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MISE-EN-SCENE VERSUS MONTAGE: VIEWER
RESPONSE TO TWO STYLES OF VISUAL
COMMUNICATION.

The Ohio State University,
Ph.D., 1977
Cinema

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The author wishes to thank Drs. Franklin H. Knower and William R. Brown for their guidance and help. He especially wants to thank Dr. Robert R. Monaghan, for his patience, assistance and quiet insight. His influence will extend far beyond the pages of this paper. Finally, he wishes to acknowledge the support provided by his wife, Vivian.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

During the early 1920's the first of the many theories of film were formulated, notably by Russian film theoreticians such as Kuleshov, Eisenstein, and Pudovkin. As film making matured as an art, other scholars contributed to the literature--e.g., Bazin, Balaza, Kracauer. Each in his own way sought to explain why or how movies produced their effects on an audience. These theories, derived from a multitude of different political, sociological, psychological, and philosophical bases, have evolved into two major, broadly spaced but opposing frameworks: montage and mise-en-scene.


2 "Montage" translates literally from the French as "mounting," and originally referred to the composition of a picture by mounting fragments of other pictures together to form a new one. "Mise-en-scene" means literally "placing on stage," as in a theatrical production.
Some modern theoreticians have concentrated on the effect of montage—one shot following another in sequence—to determine its effects and importance in the art of film making; others have concerned themselves with mise-en-scene—a long take of a scene staged in front of a nearly motionless camera—to ascertain its effects and significance in film making. The different visual styles of film and television programs reflect both theories as they are manifested through different directorial, pictorial, and editorial approaches to a given content. Proponents of each school consider its style best for obtaining the desired audience response.

Implicit in this conflict is the belief that visual style affects the viewer, i.e., that a specific style somehow produces a generally predetermined response in an audience. Yet, several years experience in producing films and television programs and in observing audiences indicates that at least a portion of these viewers react unpredictably, and that aspects of visual style seem to cause apparently spurious reactions in some of them. Does the visual style of the program affect the individual viewer?

The Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not the styles of mise-en-scene or montage do make a difference to a viewer. The problem can be restated as a hypothesis.
First hypothesis. The style of a program, whether mise-en-scene or montage, does make a difference to an individual viewer.

Style may make a difference in more than one way. First, the viewer may have an overall preference for a program in one style over the other. Second, although he might not feel a preference for one style, the style could affect the way in which the individual viewer responds to the program or its parts.

If the answer to the first question is "yes" and the hypothesis is true, then it will be necessary to investigate some of the reasons for those differences.

In looking for the answers to the above questions this particular communication situation should be considered as a part of a larger system consisting of a sender, message, channel and receiver, in which the sender is the program producer, the style is a component of the message, the channel is television and/or film, and the individual viewer is the receiver. This study involves two main, and possibly interacting, factors--the visual style and the individual viewer.

Further, the context of this study is the contemporary cultural milieu of the United States. No assumptions or predictions are made about other countries or other cultures.
The problem related to style

After the art of the motion picture had moved past the short 90-second clips of Edison's Kinetascope and Casler's Mutascope, the two approaches to filmic narrative techniques and their associated filmic styles became more consistent and identifiable.

Montage

One of the two rather broadly defined branches of cinematic technique was first espoused by the Russian school of film directors. Led by such notable directors and theoreticians as S.M. Eisenstein, V.I. Pudovkin, and L. Kuleshov, this group developed theories of film based on the use of montage.

Essentially, film as montage is based on the idea that reality is analyzed and broken down into discrete fragments. Each fragment is represented on a piece of film as a shot, ranging from a long shot to a close-up. The shots are then carefully selected, and spliced together in a planned order. As a result a new reality—a new time and a new space—is created through this editing of individual shots. As Pudovkin put it, a film is "built up from the separate strips of celluloid that are its raw material."³

The traditional film theorists contend the juxta­posing of images has a synergistic effect. These theories also make the assumption that images in the sequence, or montage, have an effect on and change the meaning of the other images. Thus, they affect the meaning of the entire sequence.

These early film theories based on the use of montage have undergone modifications, changes, and challenges. Nevertheless, the basic idea of joining individual shots of varying length together to tell a story has survived to become the dominant method of film making in use today.

Mise-en-scene

The second branch of film technique that developed over the years has become known as mise-en-scene. After World War II Andre Bazin, the French critic and founder of Cahier du Cinema, began discussing and developing the theoretical bases and implications of mise-en-scene.

As a preliminary definition of mise-en-scene let us say it is an approach to film making in which the spatial and/or temporal relationships are maintained throughout the scene. Scenes are not fragmented. In long takes and deep focus shots, the camera tends to show the action in long shots, with the picture framed in such a way that the action plays in depth, using the space near to and far from the camera and keeping the entire field of view of the camera
in sharp focus. The light levels, lenses and apertures are chosen to provide great depth of field. John Fell defines the mise-en-scene as "people in a setting all of which, together, serve a narrative effect."  

Bazin and others, cite the films of Murnau, Welles, Dreyer, and Wyler as examples of the use of mise-en-scene. Welles' Citizen Kane and The Magnificent Ambersons are frequently mentioned.

Comparison of mise-en-scene and montage styles

Consider mise-en-scene and montage to be near the polar opposites of a style continuum. At one extreme (montage) the fragmentation of time and space is complete. The length of each shot can be as short as one or two frames lasting a twenty-fourth or twelfth of a second, as in Charles Braverman's An American Time Capsule.

At the other end of the continuum (mise-en-scene) shots last for an extended period of time, perhaps many


7 Fell, p. 196.
hours, but typically several minutes or more. Time and space are not fragmented, as in montage, but are revealed through the continuous shot. Extreme examples of this are several experimental films of Andy Warhol's such as Empire and Sleep, and some of the early one-camera television productions.

As the middle of this continuum is approached from the poles, the long takes become shorter and the short takes become longer. Somewhere near the center the clear distinctions between mise-en-scene and montage become uncertain.


9Many of the early local television programs and many more commercials were shot using a single camera in one long take. It was not uncommon for the shot to be uninterrupted for the entire thirty-minute length of the program. This writer has directed many one-camera shows that ranged in format from simple interviews to panel discussions to talk demonstrations to musical programs. Perhaps the most complex program shot using this technique was a remote telecast from a large museum display of African art, ranging over a considerable physical area with numerous artifacts to be examined and explored. The number of persons in the scene at any one time varied from none to seven. Shots were composed in depth and considerable camera movement was used. This particular thirty minute segment was comprised of just three shots.
There are several characteristics of mise-en-scene and montage that are useful in distinguishing one style from the other. They are:

1. the length of the take
2. the distance of the camera from the action (i.e., whether a long shot or a close-up)
3. the depth of focus of the shot
4. the amount of audience participation in the viewing activity.

**Length of the take**

In the mise-en-scene the length of time that each take, or shot, is played on the screen is considerably longer than in montage. This variable in turn affects:

(a) the way time and space are represented by each style

(b) the amount and kind of camera movement

(c) the amount of cutting

**Time and space.** In mise-en-scene, time and space relationships are revealed in one shot within a long take. Action is played continuously in front of the camera. For some takes the camera might be a stationary eye, watching the scene unfold before it. For others, the camera might be very mobile and become an integral part of the very scene it is filming, as much a part of the scene as the actors and scenery, and not merely a recording device.
In montage the illusion of time and space is created through the juxtaposition of a number of different shots--some close, some far. Pieces of the action are shot out of order at different times. Representing different fragments of time and space, they are carefully spliced together in the editing room to form a filmic time and space which may bear little resemblance to the original temporal and spatial relationships of the action.

During the editing process in montage some strips of film or video tape can be left out or others can be added in--resulting in a condensing or expanding of time and space. In the long takes of mise-en-scene, clock time and film time are the same, and temporal relationships are preserved. A scene that took two minutes to play in clock time in front of the camera will take two minutes to play on the screen in film time. As a result, there cannot be any compression or expansion of time or space within the take.

Camera movement. Another difference between the two styles is the amount and kinds of camera movement. With the long takes of the mise-en-scene the position of the camera tends to provide the viewer with the same viewpoint throughout the shot. However, with montage the camera can, and does, change positions, and thus points of view from shot to shot.
**Amount of cutting.** As a direct result of the length of the takes the amount of cutting, that is, the number of shots used, varies between the two styles. Mise-en-scene, with its long takes typically has many fewer cuts or shot changes than does montage, which is created from many short shots pieced together.

**Camera distance**

In mise-en-scene, despite an occasional use of close-ups, the camera characteristically tends to be at a distance from the scene, so that one sees a wide view of the action. However, in montage the camera moves in and out, showing the viewer a variety of distances from the action. Typically, montage makes use of many more close-up shots than are found in mise-en-scene.

**Depth of focus**

The deep-focus shot is another characteristic of mise-en-scene. In these shots the camera lens is adjusted so that everything in the scene is in sharp focus, permitting one to view the scene as a whole, in contrast to the use of selective focus close-up shots common in montage. A result of the deep focus is that action can be played on the z-axis, that is, the axis running away from the camera. The action is played in depth and the shots are composed in depth.
Viewer involvement

It has been theorized that another distinction between mise-en-scene and montage is the amount of viewer participation and involvement in the viewing event.

In montage-style films the director selects certain aspects of the scene to be shown in a close-up shot. Usually the transitional device between individual shots within a sequence is a cut, an instantaneous change of images. At the cut the particular subject of the close-up suddenly pops onto the screen, greatly magnified. By filling the screen, the subject of the close-up excludes the other elements of the scene. The background of the image, if not completely excluded, is defocused and softened so that the viewer's attention is diverted from it to the sharply-focused subject of the close-up. All things conspire to bring the subject of the close-up to the full attention of the viewer.

The director selects the subject of the close-up, presenting it to the viewer in a screen-dominating manner that says, "Here. Look at this. It is important." With this technique the director points out to the viewer the spatial and temporal relationships which he thinks are important, and the viewer takes a passive role in selecting the details he will watch. In the long, deeply focused shots
of mise-en-scene, the camera doesn't point out important details through a sudden cut to a close-up. Instead the viewer must be the one to say, "This is important." Mise-en-scene would seem to require a more actively involved viewer than does montage, and to provide the opportunity for greater viewer participation than does montage.

**Problem related to the individual viewer**

The second major factor to be considered in attempting to discover if visual style makes a difference is the individual viewer himself.

Are any of the several decisions a viewer generally makes about programs when selecting them and while watching them related to whether the program is in the mise-en-scene or montage style? Let us suppose the viewer has a number of possible activities from which to choose, only two of which are going to the cinema or watching television. The viewer looks at a program in terms of deriving some sort of satisfaction from it: to be entertained, to escape, to be informed, to fantasize, or to satisfy some other need or want. (See figure 1.)

Let us further suppose that the viewer has a palette of programs from which to choose. Consider a person in a restaurant, presented with a menu from which he can select a variety of dishes. In addition, he has some choices about the form in which they will be served. Potatoes: mashed, boiled or hash-browned. A love story: comic,
Figure 1.--Program content flows through style to meet audience needs.
musical or dramatic. Potatoes: with gravy or butter. Dramatic narrative: mise-en-scene or montage. From the program menu the viewer selects the program that appeals to him at that particular time. At another time he might make a different selection. If he cannot find a totally satisfying program he at least searches for one. The viewer might have to settle for the least objectionable program or, perhaps, no program at all.

This suggests that each person perceives a television program in his own personal way. The kinds and quality of visual impressions received vary with the individual. He responds to a program according to his own personal wants, needs and perceptions. Different people might respond in similar ways to a program, but for different reasons, or two people might respond differently to the same program stimulus. Perhaps there are other factors within the viewer which, either by themselves or by interacting with style factors, influence his role in the communication event—whether he selects or rejects a program, whether he likes or dislikes a program, or whether a program does or does not satisfy his needs and wants.

The problem related to the producer

When a program producer uses the visual devices associated with mise-en-scene and montage he makes some
assumptions about the effects his manipulations of the style will have on the meaning of the scene and/or sequence. With the possible exception of those few who engage in making films of self-expression, which make sense only to themselves and a small circle of friends, the film maker is attempting to communicate with the viewer. He intends the meaning of the shot, scene, or sequence to be understood by the audience. The reality in front of the camera, the play of light, the contrast, and tone, the costumes, action, movement and, eventually, the arrangement of those individual pieces of film, are manipulated by the film maker to produce a desired response on the members of the audience.

It is suggested that the results of this study might be of value in two ways. First, to film and television producers they may suggest ways in which programs might be made to communicate more effectively, besides providing producers with the basis for some new insights into audience program relationships. Second, the application of the results of this study to the theoretical study of film-television may provide some basis for understanding these media systems. The succeeding sections explore the problem through these questions: (1) Does the style of a program, whether mise-en-scene or montage, make a difference to the individual viewer? and (2) if so, why? What might be some reasons for those differences?
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Studies

In the writings of some of the film theorists can be found speculation that the manipulation of film technique results in a different effect on the viewer. Andre Bazin, the French film critic and theorist who founded the magazine Cahier du Cinema during the late 1950's, has been described by Mast and Cohen as the most important theorist of the "second film generation."\(^1\)

Reality

For Bazin, the representation of reality and the resulting viewer perception of it constitute the crucial differences between mise-en-scene and montage. While Bazin acknowledges that "montage and image constitute the essence of cinema," he does not accept montage as being the best form.\(^2\) Mast and Cohen understand Bazin to believe that mise-en-scene (arranging the elements of the scene

---

\(^1\)Mast and Cohen, p. 3.  
and the camera's relationship to them as to preserve their physical reality) is a more natural technique than montage."  

Bazin, according to Fell views film as the natural extension of the theatre. According to Bazin's view "the film image ought to reveal nature whole, not present reality by cutting it into tiny bits." For Bazin the cinematic method of mise-en-scene "combines composing with the camera and staging action in front of it."  

Bazin wrote: "I will distinguish . . . between two broad and opposing trends: Those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality."  

His opposing trends are montage, "faith in the image" with its emphasis on the use of many shots and the cutting and ordering of those shots to provide meaning, and mise-en-scene, "faith in reality," in which the meaning is "inherent in the visual images themselves." That is, the meaning is in the content of the shots, of the action, of the physical space in front of the camera. Bazin puts the emphasis on the content of the images rather than the ordering of images.

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3Mast and Cohen, p. 3.
4Fell, p. 28.
5Mast and Cohen, p. 63.
6Ibid.
8Mast and Cohen, p. 63.
However, there are other theorists, such as Kuleshov, Pudovkin and Eisenstein, who believe that traditional montage best carries the meaning of the film, and consider the manipulation of images the better way to portray "reality."

In assembling pieces of film, which represent fragments of time and space, a skilled editor is able to synthesize time and space—to create a new filmic reality. The Russian theorist Lev Kuleshov wrote of one of his experiments with montage in which time and space were fragmented and then reconstructed to create a different filmic reality for the viewer by using a number of relatively short takes of long shots and close-ups that were filmed at different times and places. Kuleshov synthesized a sequence in which two actors walk toward one another; they see each other and smile; they meet, look at the White House and then climb the steps. Each of these shots was filmed miles apart in Russia and the shot of the White House was clipped from the American film, The White House in Washington. Later, when the pieces of film were to be spliced together, Kuleshov discovered they did not have the shot of the two actors meeting. The original actors were no longer available for retakes so two other people were dressed in the overcoats worn in the original

---

scenes and filmed in still another location. As Kuleshov noted, this time they filmed a close-up shot of two other people's hands being clasped in greeting. Even though the shots in the sequence were filmed at widely separated locations and with different actors it appeared the two had greeted one another and walked up the steps to the White House!  

To the montage theorists, this ability to fragment and then reconstruct time and space into a new filmic reality comprises the basic power of the style. However, Bazin sees this apparent strength as a weakness and a disadvantage from which mise-en-scene does not suffer for he contends that the long takes of a mise-en-scene sequence permit time and space to be shown "whole."

To compare the way time is presented in the long takes of mise-en-scene to the short takes of montage, Bazin uses Robert Flaherty's classic silent documentary film *Nanook of the North*:

What matters to Flaherty, confronted by Nanook hunting the seal, is the relation between Nanook and the animal; the actual length of the waiting period. Montage could suggest the time involved. Flaherty however confines himself to showing the actual waiting period; the length of the hunt is the very substance of the image, its true object.  

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10 Ibid.

Shot-in-depth

For the mise-en-scene theorists the long take's continuous representation of time and space is closely associated with the technique of the shot-in-depth. With this shot-in-depth (deep focus shot), the camera, placed usually at some distance from the action, portrays the space whole, with the entire scene in sharp focus, in contrast to the fragmented space of montage, with its generally selective focus. Bazin saw the shot-in-depth as an important cinematic development, for it made the use of montage and close-ups unnecessary.

Thanks to the depth of field, whole scenes are covered in one take, the camera remaining motionless. Dramatic effects for which we had formerly relied on montage were created out of the movements of the actors within a fixed framework.¹²

Bazin further suggests that deep focus shots provide the viewer with a greater sense of realism than do the traditional long, medium, and close-up shots of montage:

That depth of focus brings the spectator into a relation with the image closer to that which he enjoys with reality. Therefore it is correct to say that, independent of the contents of the image, structure is more realistic.¹³

Since the viewer is able to see the entire scene at once, the relationships of the actors and setting are shown as they are in nature.

¹²Ibid., p. 33.
¹³Ibid., p. 35-36.
Involvement

The third major comparison that Bazin makes between mise-en-scene and montage concerns the involvement between the viewer and the image. According to Bazin and others, the viewer is much less involved in viewing montage than in mise-en-scene. He says the deep focus shot "implies . . . both a more active mental attitude on the part of the spectator and a more positive contribution on his part to the action in progress."\textsuperscript{14} That is to say, not only must the viewer be more alert to understand what's going on in a mise-en-scene film, but he must be involved with it. In a long shot showing the entire scene of action, the viewer can direct his attention to any one of several elements in the frame. Although the blocking of the action and the framing by the camera more or less guide the viewer's eyes, they are free to wander around the image. The viewer selects details for attention. In contrast, through the close-ups and montage cutting, the director chooses for the viewer by showing an object in a tight close-up. The viewer will watch only that object, and, while he may be more or less interested in the subject of the close-up, he has had no involvement in the selection of the detail.

Another theorist, Charles Barr, supports this position. Using a scene from River of No Return (1954), Barr points

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
out the very different degrees of involvement a viewer has in selecting details between mise-en-scene and montage. In this particular scene, as Harry, (Robert Mitchum) lifts Kay (Marilyn Monroe) from the raft, she drops a bundle containing most of her worldly possessions into the water. Barr interprets the scene in this way.

Now in this scene from River of No Return, the spectator is "free" to notice the bundle, and, when he does so, free to interpret it as significant. But there is nothing random about the shot. The detail is placed in the background of the shot, and integrated naturally, so that we have to make a positive act of interpreting, of "reading," the shot. The act of interpreting the visual field—and through that the action—is in itself valuable. Significance of the detail is not announced, it is allowed to speak for itself. An alert spectator will notice the bundle, and "follow" it as it floats off screen.

The traditional method would be to make its significance unmistakable by cutting to close-ups. In this case we would gather that the bundle is meaningful because it was picked out for us. In Preminger's film, the process is reversed; we pick it out because it is meaningful. The emphasis arises organically out of the whole action; it is not imposed.15

Barr contends that, by contrast, "the very last thing Eisenstein really wants us to do is to evaluate for ourselves, what we are shown."16 On the matter of viewer involvement with the image, Barr considers montage to be inferior to mise-en-scene.

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15 Charles Barr, "CinemaScope: Before and After," *Film Quarterly* 16 (Summer 1963) in Mast and Cohen, p. 130.

16 Ibid, p. 132.
Research Reports

The words of the critics I have cited, although well-reasoned on both sides, are statements of personal judgments. The existing experimental studies have been conducted in the area of audiovisual education, and have been concerned primarily with the techniques of television and film making as aids in increasing learning among students. As such, they tell little about the effect of style on the viewer, but a survey of the most relevant studies will illustrate the state of current research and to indicate directions a researcher might take in exploring the problem.

In 1950 Hoban and van Ormer released the report, Instructional Film Research 1918-1950 (Rapid Mass Learning), which they had prepared for the Department of the Army and the Navy. In it they compiled and summarized research studies on the use of motion pictures as a training/teaching device. The publication covers about thirty years, and reports more than 200 studies.  

The use of film, and especially of television, in education increased at an accelerated rate in the years following the release of the Hoban and van Ormer study.

In 1969 Reid and MacLennan attempted to update Hoban and van Ormer by publishing *Research in Educational Television and Film*, in which they reviewed and summarized 333 additional studies conducted between 1950 and 1964.\(^{18}\) None of these studies have dealt directly with the influences of visual style on an individual's response to a particular program.

Only a few studies have investigated the effects of varying production techniques and only one variable at all characteristic of the mise-en-scene and montage styles is included in any study. Further, as a group those production variables are manipulated only within the framework of the montage style. Frequently the results yielded no significant differences in learning. Further, these studies investigated the effects of varying production devices upon group learning rather than effects upon individual perceptions.

Although effects of style were not directly investigated, as in this study, some elements from these earlier examinations warrant reviewing. Although the ability of a viewer to understand sequences of moving images is generally described as "film literacy," this term has a number of interpretations, including the following: the ability to

understand through the images themselves the film maker's meaning (to "read" the content of the images); to understand the meaning implied by the juxtaposition of the images (the editing, or montage); and to understand the meaning implied through the use of technical devices such as fades, dissolves, split screen and so on. In discussing the possible relationship between film literacy and learning from film, Hoban and van Ormer said:

Very little is known about the special abilities involved in learning from films which, for want of a better term, we designate as "film literacy." These abilities may relate . . . to interpretation of such film techniques as dissolves, close-ups, intercuts, montages, etc. There is, however, some evidence that film literacy, though not precisely defined, (1) exists, (2) is related to practice in viewing films, and (3) influences learning from films.19

If, as Hoban and van Ormer suggest, learning from films is related to production techniques, then varying those techniques might also influence a person's preference for one style or another.

Studies by Schwarzwalder, Ellery, and Cobin and MacIntyre did not vary the filmic style, but they did vary some of the production elements that are common to mise-en-scene and montage.

In a study by John Schwarzwalder at television station KCTA-TV, such factors as the contrast between planned and

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19Hoban and van Ormer, p. 7-25.
unplanned visual continuity, visual reinforcement using superimpositions, and visual manipulation, among others, were varied by the experimenter. Of interest here is the visual manipulation which compared the presentation of material in a lecture situation with that in a television situation. Generally speaking the lecture situation with its presentation directly into the television camera roughly resembles the mise-en-scene style, while the television situation with its cuts and close-ups resembles montage. The program material was a TV science program. The fifth grade subjects were found to do significantly better on tests of science content when "they had viewed television programs that had planned continuity, visual reinforcement, and had been the result of a team approach to make effective use of the medium." No mention is made of significant results from the "visual manipulation," the variable in which we are interested. Apparently, this variable had no significant effect on the group results.

In another study, J.B. Ellery examined the effects of production variables on learning. Using kinescopes of speeches, he investigated the production variables of dollying versus cutting, production errors versus no

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production errors, limbo versus nonlimbo settings, and flat versus key lighting. In this study, the variables of dollying (no cutting) versus cutting are of interest, as they may approximate two of the characteristics of mise-en-scene and montage. But subject matter tests showed no significant differences.\(^{21}\) Again, Ellery was looking for group, not individual, effects on learning.

However, Cobin and McIntyre found in a study of over 300 speech students at the University of Illinois that "students preferred simple production techniques, such as continuing close-ups, rather than a variety of shots."\(^{22}\) It is more difficult to accept the approximation of mise-en-scene and montage in this study than in the previous ones. Although the "variety of shots" may be considered to be montage, the "continuing close-up" contains conflicting characteristics of both styles.

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\(^{22}\)Martin T. Cobin and Charles J. McIntyre, "The Development and Application of a New Method to Test the Relative Effectiveness of Specific Visual Production Techniques for Instructional Television," USOE Project No. 448 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1961), reported in Reid and MacLennan, p. 47.
The continuous shot (long shot) is characteristic of mise-en-scene, while the close-up is characteristic of montage.

Studies by Holdridge, Perrow, Strumthal and Curtis, which suggest that attributes of the viewer help shape his perception of the film, should be considered in attempting to answer the question of whether or not style affects a viewer.

A recent study indicates that manipulation of camera angle does affect the viewer's interpretation of images. Different meanings are produced by changing certain visual aspects of a picture. Holdridge studied the influence of camera angle on the viewer's prediction of performance of persons engaged in several physical activities. The activities were filmed from a low camera angle and a high camera angle. Holdridge found the camera angle did influence prediction of superior performance, but it was a much less important factor than the "personal attribute, characteristics and gestures of an actor."23

Camera angle is not a characteristic variable of mise-en-scene and montage, so what is of interest here is the finding that the viewer's perception of the character (actor) as influenced by the performer's

"personal attributes, characteristics and gestures . . ." was more important in the predicting of performance than was camera angle.

Another interesting aspect of Holdridge's findings was that many subjects interpreted the film according to their existing attitudes about it and that production techniques have no effect on this. He said:

A second finding strongly indicates that many viewers . . . tend to restructure what they see in a film to support the mental or emotional set they bring to or develop about the film. This happens regardless of the production techniques the film maker uses to convey his message.24

This indicates that the attitudes, or predispositions, of the viewer may need to be taken into account. Perrow found that some viewers were predisposed to watch certain kinds of characters, especially roles they perceived as being similar to their own personalities. Conversely, the roles that were least liked and least viewed were those that viewers perceived as dissimilar to their own personalities.25

How might the viewer's perception of his own personality and situation affect his perception of other aspects of a film? Two studies by A. Strumthall and A. Curtis suggest that a viewer tends to become more

24 Ibid.
involved with a film that depicts settings and activities which are familiar to him. 26

To what degree does the realism of the depiction affect the viewer's involvement with the film?

Hoban points out that effective communication does not require that the pictures be completely realistic (if such a condition could even be possible.) "The problem . . . is not to represent exactly every sensory element in the situation portrayed, but to select the relevant cues . . . and to faithfully represent these relevant cues in picture . . . "27 Hoban says that pictures, in this instance motion pictures, arouse and "pattern the perceptual responses of the audience."28 The images themselves do not contain meanings, but must be read and interpreted by the viewer who uses relevant cues from the images and his own previous experience.

In summary, we have identified from the theoretical writings four main interrelated variables that are common to both mise-en-scene and montage and which are a consequence of the technical manipulation of shot length, camera distance and camera point of view. The variables are: (1) the manner in which reality is represented to the viewer, (2) the way in which the relationships within the

26 Hoban and van Ormer, p. 8-7.
28 Ibid.
involved with a film that depicts settings and activities which are familiar to him.\textsuperscript{26}

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\textsuperscript{26}Hoban and van Ormer, p. 8-7.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid, p. 8-8.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid.
scene are shown (whether time and space are fragmented or shown whole), (3) the apparent distance from the scene (whether changing through the long shot--close-up techniques of montage or through the deep focus shot of mise-en-scene), and (4) the amount of viewer involvement with the content and the viewing process.

From the empirical studies there is nothing to indicate that potential mise-en-scene--montage production variables make a difference. Studies by Holdridge, Perrow, Strumthal and Curtis suggest that a viewer's existing attitudes, or pre-disposition, toward performers, characters, settings and activities may influence his perception of a film. Taken as a whole, the studies tend to indicate the possibility of factors other than pure style affecting the viewer--program relationship.

In Chapter I it was hypothesized that the style of a program, whether mise-en-scene or montage, does make a difference to an individual viewer. The review of literature leaves the question unanswered, largely because no research has been directed specifically to this question.

The second question asked was, if style does make a difference, why? The author's personal observation and some of the empirical studies suggest that the factors presented in the second hypothesis are possible
reasons.

Second hypothesis. The production and viewer variables of
1. camera distance (includes long shots or close-ups and deep or shallow focus)
2. shot length (long takes or short takes)
3. camera viewpoint (fixed or changing), and
4. viewer predisposition (pre-existing attitudes)
   are the main variables which, singly or in combination, will affect the individual viewer's
   1. perception of the realism (reality) of the scene
   2. perception of his distance from the scene, and
   3. sense of involvement with the characters and details of the scene.

The investigation of these questions and hypotheses are reported in the following chapters.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The plan of the method was to show subjects a test program in which only the visual style changed and elicit their responses to the test programs in such a way that the hypotheses could be explored. Further, it was planned to provide each subject the opportunity to express responses not anticipated by the researcher.

The Dramatic Scene

Two video tapes of a dramatic scene were prepared to test the hypotheses. One version of the scene was made in the mise-en-scene style and the other in the montage style.

For the purposes of testing, the content of the examples of montage and mise-en-scene was the same. Only the camera style was different. The visual appearance of the examples paralleled one another as closely as possible without losing the integrity of the separate styles.

The scene selected was a short (seven minutes and twenty seconds) dramatic excerpt, from act 2, scene 2
of Tennesse Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire," chosen because it takes place in one room (for mise-en-scene), and advances to a climax.

The scene is set in the shabby kitchen of Stanley and Stella Kowalski, which also serves as the bedroom for Stella's visiting older sister, Blanche. Within this single set, the action is blocked so that the actors use the entire space, moving both laterally and in depth to the camera.

As the scene opens, Blanche enters the room accompanied by Mitch, Stanley's best friend. As she and Mitch talk, their light conversation turns to the considerable friction between Stanley and Blanche, with Blanche becoming progressively more upset as she describes her fear of her brother-in-law. Mitch first attempts to comfort her, then abruptly asks her age. Blanche avoids answering the sensitive question. Mitch then explains that his dying mother is eager to see him "settled" before she dies. Blanche responds by revealing that she is lonely, suffering from grief and guilt over the death of the husband she innocently married, not knowing he was homosexual. Upon discovering that fact, she had rejected the young man, and he had committed suicide. Mitch appears to be first bored, then shocked, and finally touched by the dramatically recounted story.
They embrace emotionally, and Mitch tells Blanche they need each other.

The content and blocking of the scene was identical for both versions with only the camera shots changing.

Mise-en-scene style

The mise-en-scene version was performed continuously, without any stops or cuts, and was shot with a single vidicon television camera equipped with an 8.5 mm wide angle lens.

The scene opened with a long shot of the actors entering the set. As the actors move closer the camera pans and tilts to keep them properly framed. The shot becomes tighter as they move toward the camera. Later, the man sits at the table at screen right as the woman moves around the table and backs into the far corner of the room. For this the camera trucks right so the man is in a medium close-up in the left of the frame, the woman is in a long shot in the center of the frame and the candle on the table is framed in the lower right hand portion of the screen in a medium close-up. As the woman continues speaking, the camera dollys in so the man becomes larger in the frame. They embrace and move toward the camera, which is also dollying into a low angle waist shot for the end of the scene.
For this version, the overall camera movement was restrained and subordinated to the action of the actors.

**Montage style**

The montage version was shot with the "stop and go" film technique, using one camera equipped with both wide angle and variable focal length (zoom) lenses. The longest focal length available on the zoom lens was 75 mm, and with a two-thirds inch vidicon tube it provided a moderate telephoto effect. The scene was broken down into twenty-four shots made from twelve different camera positions, or set-ups. The shots, which ranged from a long shot to a tight close-up, were recorded out of sequence and assembled into the correct order during the editing process.

The lighting and setting remained the same for both versions of the scene. Except for camera shots, care was taken to keep all acting and production elements as nearly identical as possible.

**Data Gathering Instruments**

Data were gathered in two ways: using focused interviews and an opinionnaire in the form of a semantic differential. The focused interview was used to provide the subjects and the researcher with a broad avenue for the flow of subjective data. The semantic differential
was intended to get some quantitative measures of the viewers' direction and intensity of feeling about the presentations.

**Focused interview**

**Rationale**

This study needed data to be collected so that they would provide information about how individual viewers responded to the styles of mise-en-scene and montage, and why. To get at this kind of information it was necessary to collect data in two ways.

First, hypotheses and questions had been formulated about differences of style and characteristics of viewers. Gathering data for that aspect of the study called for a structured inquiry.

At the same time, it was recognized that there was a possibility that other factors, not anticipated by the researcher and therefore not included in the hypotheses, could be operating. These factors might be variables of style, viewer, or something else. Gathering data about them would require a less structured inquiry in which the researcher had flexibility to solicit and handle unanticipated and open-ended responses from the subjects.

To achieve these goals, the method should meet four criteria. First, it should permit the researcher to get at specific structured questions and data that has been
anticipated and hypothesized. Second, it should be flexible enough to permit the viewer to express spontaneous and unanticipated responses about the programs his own way. Third, it should provide the researcher with the opportunity to probe and explore a viewer's responses in depth. Last, the method should provide the researcher with a mechanism through which he could focus the viewer's attention on a particular aspect or detail of the problem.

The focused interview, described by Merton\(^1\) provides an accepted technique for gathering data and meets the criteria outlined above. Originally the focused interview was developed to deal with certain kinds of problems associated with communications research and propaganda analysis. It is applicable to film, radio, television, motion pictures and print.\(^2\)

The focused interview provides the interviewer the opportunity to obtain detailed data by exploring interviewees' responses in depth. Further, the focused interview approaches topics in such a way that reliable data is more likely to be obtained. Merton et al. put it this way:

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\(^2\)Ibid., p. 3.
It is not enough to learn that an interviewee regarded a situation as "unpleasant" or "anxiety-provoking" or "stimulating"—summary judgments which are properly suspect and, moreover, consistent with a variety of interpretations. The aim is to discover more precisely what "unpleasant" denotes in this context, which concrete feelings were called into play, which personal associations came to mind. Furthermore, when subjects are led to describe their reactions in great detail, there is less prospect that they will, intentionally or unwittingly conceal the actual character of their responses.3

Preparation of the Interview Schedule

The focused interview schedule (Appendix A) was prepared in the following manner.

The focused interview first attempts to get the interviewee to describe his response to the program without prompting on specific questions. Thus, the first questions are of a non-directive nature, such as "Thinking back to what you just saw, what stood out about it in your mind?" This line of questioning is repeated until the subject can no longer respond to it in a meaningful way. (Questions 1 to 8.)

At this point the interviewer begins to ask questions focusing on specific aspects of the program, if they have not already been answered by the subject. The basic focus of this study, the way in which a viewer responds to

3Ibid., p. 4.
mise-en-scene and montage, was reflected in the questions on the interview schedule. The focusing was started by asking for a comparative overall response to the two programs, and then narrowed to specifically comparing character, character relationships, and the viewer's interpretations of the characters' feeling in the two programs. This was to find if, and how, style affects the viewer's perception of those aspects of the programs. (Questions 9 to 18.)

A series of questions focusing on viewer responses to several details of story and action were incorporated. Some of these events involved physical movement of the actors and/or camera, some were exchanges of dialogue containing plot elements, some were of low and some were of high emotional intensity. The purpose was to determine what differences, if any, the two styles made in a viewer's perception of different kinds of details. (Questions 19 to 23.)

To further get at the question of how differences in camera work may have affected his feelings about the two versions, the subject was asked how the camera showed the scene, and was then asked which version he preferred. (Questions 24 and 25.)

To test whether or not the viewer participated more actively in the mise-en-scene version, and to what extent, the question, "What did you look at?" was asked. (Questions 26 and 27.)
To see if the contrasting portrayals of time and space make a difference to a viewer, three related questions were asked about camera movement, pacing and the length of the programs. (Questions 28 to 30.)

Finally, to get an indication of how complete the subjects perceived the programs to be, they were asked if they felt anything was missing. (Question 31.)

The interview schedule and the focused interview technique were tested during pilot sessions. Based on the experience gained in those sessions, questions were added, deleted and modified.

**Semantic differential**

A semantic differential instrument, described by Osgood,[^4] was used in conjunction with focused interviews to obtain data about the subjects' attitudes on a number of concepts in order to permit comparisons of concepts within a subject and comparisons of subjects on a concept.

The test programs were studied and a list of concepts was drawn up, concerning viewer opinion of the overall program, camera techniques, characters, character relationships, visual style and other media. Some concepts were then removed from the list because they dealt with technical questions that would have required explanation before the subjects could respond. From the remaining

list, the twelve judged by the researcher to be most relevant to the problem were retained. These concepts were modified further during preliminary testing sessions. Those selected were designed to get an indication of the subject's attitude about the program proper, the characters and their relationship, the camera techniques, the camera techniques related to the characters, and the viewer's attitude about other kinds of media experiences. The same set of concepts was used with both programs. They are: The tv program you have seen, Blanche (the woman), Mitch (the man), The relationship between Blanche and Mitch, Mitch's feelings about Blanche, Blanche's feelings about Mitch, The way the scene was shown by the camera, The way the camera showed Blanche, The way the camera showed Mitch, Watching a play on the stage in a theatre, Watching a television program, and Watching a movie in a theatre.

The adjective pairs used in the study were chosen by a combination of methods. A list of various words and word pairs that might be used to describe a person's feelings about the programs was made up from the investigator's experience and from a search of related literature. This list, containing approximately one hundred items, was culled to about thirty word pairs. Then Osgood's lists were searched and word pairs were exchanged and
eliminated. The twenty-four pairs remaining on the list were all included in Osgood's first three factor types: evaluation, potency and activity. The ten pairs which had the purest factor loadings, while at the same time seeming to have relevancy and stability, were selected. The word pairs were: good-bad, soft-hard, active-passive, incomplete-complete, strong-weak, simple-complex, believable-unbelievable, boring-interesting, free-constrained, and fast-slow.

The form was set up by randomly mixing the scales and alternating their direction. Seven alternatives were provided, with each page of the test containing one concept and one set of scales. (See Appendix B.)

Demographic Information

Subject provided information about themselves in two ways, through a short questionnaire and through a semantic differential. (See Appendix B.) The demographic data were collected to permit description of the sample and to see if any of the demographic items could be used to predict a person's response to the programs.

The first page of the test instrument was a questionnaire used to gather information about the age, sex, education, occupation, and media activities of the subjects. This was completed by twenty-nine subjects.
Additional personal information about eleven subjects was gathered through the semantic differential. Seven concepts, dealing with the subjects attitude about himself, the media, and his favorite stars and people were incorporated in the test instrument to gather this information. It was anticipated that subjects' responses to these concepts could be compared to their responses to other concepts. They are: myself, the way others see me, the way I would like to be (my ideal self), my favorite television program, my favorite movie, my favorite television or movie character, and the person I most admire.

The Sample

The sample of subjects for this study was not chosen to be representative of the general population. However, an attempt was made to get some diversity among the participants so that a wide range of responses would be possible. The sample was drawn from college students attending Northern Michigan University and from high school students and adults in the Marquette, Michigan community. Participation was voluntary.

In all, sixty-nine people participated in some phase of the study. Of that number, twenty-one (eleven males and ten females) were used in the analysis because they watched both versions of the program, completed the semantic differential for both viewings, viewed the programs
in very small groups or as individuals, and had participated fully in the focused interview. Additionally, eleven of these subjects had completed the "self-evaluation" portion of the semantic differential.

This sample was composed of students, teachers, a secretary, a housewife, a salesman and a nurse, whose ages ranged from thirteen to sixty-two years (M = 28.8 years) and whose educational level ranged from "less than college" to post graduate (M = 3 years of college). (See Appendix C.)

Administration of the Test

All of the subjects included in the analysis viewed the programs under the same conditions.

The viewing, testing, and interviewing took place in a classroom studio. The test programs were played back on a three-quarter inch Sony video cassette machine, and displayed on a Stetchell-Carlson twenty-one inch black and white classroom television monitor.

The room lights were turned off during the showing and, with no windows in the room, the television monitor was the only source of illumination during the playback.

The contrast and brightness of the television picture were adjusted so that the highlight details in the flesh tones were just maintained and the shadow detail in the area under the bed was just lost into black. The sound volume was adjusted by ear for intelligibility and comfort
during the pre-test setup session. It was placed at the same setting for each test session. The ambient noise in the classroom-studio was about the same for each showing. The temperature and humidity were regulated automatically by the building's heating system.

First, the subjects were invited to sit a comfortable distance from the television monitor; the actual viewing distance ranged from five feet to ten feet or approximately three and a half to seven screen widths.

The explanation of the research and instructions were given to them orally. (See Appendix D.) Subjects were then handed the printed test materials and instructed to fill in the information requested on the cover page.

The experimenter then handed each subject a sample of the semantic differential. Instructions on completing the semantic differential form were given from a prepared sheet (see Appendix B), and the semantic differential concepts numbers one through seven were completed by eleven participants at this point.

Then the first television program was viewed. The order in which the programs were shown was varied so that thirteen subjects saw the mise-en-scene version first and eight saw the montage version first. When the first tape ended the subjects completed concepts eight through nineteen on the basis of that program.

Next the researcher conducted a short interview with the subjects, either individually or in small groups, using
items one and two from the interview schedule, in order to get the subjects' immediate impressions of the program. Subjects then viewed the alternate version and completed the semantic differential concepts twenty through thirty-one.

Last, the subjects took part in a focused interview (twenty to ninety minutes long) using the remaining items on the interview schedule. All interviews were recorded on audio tape.

**Analysis of Data**

The data from the focused interviews were analyzed in the following way. The audio tape recording of each interview was played back. If more than one person had participated in the session, each was identified by his voice. Because the largest group contained only three people, the researcher encountered no difficulties in identifying the speakers.

As the audio tape played, the researcher took notes on the ideas that were expressed by the speaker, at times transcribing the interviewees' remarks verbatim. As each tape was being reviewed the researcher kept the major hypotheses and questions in mind.

The remarks of the interviewees were grouped into categories suggested by the hypotheses. New categories were started as unanticipated responses were found. The
categories were defined so that each idea expressed by the interviewees could be classified. The definitions were developed by listing words and phrases that can be used to express the idea of the category. Any new terms used by the interviewees were added to the list. Terms that were potentially ambiguous were included in all the lists in which they might apply.

For example, camera technique has three categories: camera distance, shot length and camera viewpoint. Camera distance can be expressed in several different ways--far or near, close or distant, tight or wide, and narrow or long. Because several of these terms are ambiguous, comments were interpreted within the context of the interviewee's remarks. The expression "it's distant," out of context, might refer to the camera shot or the viewer's sense of involvement. The expression "long shot" might be used to describe the camera distance or the amount of time the shot had been on the screen.

The following excerpt is illustrative of the interviews.

The interviewer wants to focus on a topic the subject had spontaneously talked about earlier.

Interview: You made the comment that you missed the music.

Subject: Yeah, music is good. I didn't notice it the second time--whether there's music or not. The first time, I missed it.
The interviewer probes this point with a non-directive question.

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

Subject: Well, I don't know. I'm used to TV's. You know, you sit there. Like "Jaws"—that was one of my favorite movies.

The subject has mixed media in his response. He then volunteers the reasons for his feelings about music in the test programs, attributing the difference to camera style.

Subject: In the second one I forgot all about the music. Probably because the way the cameras were and all that. They kept you going on that and you didn't need it.

This topic is exhausted and the interviewer moves the discussion on with a non-directive question.

Interviewer: What other things stood out?

Subject: The only thing that really stood out was the way the cameras switched and that. And I enjoyed the second one a lot more than the first one. The first one was real boring and dull. The second one was not real action-filled—you know, chasing down the street—but it was a lot more entertaining and exciting.

The subject considers camera work to be important and mentions effects associated with editing and camera movement. He makes a comparative evaluation of the two styles and then tries to anchor the comparison with an external example. The interviewer probes the subject's feelings about the camera switching.
Interviewer: What did you feel when the camera started switching around?

Subject: At first I thought, "Well, they're just re-doing the play all differently" and then I realized it was the same thing. And then I said, "I like this a lot better." That's how I felt. I liked it and I felt a lot better. I felt more like I was a part of those two people. Like I was sitting apart from the room. If anybody's going to do a show, do it that way rather than the first way.

In this response the interviewee engaged in retrospection and recalls his feelings and attitudes about the stimulus, referring to his involvement with the characters, his perception of distance from the scene and characters, and finally expressing an evaluative opinion.

After the tapes had been reviewed, the notes were examined a number of times to see how individuals had responded to the programs and to look for any commonalities or differences in responses among the interviewees.

The numerical data from the questionnaire and the semantic differential were coded and key-punched for electronic data processing.

The demographic data and the program preference data from the interviews were cross-tabulated using the SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). A Chi² test statistic was computed for each cross-tabulation. In addition, a t-test and Spearman Rho statistic was computed for the cross-tabulations.
of viewer preference of style and the number of hours spent reading newspapers, reading books, and watching television. All were tested for significance at the five percent level.

Both computer programming and hand tabulating were used to provide tables of factor scores and matrices of D scores from the semantic differential data. These matrices were the basis for clustering, using McQuitty's Elemental Linkage Analysis procedure. Two kinds of D scores matrices were generated: (1) A matrix of D scores of concepts of an individual and (2) A matrix of D scores of people on a single concept.

The semantic differential data were further subdivided and analyzed: for example, those who preferred the mise-en-scene, those who preferred the montage, those who saw the mise-en-scene first, those who saw the montage first, and so on.

The results of these procedures are discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Findings

Two kinds of data were gathered for this study. The data from the semantic differential were compiled and examined, but following this avenue provided few useful insights. The data from the focused interviews did yield useful results.

Viewer Responses

Preference of style

Every one of the twenty-one subjects had a preference for one or the other of the styles. The mise-en-scene was preferred by ten people and the montage was preferred by eleven people. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1.--Number of subjects preferring a style.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mise-en-scene</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montage</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52
The following comments from the interviews indicate how some of the interviewees expressed their preferences. Unless enclosed in quotation marks, all remarks attributed to the subjects are paraphrased and edited.

Prefer mise-en-scene

Here are a few viewer comments about mise-en-scene:

For the scene to make it . . . to show it . . . the [mise-en-scene] showed it.

Personally, I liked the [mise-en-scene] best because I could see full bodies and character relationships.

Prefer montage

These comments are illustrative of subjects' feelings about montage:

I felt much better with the [montage]. The [mise-en-scene] showed too much destruction.

The [montage] was more interesting to watch because of the different angles.

No preference

All of the subjects had a preference for one style or the other.

Viewer perceptions

The focused interviews revealed there was a difference in the way an individual viewer perceived certain aspects
of the program-viewer relationship. Those perceptions influenced by the program's style were of realism, distance, involvement and the characters.

Only one subject did not distinguish any difference between the two versions. He said he thought them to be the same even after another subject had pointed out a number of specific differences. However, even so, he expressed a preference for one version over the other. He made this comment:

To me the second was identical to the first. To me they were identical . . . I liked the [mise-en-scene] better.

Perception of reality

Most subjects perceived a difference in the reality of the two versions; in their comments, they tended to use "believable" synonymously with "realism."

The mise-en-scene version was considered by three to be more realistic and the montage was considered to be so by six.

Mise-en-scene. Here is how the realism of the mise-en-scene was described.

I guess that it [mise-en-scene] made it a little more believable.

At least one subject commented that the mise-en-scene version was "more realistic" than the montage version. He
perceived "realistic" as being synonymous with an actual theatre-going experience.

Montage. Several people made these kinds of remarks about their sense of realism of the montage version.
Like you were right there.
You felt more like the characters were real.

Perception of distance

Distance, as they perceived it to be, was a factor mentioned by twelve people. They talked about two kinds of distance, one classified as physical distance and the other as psychological distance. However, the two are interdependent here and have been put into a single category. (It should be borne in mind that distance or closeness is not an evaluative judgment.) The following remarks serve to illustrate different perceptions of distance in mise-en-scene and montage.

Mise-en-scene. Referring to mise-en-scene one person said:
It's almost like watching fish through the glass of a tank. It's over there, it's not right here.

Montage. Two subjects expressed their feelings about distance this way:
I felt closer to what was going on.
The scene was as though you are sitting right here [motions with hands].
Sense of involvement

A sense of involvement in the programs was expressed by a number of interviewees. A person's involvement might be expressed on more than one level. For example, the viewer might be involved on a technical level by trying to second guess the director and a few moments later he might become involved emotionally with a character. Four persons expressed a greater sense of involvement with the mise-en-scene, while seven felt more involved with the montage, indicating that the montage style is more likely to create a sense of involvement in the viewer.

These comments indicate the way some viewers felt about the two versions:

Instead of being separated from it, [mise-en-scene], you were more involved in it [montage].

One person's sense of involvement was reversed for the two styles:

I think they lost a lot of what they had shown in the [mise-en-scene], the completeness, the wholeness. To me the involvement was less that way. I felt less involved.

I felt a part of what was going on.
Perception of character

Because the climax of this scene is a revelation of Blanche's character, subjects responded readily to questions about her. Each was asked how he felt about Blanche in each of the two versions. Their perceptions and opinions were analyzed with regard to style. Of the useable responses (nineteen), all but two had different perceptions of Blanche from each style. For almost all the sample (sixteen, 98 percent), the individual's opinion of the character changed toward a more positive attitude and more involvement. Overall, they had a better opinion of Blanche and saw her as a more likeable character. For most, the more positive perception was associated with the program version of the style which the subject preferred. Only two had a more negative opinion of her in their preferred style version and only two people's opinion remained unchanged in both versions.

Viewers' responses to Blanche have been categorized in the following way: first, the respondents are broken into two groups according to whether they liked the mise-en-scene or montage versions best. These two groups are divided into three groups each, according to how the respondents' perceptions of Blanche changed as they viewed the different versions of the scene. (See figure 2.)
Preference for Mise-en-scene  

I  
A lot of involvement with Blanche and her situation. Identify with Blanche. Felt sympathy for her.

Less involved, unable to relate to her. She became more ordinary. Less dynamic ... more fakey.

II  
Detached, objective view of Blanche. No involvement. Low opinion of Blanche and acting.

Slightly improved opinion of both character and acting.

III  
No change in opinion from one tape to the other. An uninvolved and detached opinion of Blance.

Preference for Montage  

IV  
Detached, objective analytical view of character and situation. No involvement. Negative opinion of Blanche.

Took a more sympathetic view of Blanche. Became involved with her.

V  
Unsympathetic and unimpressed. Negative opinion of Blanche.

Opinions changed in a negative direction.

VI  
Sympathetic, saw good in the character.

Little change, but toward more sympathy and "goodness."

Figure 2.--Description of group perceptions of Blanche after watching each program according to the subject's preference for the mise-en-scene or montage.
The following remarks from the focused interviews typify some of the opinions about the character and illustrate how the style seemed to alter the viewer's perceptions.

Subjects preferring the mise-en-scene

Those who preferred the mise-en-scene were categorized into three groups according to their perception of Blanche and the direction of change in perception, if any.

Six of the subjects became emotionally involved with Blanche and her situation as presented in the mise-en-scene. Their image of Blanche changed after seeing the montage version. They tended to be less involved with her and her problems, were less able to relate to her, and found her to be less aggressive and more ordinary. These changes were attributed to the loss of the wide angle view of Blanche in the montage version of the scene.

One subject said:

Mise-en-scene. "... hit me hard." Felt emotionally involved and identified with Blanche.

Montage. Couldn't relate to her. Too close. Half of her body was cut off. I was frustrated.

Another person said:

Mise-en-scene. The woman stood out.
Montage. The changing distance of the camera took away from what she was saying . . . had a stronger feeling of fakiness.

Another interviewee said:

Mise-en-scene. [I was] tremendously disturbed by the quality of Blanche . . . unable to stabilize herself either physically or emotionally.

Montage. [She] was more of an average person with a problem. "I felt the problem was not as intense when you were focusing on the face. The body gives you more of the complete despondency than does the face."

Another remarked:


Montage. An average person with a problem.

The two people in the second group were not involved with the character. They made essentially objective judgments about the character and the acting. Both had somewhat low opinions of the character from the montage version.

After viewing the mise-en-scene tape their opinion shifted in a slightly positive direction.

One person said:

Mise-en-scene. Had a low opinion of Blanche, she was always griping. She overplayed her part. I didn't
consider her too much.

Montage. . . . liked her better, she was more forthcoming.

For the two subjects in the third group the impression of Blanche didn't change from one style to the other. One person was sensitive to the character and perceived a change in Blanche within the scenes. This subject said:

Blanche changed from a hard and insensitive person to a more sensitive, more soft, more gentle person. She was the same for both tapes.

The other subject took a very detached view of Blanche and perceived both programs to be identical in all respects:

The woman portrayed her part pretty well. She was unstable. The second program was identical to the first.

Subjects preferring the montage

The five subjects in the fourth group had a detached, objective and analytical view of the character and situation in the mise-en-scene. They had no involvement and had a negative opinion of Blanche. After viewing the montage this group took a more sympathetic view of Blanche and became involved with her.

Of Blanche one interviewee said:

Montage. Because of the close-ups, I felt completely involved with her. She was more believable. The situation was "really painful for her."

Another person said:

Mise-en-scene. Thought she was weird and unbelievable. "I couldn't stand her."

Montage. My opinion of her . . . was neutral.

This subject commented:

Mise-en-scene. She is the suffering type with strong feelings about her husband. She's weak, cool, wrapped up in herself . . . has no feelings for Mitch.

Montage. Felt a little sorry for her during the monologue. She was more believable. Convinced me she has an emotional problem. The close-ups "made a world of difference."

For this subject Blanche became more believable.


Montage. "She became much more believable for me."

Liked her better because extraneous movements were eliminated. She was "using, taking" Mitch. I think I would have been suckered, too. Felt sorrier for her in the [montage]. Living this on-going lie . . . it was pathetic. She was frightened, scared and lonely.

The fifth member of this group expressed the same general attitude about Blanche, but with reverse styles.
After seeing the montage version, this person said Blanche was "fakey." After viewing the mise-en-scene version without close-ups, his opinion of Blanche improved.

He said: Couldn't see the fakiness in the [mise-en-scene]. He continued, "I just liked Blanche a lot better in the [mise-en-scene]."

The two people in group five were unsympathetic and generally unimpressed with Blanche after the mise-en-scene. After viewing the montage style program they continued to be unsympathetic towards Blanche, but did have a clearer perception of her.

One interviewee said:

Blanche was harder, more aggressive, and crazier in the [montage] version. She wasn't delicate. "She'd flipped out and you could see it in her eyes [through the close-ups]."

The other subject explained his feelings: My impression of her changed. Blanche was made worse in the [montage] version. She was more starkly old. The camera gave the idea she was unstable.

After viewing the mise-en-scene, the two members of group six were sympathetic towards Blanche and saw "goodness" in her.

However, after viewing the montage style program these subjects changed only slightly to a more sympathetic
attitude towards Blanche.

One said:

Mise-en-scene. I liked her. She was a good person with a lot of secrets. She was honest and feeling sorry for herself . . . insecure.

Montage. She's a little more believable and honest. She seemed a little warmer.

The other responded:

Mise-en-scene. She seemed to really need someone . . . to cling to. Mistakes had kept her down. I think she was pregnant . . . felt sorry for her.

Montage. Not as much insecurity because you couldn't see her holding her arms across her stomach. She was more believable.

Viewer Reasons for Style Responses

The interviewees gave a number of reasons for their different responses to the two programs. The main reasons were found to be differences of:

1. Camera techniques including
   a) camera distance,
   b) camera viewpoint,
   c) shot length, and

2. the viewer's own pre-existing attitudes, or predispositions.
Camera technique

The three factors of camera technique, which are the main components of style difference in this study, cannot be readily isolated. It cannot be safely said that one factor and only one factor causes or is related to a particular effect. While the three factors should be taken as a whole, it is possible to ascertain that camera distance has a greater influence than the other factors. The camera viewpoint was the factor most often mentioned next and the least mentioned factor was shot length. (See Table 2.)

Camera distance

The first factor of camera technique is the distance of the camera from the scene, manifested in the use of long shots or close-ups. This factor was the one most often mentioned by nineteen interviewees as the reason for their different responses to the two styles. Viewers stated that this factor influenced (1) their like or dislike of the programs, (2) their perceptions of realism, (3) their perceptions of distance, (4) their involvement with the scene and (5) their reactions to the characters.
TABLE 2.--Number of interviewees giving a factor of camera technique as a reason for different perceptions of the test programs and the number of times that factor was mentioned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Camera Technique</th>
<th>No. of Subjects</th>
<th>No. of Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camera distance</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera viewpoint</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot length</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Chili = 45.5, significant to .11 level with 2 degrees of freedom.

**Style preference.** Many subjects attributed their like or dislike for a particular style to the presence or absence of close-ups. The use of long shots was cited by six people as one of the reasons they preferred the mise-en-scene version, while five cited the use of close-ups as one of the reasons they preferred the montage version.

One of those who liked the long shots of the mise-en-scene said:

The close-ups and side views ruined it [the montage]. I would prefer to watch the [mise-en-scene].

Another interviewee felt just the opposite:

I liked it a lot better done this way [montage].

---

with the cameras this way instead of showing the whole room.

**Perception of realism.** The shot size influenced the individual's perception of realism. The scenes shown in long shots were considered to be more realistic by three viewers, while eight thought the close-up scenes to be the more realistic.

This interviewee said:
The close-ups, the main focus, made it more believable, more interesting.

Another commented:
Just seeing their real feelings come out--it looked so close.

**Perception of distance.** The subjects viewed both programs at the same distance from the television screen. However, many perceived the distance between themselves and the scene to be different from one version to the other. Subjects felt distance in terms of physical space and emotional distance. The emotional distance was sometimes expressed as "feeling close" to a character or the situation. A greater feeling of closeness was expressed by eight with the montage version and by three with the mise-en-scene.
One commented:

"I felt like I was in their bedroom with them." "I really enjoyed being brought so close to what was going on that I felt a part of what was going on. It made it that much more meaningful for me."

This subject compared the feeling of distance with a play:

The [mise-en-scene] gives a feeling of separateness, like a play, a tremendous distance.

**Viewer involvement.** A number of interviewees talked about a feeling of involvement they had with the situation, story, or characters. This involvement connotes a number of things, including an intense interest in the story, feelings of sympathy for characters and empathy with them. Although a number of factors contributed to the individual's sense of involvement, the distance of the camera from the scene was the major one. The mise-en-scene created a greater sense of involvement for two subjects than did the montage. However, eight people found themselves more involved with the montage than with the mise-en-scene.

Referring to the montage version, this subject said he felt this way:
You were more into it, more involved . . . I got all wound up in this. The shots made it more entertaining and exciting.

This person said:

I felt more emotional involvement in [montage] because of the way the camera showed the scenes. By the close-ups focusing on her--because that's all I was seeing--I really got into the story. More believable, more convincing to me.

Commenting on another scene in the montage this subject said:

I could see her face more clearly, hands on face, the shot. I was really wrapped up, "I was picturing in my mind the scene she was telling about, rather than paying attention to how Mitch was looking or anything else in the scene."

Another person said this about the montage:

I got more emotion being closer to them, I could feel different kinds of vibrations.

**Perception of characters and situation.** Most of the subjects perceived the characters and situation differently in the two versions. The focused interviews revealed that for at least thirteen subjects much of the perceived difference was attributable to the camera distance.
These comments from the interviews illustrate how the style changed these subjects' perceptions of the situation and characters:

Just showing the close-ups seemed more concerned with just the people instead of the scene and how poor she was.

Another person said:

I became aware I was more interested in the people with the close-ups than I was the other way [mise-en-scene].

The styles affect this viewer's overall perception of the characters:

[I] felt less hopelessness about people in [montage] than in [mise-en-scene].

One viewer's perception of Mitch was different for the two styles. He said:

Mitch's character was more fully developed in the montage even though he is not on the screen as much. He was more common. The way he used his mouth and so on. Because of the close-ups, you saw the contrast better.

Another viewer had a change of opinion about Mitch. He put it this way:

I changed my feelings toward Mitch completely. The camera zoomed in on the face and you could see that he had some of the pain, too, and I felt better about how he was feeling about Blanche.
Camera viewpoint

For the purposes of this discussion camera viewpoint refers to the relative mobility of the camera. The camera may view the scene from the mostly fixed vantage point of mise-en-scene, or it may jump around and show the scene from the multiple vantage points of montage. Fifteen people directly or indirectly indicated that camera point of view affected their feelings about the programs. However, it was mentioned only about half as many times as camera distance, which is indicative of its lesser influence on viewers.

The following paraphrasings are typical of the subjects' comments on camera point of view.

Style preference. Subjects tended to have mixed reactions to the single point of view.

One person who expressed a preference for the mise-en-scene style made this comment:

We were sitting back watching one camera at a distance shoot the whole thing. Good that you can see the whole thing like a stage play, but you don't get the close-ups of the facial expressions.

But another person said:

You can do as in [mise-en-scene], use the static human eye approach. It's not active, not an interesting
style. I like a bit more action on the part of the camera.

**Perception of reality.** No subject made a positive comment about the fixed long shot and his perception of the program's realism. This association was conspicuous by its absence. However, a number of subjects thought of mise-en-scene in terms of theatre and one who considered "realistic" to be synonymous with an actual theatre-going experience, thought the mise-en-scene version "more realistic" than the montage version.

Another person alluded to the connection between the theatre and the fixed shot in the sense of a recording. Referring to the mise-en-scene he said:

*It was very much like watching it in a theatre because it was a straight on--fourth wall approach--stable camera. The camera was just the naked eye.*

**Perception of distance.** The camera's point of view was mentioned by at least five people as affecting the way they perceived distance. As illustrated previously this relationship was considered by some to be a positive factor and by others to be a negative factor. For example, this viewer said:

*It's like I was way, way off. I like being able to see a lot, to see the whole room, to see Blanche and Mitch*
at the same time and what was going on and hear the conversation.

Another said:
Showed it in one vision--like in a play. I was aware that I had only one viewing point and you were seeing all of this at once.

Another person said:
I felt farther away from it. I felt removed from the entire scene.

While this subject complained:
"It was very stationary and it didn't add to the scene."

Involvement. Only four subjects related their involvement or lack of involvement with the programs to the camera's point of view.

One interviewee commented:
In [mise-en-scene] you can look around. In [montage] you couldn't do that.

Expressing a contrary reaction to his involvement with the fixed long shot another person said:
Felt like I had to do all the work to bring things together. It [mise-en-scene] was more disruptive, it was grey, no action, no liveliness.

This subject expressed how she felt about the points of view of the two styles:
In mise-en-scene there is no focal point. Your attention is scattered all over the picture. In the montage your attention was focused. What you saw you knew was planned, that someone wanted you to see that for a reason. TV is telling you where to look. It's more pleasurable to see.

Character and situation. The many comments about the influence of the close-up shots on subjects' perceptions of the characters and situation were reported above. Several comments, however, related the perception of character and situation to a fixed camera point of view.

Referring to the mise-en-scene, one subject said: "I liked most that I could see the interplay, more body movement."

A second person described how the long shot affected his impression of the situation. He said:

The long shots showing the drabness of the scene, showed the terrible situation--added to the overall Gestalt.

Another subject compared the cutting of the montage to the more stationary shot of the mise-en-scene. [I was] disturbed by the cutting early in the montage. [I] couldn't see the interplay of the people.

Shot length. Only three people made comments that could be interpreted as attributing any effects to shot
length. For one interviewee, style clearly affected his perception of time in the two versions. His comments reflect how they made a difference to him:

With the shots on people I become more concerned with how this person is right now, rather than putting this person into a longer time frame, which is encouraged by the environment [mise-en-scene].

**Viewer predisposition**

An attempt was made to discover if there were any apparent commonalities among the conceptual frameworks or pre-existing attitudes with which the subjects viewed the test programs. The different ways in which the subjects responded overall to the test programs provided findings which indicated that the viewers were predisposed to and generally responded to one of three aspects of the programs. They tended to respond to:

1. the form, structure and mechanics of the programs,
2. the realism and/or believability of the acting, characters and situation or
3. the characters of the story.

For convenience these groups are labeled: Form, Realism and Humanism, and are comprised of four, six and eight people respectively. The remaining three subjects' responses could not be categorized.
Form

The first group was comprised of four people. They were predisposed to respond to the programs in terms of the way they were staged, the ensemble effects and the acting. They made comparisons between theatre and television techniques. They looked at the programs on a technical level and analyzed the effects of those technical matters, as they perceived them, on the characterizations and interplay of the characters.

The four members of this group did not become emotionally involved with the characters or the plot situation. Neither did they express sympathy or feelings for the people portrayed in the story, and they were aware of the physical and psychological distances. The following paraphrased comments are illustrative.

This interviewee said:

It's going on in a separated module . . . like watching fish through the glass of a tank. They zoomed in too far. Showed too much of Blanche without showing what Mitch was doing. Lost a lot of reaction. Could see her facial expression, which was really good, but the scene wasn't complete--it was just one person. You could have removed the setting . . . to anywhere almost. The involvement is less.
Another made these observations:

Camera work gave a stationary view, a tunnel view. They were acting for the stage instead of television. This was not like a television show . . . it was more like a camera setting on the stage. Stage acting for television [montage] was no good although it was o.k. for the [mise-en-scene].

The fourth person in this group liked to see the interplay of the mise-en-scene and to see the ensembles. He put it this way:

I liked [mise-en-scene] because I could see full bodies and the character relationships. I could see the interplay, more body movement. I like to see "animal tensions" and, the non-verbal communication.

Realism

This group was comprised of six people. Their predisposition was to respond to the test programs in terms of their perception of the believability and realism of the characters and the situation.

They were more concerned with the entire situation than with the individuals in the story. They gave attention to technique and camera work, but only as it affected realism and believability. They tended to be objective and even somewhat analytical about the play and the techniques. Three remained uninvolved and detached from the
story, while the remaining three, felt involved with various aspects of the overall situation.

The first three individuals considered the shots on the basis of whether or not they made the story and characters more believable and more realistic. They expressed little interest in the relationship between the characters. They tended to be objective, impersonal and unsympathetic about the characters.

The following comments are illustrative:

It was "soap opera" because it was so dramatic and so fakey. No way. It's like a play. TV isn't like that.

\[\text{Mise-en-scene}\] made it more unbelievable.

It almost seemed like they were "realer" people, because if you think of it as a theatre, the people are right there.

The other three in this group, who felt a degree of emotional involvement with the story, expressed their feelings in more detail.

About the mise-en-scene one person said:

\[\text{Mise-en-scene}\] has no action . . . like a stage play. Not believable.

He was very aware of the different shots in the montage version and made these comments:

You were more into it, more involved. You weren't separated--like you were right there. The shots made
it more entertaining and exciting.

Another subject referring to the mise-en-scene said: Plays give a feeling of stiffness. [Referring to the montage] you felt more like the characters were real. Felt closer to them, felt more empathy for the situation; more involved with them. During Blanche's monologue you could see her projection into the past. The [mise-en-scene] gives a feeling of separateness, like a play, a tremendous distance.

Humanism

This was the people-oriented group. The eight subjects in this group, perceiving the tapes in terms of the characters, looked at personalities, motives, backgrounds, inter-relationships and other story elements. Considerations of style and camera technique were viewed in terms of how they affected the subjects' perception of the characters and the situation. They made some sharp distinctions between television and theatre, and they saw differences in physical and psychological distances.

There were five in the group who tended to be more analytical in their responses. They observed and were sensitive to the emotion displayed in the story, but expressed less sympathy of their own for the characters and the situation than did the others in the group. The
three remaining subjects were more emotionally involved with the characters and story than were the others.

For example, one person in the first group compared the television performance to the stage. He said:

TV is more intimate and lets you "zero in on the characters." I was able to identify with the people and felt closer to what was going on. The camera brought me closer [psychologically].

Another person said:

We were watching one camera at a distance shoot the whole thing like a play, except if they are going to be close together the camera should be closer in. Blanche and Mitch mentally closer in [mise-en-scene] because I saw his reactions. Mitch was a scummy person. Blanche liked him more in the [mise-en-scene].

The three subjects forming the second group were involved emotionally in the story and had stronger feelings of identification with the characters and situation than others.

Seeing it on TV "hit me hard." [I was] so emotionally involved identifying with Blanche. I liked it. "I can identify with a house like that [in the story]. Paul's house is two rooms. Jesus, I could see me trapped like that."
This subject was interested in the characters and became involved herself. She said:

There was a world of difference—the close-ups, the main focus. It was more dramatic, more believable and more interesting. Feelings about the characters changed. "I was really wrapped up. Wow! This tragedy really happened. She's really suffering from it."

This subject, also sensitive to the characters and the situation, had mixed feelings about the two artistic approaches:

I liked the facial shots, but then wanted to see the other person. Felt so much more power with the camera moving, shifting, coming in. The embrace was too close, I felt uncomfortable.

The close-ups of the montage caused a shift of emphasis for him:

I was more interested in the people with the close-ups. There was different focus in attitude towards people [with the montage]. Blanche and Mitch's problems were not as intense when focusing on the face. "The [mise-en-scene] showed too much destruction."

There were three subjects who did not fit into the categories above. They can be characterized either by their negative response to the programs or their lack of response to the programs. Everything was criticized:
character and plot were found lacking, and visual styles, camera techniques and editing were perceived as distractions. But most responses centered around the failure of the programs to communicate anything of positive interest to the subjects.

One subject was "turned off" by just about everything in the tapes. Another thought the story and situation to be "old fashioned" and just wasn't interested in "that kind of thing." The third could see no difference between the two versions even when differences were pointed out to him by the other member of the group.

One of them put it this way:

I didn't like the programs. Didn't understand them, no plot. Didn't see any relationship between characters and disliked them.

Other Findings

 Viewing and reading

Each subject reported his estimate of the amount of time he spent reading newspapers and books during a week. The subjects' time estimates for each activity were correlated with the styles of their preferred programs.

The amount of time the subjects devoted to reading the newspaper correlated positively with preference for the mise-en-scene version. The Spearman rho (point
There was a significant positive correlation between the amount of time subjects spent reading books and their preference for the montage version. A point biserial correlation of the amount of time spent reading with the preferred version yielded \( \rho = 0.3846 \), significant at .05.

**Tolerance of close-ups**

The focused interviews also revealed that at some point in the programs the viewers considered the shots to be too close. This feeling was indicated by eighteen subjects. Further, the closeness of the shot, at the time it was perceived as too close, varied for each person. For example, one person said:

"When he put his head on her shoulder . . . didn't like it. It [the shot] was too close. Wanted to back away a little . . . to be the same distance at the start of the scene."

Another interviewee expressed his discomfort this way:

"I almost felt like I was in their bedroom with them. I just wanted to be removed from that a little bit. That...

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\(^2\)Ibid., p. 282.
was the only place I felt the camera was getting too close to what was happening . . . I'll move my chair back three or four feet."

At least one person made a conscious connection between the closeness of the shot and the emotional intensity of the scene. He said:

"A longer shot would have been more effective . . . as the kiss was not passionate enough."

Discussion of Results

Major findings

Let us consider the results in terms of the hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is:

The style of a program, whether mise-en-scene or montage, does make a difference to an individual viewer.

The results confirmed the hypothesis in two ways:

1. by demonstrating that every subject had a preference for one or the other of the programs and,
2. by demonstrating that individuals' perceptions of reality, distance, involvement and character were affected by the style of the programs.

Thus, the style of a film or television program does affect the individual's responses to the program.
The second hypothesis was formulated to guide the attempt to answer the question of why a viewer prefers one style over the other. The second hypothesis is:

The production and viewer variables of

1. **camera distance**,  
2. **shot length**,  
3. **camera viewpoint**, and  
4. **viewer predisposition**

are the main variables which, singly or in combination, will affect the individual viewer's

1. **perception of the realism of the scene**,  
2. **perception of his distance from the scene**, and  
3. **sense of involvement with the characters and details of the scene**.

The results confirmed this hypothesis. There was substantial evidence to support the contention that the style differences, together with the predisposition of the viewer, affect his response to programs.

Production variables

The three style variables were cited by subjects, either directly or indirectly, as an explanation for their particular response to a program. (1) The variable of camera distance (shot size) was the reason most often given and was the most influential factor. As such it has the greater effect on a viewer's perception of the degree
of realism and distance from a scene, as well as his feeling of involvement with the characters and their situation. (2) The variable of camera viewpoint was mentioned second most often and has a moderate influence on viewers. (3) The variable of shot length was mentioned the fewest number of times and is the least important factor.

These results indicate that: (1) the use of close-ups or long shots (camera distance) is by far the most influential factor affecting an individual viewer's response to a program, and (2) the representation of space (through camera distance and viewpoint) is of much greater importance to a viewer than is the representation of time (through shot length).

Predisposition variables

The results also showed that the variable of viewer predisposition did have an effect on the way a viewer responded to the programs. Further, three components of predisposition were identified and found to be operating in this study. They are: Form, Realism and Humanism. The hypothesis is further supported by results which indicate that the predisposition variables interact in a complex way with the production variables. However, the viewer's predisposition tended to remain constant over both programs. Thus, the synergistic effect of the complex
interaction produces an effect in the viewer.

This means a person is likely to approach a program oriented to look at it in terms of either form, realism or humanism. The resulting interaction of his predisposition with the style of the program ultimately influences the viewer's response to the program. This interaction is a partial explanation for the seemingly erratic viewer response to variations of production styles discussed in Chapters I and II.

This fact, that the complex interaction of several elements results in individuals' being affected in different ways by similar production factors, may help to explain why group effects are not readily achieved through manipulating production variables--the viewers' responses cancel each other.

Other findings

Viewing and reading

The results show a significantly positive correlation between preference for mise-en-scene and reading newspapers, and preference for montage and reading books. This indicates that the correlated activities tend to go together in individuals.
CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS

The question posed in this study is whether or not the styles of mise-en-scene and montage make any difference to an individual viewer.

The results indicate that individual viewers have definite preferences between the styles of mise-en-scene and montage. Evidence exists that several interrelated factors influence these preferences: most important, perhaps, is the viewer's individual predisposition to perceive in a particular way. Some viewers are predisposed to respond to the form of the program, some to its realism, and some to its human elements, and which factor a viewer was prone to respond to would not necessarily predict whether he would prefer mise-en-scene or montage.

But interacting with the viewers' predisposition were production factors which did influence the viewers' perceptions:

**Shot size**, the most important technical difference between mise-en-scene and montage, had the most important stylistic influence on viewer perceptions and preferences.
As the shots became closer, viewers who liked the montage tended to perceive the action as more real, to perceive the characters more sympathetically, and to become more involved with the story.

However, if the close-up is overdone, it may prove distracting or irritating to the viewer.

Because of its importance, the implications of variations in shot size will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

Interaction of variables with viewer predispositions

In the discussion of the implications of this study's results, it becomes increasingly clear that the effects of the variables are, in large part, a result of their interacting with one another. The subjects' choices of differing styles were not caused by random selection; the viewers were positive about their preferences and gave reasons for their choices. The logical reason for their differing choices is that different people like different things, and respond in different ways to the same stimuli. Accordingly, future research might consider Q analysis as an appropriate method of investigation. For example, several people responded quite differently to the same portion of the scene in which Blanche delivers a monologue describing her young husband and the events leading to
his death.

In referring to the montage version subjects had these comments:

The scene wasn't complete . . . and you could have removed the setting from where it was to anywhere almost.

She could stand in front of a mike and give her lines.

"Could have put them in the woods, because they didn't show the set. It could have been anywhere." [I] couldn't relate to her, she was too close. I didn't like Mitch being left out. [It was] like she was talking to nobody.

Still referring to the montage version of that scene these subjects came away with quite different feelings about the situation.

From seeing her up close, it struck me that she was really thinking that she was almost there again--when her husband . . . you could see her projection in the past just from the look on her face.

"I was picturing in my mind the scene she was telling about . . . ."

I "liked that you could get the idea that she was not talking to him during the monologue, that she was some place else, because you couldn't see him [Mitch] at all. She was just talking, dreaming."

Conflicting comments like these are not uncommon among groups of persons discussing movies or television
programs. It seems evident that differences among the viewers affect the ways they respond.

What factors comprise a viewer's predisposition?

In formulating this study, it was hypothesized that viewer variables would have some effect on whether or not style makes a difference. The testing instrument included demographic variables such as the age, sex, and education of the subjects, but when these were compared with their style preferences, no patterns were found. The commonalities that were found were among the viewers' predispositions, that is the frames of reference from which they viewed the programs.

While the twenty-one different viewer responses could be roughly placed into the three categories of predispositions to respond to form, realism, or humanism, it is expected that a number of factors within an individual will determine which of these he responds to.

Motivation. Why a person wants to look at a particular program, the needs, conscious or unconscious, that he expects it to fill, would comprise his motivation for watching that program.

Attitude. The particular emotional set that the viewer has when he sees a program will affect his response. For example, if he is feeling negative, he will probably
find a great deal wrong with the program: his negative attitude will produce a negative response.

**Previous Media Experiences.** Viewers also respond in terms of their previous experiences with the medium they are viewing, or with another medium they perceive as similar, such as theatre and motion pictures. Those who saw the mise-en-scene as a televised play made comparisons to live theatre; those who perceived the montage as televised film made cinematic comparisons.

Viewers will tend to lump various factors of medium, technique, and form together and make comparisons across those factors, without categorizing the programs. The subjects of this study made such cross style-media associations:

Shots were kind of soap operish, not like you would see in the movies.

Reminds me of the soap opera because all soap operas are on video tape.

A viewer is likely to judge the program in terms of style, form, or content, but to describe it in terms of the medium, using the name of the medium loosely to represent a whole complex of stylistic, formal, and content meanings.
Camera distance—the key technical variable

The distance of the camera from the scene was the stylistic variable that had the greatest influence on the viewers' preferences and perceptions. The use of close-ups intensified the object and the experience for the viewers for a number of reasons:

1. Close-ups direct and focus the viewer's attention to details.
2. Close-ups exclude other details that might distract the viewer.
3. Close-ups magnify details and in so doing give them greater importance.
4. This magnification interacts with factors in the physical viewing situation to determine the actual size of the image the viewer watches; the image size does have some influence on the viewer's perception of the program.

All of these factors worked together to influence a phenomenon called viewer involvement. The closer the viewer perceives himself to be to the scene and the more realistic he perceives the scene to be, the more he feels involved with what is happening and the more he becomes involved. Viewers who preferred the montage scene considered it to be more realistic, more believable, and more lifelike, more "like you were right in the room with them" than the
mise-en-scene.

Actual image size was a factor here, because it affects the viewers' perceived physical distance from the scene. This perceived distance prompted such comments as "they were across the room on a couch" and "I wanted to push them back a little."

At this point the results seem to conflict with the opinions of the critic Bazin, who, as mentioned in Chapter II, considered film to be an extension of the theatre. He took the position that mise-en-scene with its one fixed long shot of staged action is closer to reality than montage with its close-ups and fragmentation of space. The few subjects who thought mise-en-scene to be more realistic did indeed compare it with a stage performance. However, the majority of the subjects considered the montage to be more realistic. They evidently based their evaluation not on whether the style resembled the reality of the theatre, but on whether it made them feel involved with the action, so that they perceived the action as "real" because they were part of it.

The limits of distance

Some of the subjects didn't want to be close, or involved, or to perceive things realistically, preferring

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1Bazin, vol. 1, p. 35-36.
to back away, to be detached and uninvolved. These subjects tended to prefer mise-en-scene. But even subjects who liked close-ups had limits to their preferences: evidently, the tension generated in the content and the closeness of the shot must be in balance, supportive of each other, congruent. Within any given content is an apparent limit to how close a shot can be. If the limit, which varies among viewers, is exceeded, the viewer disengages from the program. Three main factors appear to determine the limits of shot tolerance.

Emotional level. The greater the emotional content of the scene, the closer (tighter) the shot can be and remain acceptable to the viewer.

Involvement-identification. The more the viewer becomes involved with the program, the more he is predisposed to be involved, the greater will be his tolerance of close shots.

Photography. Also significant is the photographic effectiveness of the shot.

Behavior common to viewing and reading

There was a significant correlation between subjects' preference for style and their reading habits.

A way to explain these correlations is to examine the kinds of behavior one displays when reading and when watching. Reading newspapers and reading books require
different behaviors.

Both in the mise-en-scene program and on the newspaper page a person has a wide view of a panorama of visual information. On the pages of the newspaper there are numerous stories, headlines and pictures—all competing for attention. The reader glances at the whole page, then skips to and fro reading a story here, looking at a photograph there. He focuses in on this detail and ignores that one. Further, as he works his way through the newspaper, he jumps back and forth through the pages, even skipping some of them entirely. The reader takes an active role in reading. Just as in the experience of viewing the mise-en-scene style, reading the newspaper is a rather unstructured and random access type of experience. A person's affinity for this kind of situation and behavior provides a link between these two activities.

The same kind of argument can be made for the similar behavior required for reading a book or watching montage. In a book, whether it is a novel or not, the information is presented in a linear fashion: left to right, top to bottom, front to back. The ordering of the material is done by the author and the details are selected by the author. The reader does not have the freedom to select or order materials of the book. The reader takes, in this sense, a passive role. It is rigidly structured and
Preference of style and ETV

Reid and MacLennan have observed that in studies of effect of manipulation of film and television production variables on learning, most have failed to produce a significant effect. (Relevant studies were reviewed in Chapter II.) However, as one who has produced a number of instructional films and television programs I must concur with Reid and MacLennan who point out:

"there is not the slightest doubt that suitable films stimulate learning and the way in which films are produced can influence the degree of learning. On the other hand, it would appear that no techniques have yet been discovered for consistently producing large and significant differences in learning."2

The findings of this study may provide a partial solution to the puzzle. Production techniques can make a difference to the individual, however, they may be influencing the students in different directions, canceling each other out, and thus, not be apparent in tests which measure for group effects. This may suggest that instead of attempting to produce a single film or television program for all students that multiple versions of each film be made, perhaps one in mise-en-scene and one in montage, so that, they can be made to be more effective with subgroups or individuals.

Throughout this discussion we have been attempting to

2Reid and MacLennan, p. 15.
point out, both directly and by implication, that the several factors which have been identified from the literature, from this study, and from personal experience and observation are intertwined and interact in a complex way. Their relationship does not lend itself to a simple explanation. As the technology of communication continues to become increasingly sophisticated it provides the producer tools for more complicated program styles and forms. The walls that separate the traditional media are eroding so that the once distinguishable media of film, television and theatre, are losing their identities. For example, movies are shown on television, television is projected in theatres, television production techniques are applied to film and film production techniques are applied to video tape, and it is all available in a form so that it can be played in any living room on a tape machine or record player.

Thus, the variables of style and the viewer, which have been investigated here need to be considered with other variables from this complex situation so that it can be examined and we can attempt to understand it in its complexity. It is with this in mind that the following discussion of a communication subsystem is presented with the hope that it will provide a basis for understanding the complexity of the situation and suggest avenues for future research.
Dimensions of a Communication Subsystem

Although the empirical evidence of this study is limited to specific audience-style relationships, it is indicative of a much broader framework of many interrelated variables. This discussion attempts to lay the groundwork to facilitate treatment of a complex system of variables by identifying its major dimensions and interrelationships.

This suggested communication subsystem is one in which the main interests lie in the interaction of the visual styles of mise-en-scene and montage, with the viewer's conceptual framework and perceptions, the content of the program, and the message channel. Several assumptions about the nature of those dimensions and communications events are implicit throughout this discussion.

First, the relation of visual style to a communication event is not simple. A number of factors, of which visual style is only one, interact with and modify one another. Much of the richness of the communication experience comes from that complexity. These complex communication events cannot be simplified and remain meaningful. Instead they need to be examined and understood in their complexity.

Second, this kind of communication act is a dynamic event that takes place on a time continuum. The parts of
the event are viewed in sequence so that the entire event, as a sum of its parts, is experienced within a time frame. It is a dynamic event because the images and their relationships, within and between, are constantly changing. Each instant of time provides the opportunity for different relationships to exist. In contrast, the content of a painting, for example, is not time bound. The content is always there in its entirety. Further, the ways in which the dimensions of the communication act overlie and interact are continually changing. The events discussed here grow out of this dynamic process.

Third, the dimensions of the communication event should be viewed as being continuous—not dichotomous—and capable of representing a wide range of conditions.

Fourth, the concept of visual communication discussed here is concerned with a specialized area of a more generalized conceptualization of communication events such as that designed by Wayne Brockriede.3

Fifth, the message is mediated by a series of technical devices. Typically, these technical devices would be those associated with the media of television or film. The message flow is typically unidirectional, and any feedback

is delayed and indirect.

And last, the content is limited to dramatic type program materials.

The findings of this study and the personal experiences of the author point to four dimensions as the primary operators in this system: the viewer, the style, the content and the channel.

The viewer

The dimensions of the viewer relate to his own internal structure of concepts, his external relationships with the other dimensions and the combination of the two.

Motivating forces

First, the individual has certain wants and needs which he seeks to satisfy. These function as motivating forces which prompt a person to seek out or participate in some kind of a communication activity in an effort to satisfy those wants and needs. The traditional purposes of communication—to inform, to persuade and to entertain—can be the objective of the viewer's quest. However, considering these purposes to be clear cut categories is an oversimplification of both the viewer's objective and the nature of the communication event.
Expectations

A viewer has expectations about the way in which a communication event will contribute to fulfilling his wants and needs. He makes choices based upon his judgments of the worth of a particular event according to the expectations he has for that particular event at that point in time. The viewer's expectations for a particular event are related to its content, style and channel, and may or may not be met to some degree.

Predisposition

This dimension is the frame of reference the viewer brings to bear when watching a program. The data in this study suggest that there are at least three distinguishable categories of viewer predisposition. The viewer, using his frame of reference, selects certain aspects of the communication event for attention, and evaluation aspects are related to form, realism, and people.

Likes--dislikes

This evaluative dimension crosses and interacts with the other dimensions.

Tolerance

The tolerance dimension is closely akin to the like-dislike dimension. It is the viewer's willingness or
unwillingness to accept dimensions and factors pertaining to the communication event or the event itself. Within the extremes of this continuum are ranges of acceptance, rejection and non-commitment. Non-commitment is the range in which the viewer doesn't know enough to care enough about the event to have formed an opinion.\(^4\)

This dimension was operating with a number of variables in this study. One, of course was the factor of camera distance with the close-ups. A subject for whom the closeness limit was exceeded said: "Wow! Let me out of here."

Another was with the believability factor. Such comments as: "She's so fakey" indicated that the limit of the tolerance dimension had been reached.

**Perceptions**

The meanings are in the viewers not in the images. The viewer's perceptions are a major dimension in this interacting system. The viewer's perception of the event is the ultimate determinate of the response to the communication. The concerns here are the ways in which a person perceives reality, time and distance.

**Reality.** The dimension of reality operates on more than one level. Because this communication subsystem interposes a technologically based medium between the event being depicted and the depiction, the communication event

\(^4\)There is a similarity between this dimension and Brockriede's dimension of persuasibility (p. 5).
is an abstraction of the original. (1) The depiction creates to a greater or lesser extent an illusion of reality in the mind of the viewer. (2) The viewer selects different aspects of the depiction for attention. These were demonstrated to be important factors in this study by the data. Further, the viewer's perception of the reality of the communication event can be different for different aspects of the depiction simultaneously. For example, the characters in a story may be perceived as being very real, while the story itself is perceived as being very unreal. The dimension of perceived reality interacts across all levels, from the event being portrayed, through the depiction, to the communication event.

**Time.** The dimension of perceived time is closely related to perceived reality and the time factors of the style dimension. Perceived time refers to either the quantity of time—how much time elapses during an occurrence—or the period of time—when the event occurred (yesterday, in the late 1700's, or whenever).

The major aspects of this time dimension are the perceived time of original event, the perceived time in the portrayal or depiction of that event and the perceived time of the communication act.

In general the temporal relationships were not mentioned by the subjects. Referring to the montage, one
interviewee expressed the idea of the camera breaking the unity of time. He wanted to see a flashback of the suicide scene. Two subjects provided themselves with their own mental flashback of the scene.

One commented:

I thought that in the [montage] they'd go on location and show the whole thing that happened.

The viewer dimensions of perception of time and space are important to theorists like Bazin and Kuleshov and were discussed in Chapters I and II. They are also real considerations with which the practicing film maker must deal. The improved technologies of film and television are influencing these perceptions too, by permitting their manipulation and distortion to such an extent that a viewer can easily be fooled. Instant replays on television, live pictures from the moon, studio simulations of the moon's surface, and very realistic film special effects are illustrative of the technology. Words such as "replay," "live," and "simulation" superimposed on the screen are illustrative of the potential misperception of these dimensions.

Space. In this context a person's perception of space refers to (1) the place, the setting, the "where" of the depiction and (2) the way a person perceived relationships of the elements within the scene. These perceptions are
closely related to the style of the depiction.

In this study the interviewees confirmed there was a difference in their perceptions of spatial relationships portrayed in the two tapes. However, in this instance the concern with the continuities of space and time was minor. The viewers' concern with the representation of space was not so much with its continuousness or wholeness, but with the distance.

Distance. Perceived distance is of two general forms, physical and psychological. Physical distance, primarily one of spatial relationships, is a combination of the perceived and actual distances from the channel associated elements of the communication event—for example, the distance of the viewer to the screen and the perceived distance of the event behind the screen. In combination, these two factors provide the viewer with an overall sense of physical distance from the event being portrayed.

One interviewee perceived his distance from the characters in terms of being in the same room with them. He said:

It's like you're in the living room sitting on the couch and they're on the other side of the room.

The second form of perceived distance is the psychological distance between the viewer and the characters and events of the content. A viewer can feel "close" to a
character or situation. This perceived "closeness" may result from a likable character, or a feeling of empathy for a character, or a sense of similarity between the character and the viewer. The dimensions of perceived reality of time and distance interrelate very strongly with dimensions of style, content and channel.

Involvement

This dimension interacts with the other characteristics of viewer and with style, content and channel in such a way that it becomes a kind of viewer "concentration" dimension. It is the degree to which a viewer is "caught up" in or remains detached from the communication event. The data showed that this dimension interacts very strongly with the style dimensions of camera distance. One person said:

The close-ups made you feel closer to the character. I felt more empathetic for her . . . more empathetic for the situation she was in.

Personal identification

The degree to which a person perceives similarities between himself and people in the story, or between situations in which he has been and situations in the story, is represented by the personal identification dimension. The closely related dimensions of distance and involvement
combine with the dimension of personal identification and are factors in generating the viewer's emotional and physical responses to the communication event (i.e., feelings of love, sympathy, hate, disgust, and laughing, crying or walking out).

This factor was operating in this study when one person said:

I could see myself trapped like that.

Viewer differences and similarities

The two aspects of this dimension, can be posed as questions. First, do an individual viewer's wants, needs, attitudes, perceptions, and responses remain constant or change within and between communication events? Second, what similarities or differences are there among a number of individuals participating in the same communication event?

Media behavior patterns

The last dimension of the viewer is media behavior patterns. A person brings certain behavior patterns into play when he engages in a communication event. These are psycho-physical behavior patterns that relate to (1) the individual and (2) the event. For example, the findings of this study, discussed earlier, indicated a similarity
between viewing patterns associated with some visual styles and reading some print media.

**Style**

Although the term "style" is applied broadly to all elements of content, here it is limited to identify those variables associated with description of the visual style continuum of mise-en-scene and montage. The four variables of style which interrelate with the viewer, the content, and the medium are time, space, photography and editing.

**Time**

In this system we are considering the dimension of time as it applies to the television or film medium. There are three kinds of time operating: clock time, depicted time and perceived time. First, there is the elapsed clock time during the period when the event is being recorded and the elapsed clock time during the period when the depiction is being viewed. Second, through the use of performance, camera and editorial devices, there is the story time, the time depicted as having passed during the program, which can range from zero to infinity. Third is the viewer's perception of the time of the event, the time of the communication act itself and the depicted time.
Space

The dimension of space is closely interwoven with the time dimension. The variables are similar and include the true physical space, the depiction of space and the viewer's perception of those spaces. First is the actual space of the event (the physical space that is recorded by the camera) and the actual physical space occupied by that event on the television or movie screen. Second, there is depicted space; that is, the illusion of space created through the use of performance, camera and editorial devices. Third is the viewer's perception of the space physically occupied by the event, the physical space of the images, and the space depicted by the communication act.

The dimensions of time and space also operate across and interrelate with the viewer dimensions of reality, distance and involvement.

Photography

The camera dimension is tightly interrelated to the other dimensions in this system. There are numerous factors involved in the photographing of an event: image tone, contrast, color, texture and so on. However, the important camera dimensions associated with the stylistic differences between mise-en-scene and montage identified by theorists, experience and this study are camera movement,
closeness of shots and depth of field.

Camera movement. This dimension contains two variables: first, the nature of the camera movement, whether a pan, a dolly, or a smooth or a sudden change of position and, second, the amount of movement.

Closeness of shots. This dimension may vary from a close-up, covering a relatively small area of the scene, to a long shot in which a relatively large area is shown. As one of the primary factors of style, shot closeness has an intrinsic relationship with all of the other dimensions in this system. However, it is also deeply interwoven with the viewer dimensions of reality, distance, and tolerance, and with the content dimension of intensity.

Depth of field. The depth of field dimension ranges from deep focus shots, with everything in sharp focus, to selective focus shots with all but one image detail out of focus. This factor is also related to viewer dimensions of reality and distance.

Editing

Personal experience with film making permits the identification of two main aspects of the editorial dimension. The first aspect is shot selection. Through the editorial process the images are selected for the viewer. There are two factors involved in shot selection: (1) the
determination of which shots are to be used and (2) whether the viewer or the editor selects them.

The second editorial dimension is shot length. The mise-en-scene is associated with lengthy shots and montage with short shots. As a major dimension of style, the editorial dimension interacts with the dimensions of viewer, content, and channel.

**Content**

Content is the third part of the dynamic interaction of viewer, style, content and medium.

The dimensions of content are form, story, performance, setting and emotional intensity.

**Form**

This dimension of content describes the kind of treatment given to the content, whether it is a documentary, a musical, a drama or some other genre. In this discussion the content is in the dramatic form.

**Story**

The story dimension has two major variables. The first is plot, which includes the thread of action and the situation in which that action is carried out. The second variable is characterization. The way in which the characters are conceived and portrayed interacts with the dimensions of style and viewer. These were demonstrated
to be important variables in the present study.

Performance

This dimension interacts with, and can be constrained by, factors of style and medium. It also operates in relation to the evaluative and perceptual dimensions of the viewer.

Setting

This factor is the physical environment of the event being depicted and includes such aspects as the scenery, lighting, costumes and make-up.

Emotional level

The last major dimension of content is its emotional level or emotional intensity, which can be low or high. It might be more accurate to designate this dimension as intended emotional intensity. Factors of story and style, and particularly the closeness of the shot, interact with viewer variables to create a perceived sense of emotional intensity.

Channel

There are two major dimensions of the channel in this system; first, the medium—the technology-based transmission aspects and second, the viewing situation—the conditions under which the communication event is consumed. These dimensions of the communication subsystem have been
identified through personal observation and experience.

Medium

There are two dimensions of the medium that interact with the content, the style and the viewer—technical parameters and media transparency.

Technical parameters. The first technical dimension is the image size, whether it is large or small. The second dimension is the shape of the image: square, round, wide and so on. The third dimension is the perspective depicted in the image. This is a function of the distance of the camera from the object being photographed and the angle of the lens. Image resolution is the fourth dimension. This is more accurately referred to by the technical term "modulation transfer function": it expresses the amount of clarity of the picture. This dimension is closely related to the style dimension of shot closeness and the viewer dimensions of perceived reality and distance. The fifth dimension is color. Usually, this factor is thought of as being dichotomous, either black and white or color. However, this is an oversimplification and color should be considered to range from zero saturation (black and white) upward. The next dimension is the dimensionality

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5Eastman Kodak Co., Motion Picture Films for Professional Use (Rochester: Eastman Kodak Co.), p. 9.
of the image itself, the degree to which three dimensional space is represented technically. Is it represented by a flat or stereoscopic image? The last technical dimension is sound fidelity.

**Transparency.** Closely related to the technical dimension, the second dimension of medium is media transparency. To what extent does the medium interfere with or distract from the content? When a medium is perfectly transparent it does not diminish the fidelity of the content in the least. No medium is perfectly transparent, but the degrees of transparency can range from "very little distortion" to total obliteration of the content. This dimension is closely related to the viewer dimensions of involvement and perceived reality.

These dimensions of medium operate across style, content and the viewer.

**Viewing situation**

This dimension of the channel has two major groups of variables: those factors relating to reproduction of the image and sound, and those factors relating to the physical environment.

**Reproduction.** Although this dimension is limited by the technical nature of the medium itself, there are five main variables associated with the reproduction of the medium. One is the size of the reproduced image, another
is the brightness of the image, and third is its quality. The fourth variable is the sound fidelity and the last is the sound volume.

Physical environment. There are three major dimensions of the physical viewing environment. The first is the physical relationship of the viewer and the screen. This factor relates to the size of the image, the perspective of the camera, the resolution of the image, and the viewer's perceptions of distance, reality and involvement. The second dimension is the number, kinds and intensity of distractions associated with a particular viewing situation.

The third dimension of the physical environment is the physical comfort of the viewer. Such factors as climate and seating facilities are included in this dimension.

The dimensions of the viewing situation interact primarily with the viewer dimensions.

The reader who has threaded his way through the intertwining mazes of this subsystem begins to understand the complexities that must be dealt with when one attempts to sort out which influences do what to whom in the medium-viewer relationship. Very little research has been done in this area, but the field is fascinating. With the growing technological sophistication of communications
media, it becomes increasingly necessary that ways of understanding and analyzing what happens in a communications event be found, and that methods of predicting the effect of media styles and techniques on a given viewer or audience be explored. This study, which has been concentrated on the effects of two styles on an individual viewer, leads to interesting implications both for exploration by researchers and for consideration by working producers.

Implications for research

We need to know more about the variables in the viewer dimension and their relation to the rest of the subsystem.

For example, although three areas of predisposition have been identified in this study, there may be more, and if so, we need to know what they are and whether or not one aspect is more influential than another, as they interact with style, content and medium.

The viewer's perception of distance as a function of shot size is another variable which warrants further study. We know that it is also related to the perceived realism and involvement, but the exact nature of the relationship is not clear. What are its intricacies and how are they related? Is there a cause and effect relation between them?
Another result of the use of close-ups was the fact that viewers would at some point perceive close-ups to be "too close" and reject them. This suggests the need for an investigation of the concept of the viewer's tolerance of close-ups as they relate to the intensity of program content. Still or moving images of material representing different amounts of content intensity could be depicted through a range of shots from very wide to very tight. The study would seek to discover patterns among content, shot size and tolerance.

It was found that the viewer's sense of realism tended to increase as the shot moved into a close-up. The subsystem suggests that the physical viewing situation as a factor of the medium dimension may be interacting with the style variable of camera distance. One might hypothesize that when the image size approaches life size, from the viewer's perspective, the sense of realism is the greatest. An experimental design in which viewer perspective and image size are varied could test the hypothesis.

The variables in the physical viewing situation offer a number of intriguing possibilities for investigation. The possible interaction of the dimension of predisposition with actual image size is an example.

One can speculate that a viewer's predisposition will condition what will be the most comfortable distance in a
particular situation. Perhaps the viewer who feels potentially threatened by a viewing experience will tend to sit farther away from the screen (whether television or motion picture) while the viewer who seeks an emotional experience (such as being frightened or having a good cry) will sit closer to the screen. An experiment in which the viewer controls the viewing distance and the actual size of the image will give him the opportunity to "push it away."

Another interesting avenue of research would be to explore some of the physiological processes associated with viewing programs by using eye movement research techniques. Here, the eye movements (actually fixations) of persons viewing materials prepared in the styles of mise-en-scene and montage would be recorded and analyzed to discover if there are any characteristic eye movements associated with either of the two styles. Potentially, this might provide some insights into the questions surrounding shot selection and editing.

**Implications for producers**

Many of the findings of this study have practical implications for producers of television programs and films.

An important finding for program producers is that viewers are not alike. Because each member of an audience watches a program from his own personal point of view, the producer should look at an audience as a number of
groups of individuals. These groupings are not made on the usual demographic bases of age, education, sex, etc., but rather are based on the ways in which the viewers interact with and respond to the programs.

For a producer a rather important difference in effect between mise-en-scene and montage is the difference in a viewer's perception of distance. For example, this sense of distance is closely associated with the viewer's feelings of involvement with the story. A producer wishing to keep his audience at a distance from the story and characters, to keep them somewhat uninvolved, should use long shots and long takes approximating mise-en-scene to "disengage" the audience from the action. The producer who is tempted to use many close-ups should keep in mind that some people don't want to become involved with the program and prefer to remain at a distance.

The style affects how the viewers respond to characters. The montage with its close-ups tends to yield a more realistic, more human character, which viewers find easier to respond to emotionally. When a producer wants to intensify the emotional feelings and involvement of a viewer with a character he should use more close-ups. However, close-ups should not be over-used indiscriminately, as the tension--building effect can boomerang. The producer needs to be judicious in his use of close-ups,
as the tolerance varies widely among viewers.

The data in this study show that viewers take an active role in watching mise-en-scene. The "select" and "edit" their own shots. For the producer using mise-en-scene, this is a two-edged sword, because the viewers may be missing what he wants them to see. However, if he wishes to take that risk, he can provide the viewers with a more free and interesting viewing experience. If the producer does not wish to take that risk, he should use montage, showing his audience what he wants them to see in the order in which he wants them to see it.

The mise-en-scene style shows large portions of the set and lets the viewer see the totality of the setting. However, this wholeness is lost in close-ups. Therefore, special care must be taken in the design of the sets for montage so that meaningful fragments are included in the background of shots.

Primarily due to the effects of the close-up, differences in acting, costuming and make-up are required for the two styles. These elements need to be more restrained in montage than in mise-en-scene.

The producer should always keep in mind the importance of the quality of the story and content of the program. Although it was not a specific topic of study, this fact was constantly re-emphasized during the interviews. A good
story is as important as style and technique.

Finally, the producer should remember that terms such as mise-en-scene and montage are invented labels for arbitrary classifications of production techniques.

Viewers don't see programs in terms of style or technique; rather, they perceive a blend of style, technique, story, acting, camera work, editing, and so on, as a total viewing experience.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not the styles of mise-en-scene or montage do make a difference to a viewer.

It was hypothesized that:

First hypothesis. The style of a program, whether mise-en-scene or montage, does make a difference to an individual viewer.

Second hypothesis. The production and viewer variables of

1. camera distance (includes long shots or close-ups and deep or shallow focus)
2. shot length (long takes or short takes)
3. camera viewpoint (fixed or changing), and
4. viewer predisposition (pre-existing attitudes)

are the main variables which, singly or in combination, will affect the individual viewer's
1. perception of the realism (reality) of the scene
2. perception of his distance from the scene, and
3. sense of involvement with the characters and details of the scene.

For this study a short segment of an established dramatic work was chosen as the test stimulus. Two versions of the scene were produced on video tape in black and white. One was in the style of the mise-en-scene and the other was in the montage style.

Focused interviews were used to gather data from the subjects. A semantic differential instrument was also used but did not yield any useful data.

The test programs were viewed in the same physical setting by small groups of two or three and by individuals. Subjects provided personal and demographic data via a questionnaire. They then watched one of the test versions, completed a semantic differential, participated in a short interview, viewed the other version of the program, completed a semantic differential, and took part in a focused interview. The viewing experiences were discussed at great length in the focused interview. Of the subjects interviewed, twenty-one (eleven males and ten females) were used in the final study.

The findings of the study indicated that a viewer's relationship to a program style is a complex one with
with several interacting factors. This complex communication event was conceptualized as a communication system with four major interrelated dimensions: viewer, style, content and channel. These dimensions were discussed in terms of their interrelatedness and interdependence in a communication subsystem. The conceptual framework provided by the subsystem can serve as a base for further explorations and for understanding audience-program relationships.

The major findings were:

1. The style of a program does make a difference to the individual viewer.

2. Subjects tend to look at three broad aspects of programs: form, realism, and people. They focus on (1) the aspects of form and structure, (2) the realism and believability of characters and situations, and (3) their own concern, involvement and feeling for the characters.

3. Camera distance is the main stylistic difference between mise-en-scene and montage.

4. There is a relationship between the closeness or distance of shots and the degree of realism perceived by the viewer.

5. Close-ups increase the viewer's feelings of involvement with the characters and situation.
6. The viewer's perceived distance from the scene is a major factor in his response to a program.

7. All viewers do not wish to become emotionally involved in programs. Many wish to remain at a distance from the story.

8. There is a shift in viewer perception of characters and story situation from one version to another that is attributable to shot size.

9. Close-ups can be too close and cause the viewer to be distracted from and/or reject the content. Close-ups can boomerang.

10. There appears to be a kind of information gathering, scanning and retrieval behavior common to both programs in the style of the mise-en-scene and reading a newspaper. A different kind of behavior pattern appears to link watching montage programs and reading books.

Most important, this study indicates the complexity of the factors involved in trying to determine the effect of any one element of style or technology on viewer responses, and presents a model subsystem that should be useful in analyzing the parts of the viewer-media situation. Our society's growing dependence on mass communication for both education and entertainment makes it imperative that we understand how these complicated factors work together.
to produce their effects in the minds of individual viewers, and how the minds of viewers varyingly perceive the same communications event.
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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

REMEMBER TO:

1. Direct **attention** to television **tapes**.
2. Have Ss **specify** the **parts** they noticed.
3. Have Ss describe their responses to those **parts**.

**(SHOW 1ST TAPE)**

**(ADMINISTER SD)**

Think back to the television program you just saw.

1. **What stood out** most in your mind? Tell me about how you **felt** there.
2. **Still thinking back** to the television program—what **other** things stood out? How did you **feel** there?
3. (CONTINUE TO REPEAT AND EXPLORE AS IN NO. 2, ABOVE).
4. (AFTER 5 MINS. OR SO AND/OR THE MAJOR IMPRESSIONS AND FEELINGS HAVE BEEN EXPLORED—**SHOW 2ND TAPE**).
5. **(ADMINISTER SD)**

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6. Thinking back to the television program you just saw--
   What stood out most in your mind?
   Tell me how you felt there.

7. Still thinking back to the television tape you just saw last--
   What other things stood out?
   How did you feel there?

8. (CONTINUE TO REPEAT AND EXPLORE AS IN NO. 7, ABOVE).
   (If subjects do not mention on their own--ask:)

9. Compare how you felt about the first program with how you felt about the second one.

10. In the 1st tape, what kind of a person did you think Blanche was?

11. What kind of a person was she in the second tape?

12. What were your feelings about her in the two versions? Why? (IF NEEDED--
    What other characters on TV or in the movies do you know like this?
    Describe someone just the opposite--a character or someone you know.)

13. Remember Mitch in the first tape. What kind of a person was he?
14. What kind of a person did you think Mitch was in the last tape?

15. Compare your feelings about Mitch in the two programs. Why did you feel that way?

16. What was the relationship between Blanche and Mitch in the first television tape? What made you think that?

17. Think now about the second version--what was their (Blanche & Mitch) relationship in that one? Why did you think so?

18. Think back to how you responded to their relationship in the two versions--what did you feel about their relationship? What made you feel that way?

19. Recall how you felt when Blanche was telling Mitch about Stanley and the bathroom door. What did you feel during that part in the first program? In the second one? Why?

20. Remember the part where Blanche says "that man will be my executioner?" and Mitch comes over to her and then asks her, "How old are you?" What did you feel during that part in the first tape? During the second version? Why?
21. How did you feel when Blanche told her story? During the first one? During the second one? Why?


23. Remember the last part of the television tapes where they embraced? How did you feel about that part in the first one? Second one? Why?

24. How did the way the camera showed the dramatic scene in the two versions affect the way you felt about them? Why?

(LET SUBJECTS DESCRIBE THE CAMERA TECHNIQUE IN THEIR OWN WORDS).

25. Did you prefer one version over the other? If so, which one did you like the best?

26. In the (MISE-EN-SCENE--USE THEIR WORDS TO DESCRIBE IT) version what did you find yourself looking at? Specify the place. What proportion of attention on what things?

27. In the (MONTAGE--USE THEIR WORDS) version what did you look at? At the time how did you feel about that? (HAVING ATTENTION DIRECTED BY THE CAMERA).
28. Did the camera move around any during these programs? How did you feel about that moving? Did it move in the (MISE-EN-SCENE) version? Where? How did you feel about that? Why?

29. Tell me about how you felt about the pacing (or speed) of these television programs? What was it about them that made you feel that way? (That one of them was faster).

30. What about the length of the two programs? Did one of them seem longer than the other? Which one? Why did you feel that it was longer?

31. As you were watching these programs--did you feel like anything was missing? What? Where? Why?
APPENDIX B

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS

After you have seen both TV tapes we'll discuss them.

Please fill out the first page of the questionnaire and then I'll explain the rest of the packet to you.

SUBJECTS FILL OUT QUESTIONNAIRE

HAND OUT SAMPLE SHEET OF SD SCALES

Now about the rest of the packet. On each page there is a set of opinion scales. They are pairs of word opposites. The same opinion scales are used on every page.

At the top of each set of scales is a concept. You are to mark each scale to indicate the way you feel about that concept. Mark them according to what the words mean to you. There is a different concept on each page.

For example, look at the loose sheet with the scales I just handed to you.

Let's say that the concept for this particular page is AUTOMOBILE. You indicate your feelings about automobiles by putting "x" in one of the spaces for each pair of words.

If you feel very strongly that automobiles are BAD, mark an "x" in the space next to BAD.
If you think that automobiles are *moderately* GOOD, then mark an "x" in the space second from GOOD. (POINT.)

The spaces next to the center indicate you think AUTOMOBILE is slightly GOOD or BAD. (POINT.)

Of course, the middle space means you have balancing, or neutral feelings, or don’t know.

Place the "x" according to the way you feel about the particular concept on the page. Be sure and mark the "x" within the space.

Please don’t look back and forth between the concepts. Judge each one on its own.

We want your first impressions, so work quickly. We also need your *accurate* and *thoughtful* opinions, so please work carefully.

Work through the concepts until you come to the page marked STOP.

First, you will see the tape; then you will mark your opinion scales.

(SHOW FIRST TAPE)
Sample page from semantic differential.

The TV program you have just seen

good ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ bad
soft ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ hard
active ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ passive
incomplete ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ complete
strong ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ weak
simple ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ complex
believable ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ unbelievable
boring ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ interesting
free ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ constrained
fast ___:___:___:___:___:___:___:___ slow
(1) Your age: _ _ _ years.  
(2) Occupation ________________.

(3) Education: (circle last year completed) 
less than high school; H.S.; College: 1, 2, 3, 4; M.A.; Ph.D.

(4) (Circle) Male     Female

Now a few items about your reading and viewing habits.

During a typical week, how much time do you spend reading--

(5) Newspapers? _____ hours
(6) Magazines? _____ hours
(7) Books? ________ hours

How about--

(8) Watching television? ________ hours
(9) Listening to the radio? _____ hours

(10) During the past three (3) months, how many times have you gone to the movies? _____

(11) How many stage plays did you attend during that same three months period? _____

Please list your favorite television programs and movies--

(12) Favorite television shows

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

(13) Favorite movies

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________
APPENDIX C

TABLE 3.--Frequency distribution of subjects according to age in years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE (Years)</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-55</td>
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<tr>
<td>over 55</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean = 28.8 years, Median = 20.3 years

TABLE 4.--Frequency distribution according to subjects' education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level (Last completed)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
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<td>Some college</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Post graduate (Ph.D.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Median = 3 years of college
TABLE 5.-- Frequency distribution of subjects according to occupation

<table>
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<th>Occupation</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

STATEMENT TO BE READ BEFORE SHOWING TAPES

This is an experiment about television.

In order to learn more about television we need to know more about what people feel about the things they see on TV.

You will see two television tapes of a dramatic scene.

I would like you to give me your open and frank responses and feelings about what you see in these TV tapes, and why you respond in that way.

So, you see, this is not a test. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. I just want your opinions.

(If more than one person is viewing.)

People usually have very different feelings and reactions to programs. So, if you hear someone telling of his reactions to the TV tapes and you have a different reaction or feeling about it--even if it's only slightly different--let's hear about it.

We want everyone's point of view.