Excerpts from:
A Primer for Filmmaking,
"Capturing the Image"

Moving the Camera

Film gained its freedom and became a unique and fascinating art form when the camera became mobile. The first step toward mobility came with the realization that it was possible to cut between shots, but camera movement was always on the outskirts, looking on at the action from afar. Griffith supplied the next step in mobility when he transported the camera into the action, removing the camera from its seat in the orchestra and allowing it to witness the action at close range. Even with these developments the film was hobbled; it served mainly the function of a recording device. It was Murnau who finally unshackled the film by allowing the camera to operate as a separate force. Murnau gave the camera movement within the shot, and now the camera could move within and participate in the dramatic action. Now the film-maker could achieve a sense of movement by cutting from shot to shot, through the action happening within the frame, and in the movement of the camera. It is the latter which probably creates the greatest sense of movement because such movement carries the spectator along with the camera.

BASIC TYPES OF MOVEMENT

The camera can *pan* to the left, to the right, up, or down. The movements up or down are sometimes referred to as *tilting* the camera. A pan movement is a turning or tilting of the camera so that its view takes in the horizontal or vertical panorama of an area without, however, moving from its axis. When the camera is either mounted on some kind of vehicle or is hand-held, the camera can engage in a *tracking* movement. Such a movement of the camera occurs when the camera is transported through space toward, away from, parallel, or diagonal to the course of action being photographed. Another movement of the camera is the *crane* shot, made possible by utilizing a special vehicle that has a counterbalanced arm on which the camera and its operator are placed. The arm, and therefore the camera, can be raised, lowered, swung to the right or left, or any combination of these movements. A shot that resembles the crane shot, but is less restricted, is the *helicopter shot*. The camera is mounted inside of a helicopter which can rise, drop down, or move in any direction in relation to the action being photographed.

These movements can also work together within a shot. By mounting the camera onto a crane, you have the capability of tracking and panning, as well as moving the arm of the crane. Such flexibility of movement can be extremely tempting, but at the same time the results can be quite grotesque. Your decision as to what movements to make use of should be guided by the purpose the shot is to serve. If you have reason to think that a movement or combination of movements will take away from that purpose, you should rethink the movement, and find the one that will be completely subservient to your purpose. Remember, the spectator's concentration must be on the focal point of the shot, not the shot itself.

Too often we ignore the potential of camera movement, except for panning, because we feel it will be too expensive. The rental of a crab-

dolly to be used for tracking the camera *is* expensive—approximately $35.00 per day plus some means of transporting it to where it is to be used—but it is not necessary to go to such expenses. We have mentioned several substitutes that may cost nothing that can be used in place of the dolly (see page 36), and more than likely you can think of devices we have not mentioned.° If you can spend the extra money or put your ingenuity to work, the ability to move the camera can add a smoothness of continuity and a flexibility of expression that is usually associated with the best cinematography.

You can find many who are against movement of the camera per se; they feel it creates too unreal an experience for the audience. Yet if movement is properly employed, this need not happen. People with this attitude are a bit behind the times. This was why the Russian filmmakers, in the silent era, devised the montage, seeking to achieve greater expression without moving the camera. We are in an era in which the prime concern is what happens within the frame of the shot, rather than in the relationship of the frames to one another. If our concern with the concept of the frame is to be fully voiced, the camera must move. We will admit that movement of the camera has lately been carried to extremes. Dwight MacDonald, the former film critic of *Esquire*, has justifiably complained that in some cases the talkies have become the walkies. But we are not advocating excess. We are advocating the use of movement when it adds meaning to and/or aids in emphasizing the content of the frame.

THE HAND-HELD CAMERA

Removing the camera from the tripod and holding it in the hands is a method of shooting that has been standard procedure for some time with newsreel and combat cameramen, and, in such action scenes as fights and dancing, it has been a technique used on feature films as well.

The influence of the *nouvelle vague*, cinema verité, and the underground film movement in the United States has established hand-holding as a technique, and it can be found in most every type of film production today. It offers freedom and fluidity in the following of an action and at the same time creates a unique feeling of subjectivity, for the movement of the camera operator can be seen and the spectator has the sensation of participating in the action. For this reason, unless the shot calls for a subjective impression, hand-holding should not be used. There is an example from Mike Nichol's *The Graduate* that we consider to be excellent usage of the hand-held camera. One scene of the film takes place at the birthday party for the hero. He has been given a complete scuba diving outfit by his father and has been goaded by the father into demonstrating the outfit in the family pool. We first see the hero ludicrously encumbered by the wet suit, air tanks, face mask, flippers, and carrying a spear gun. As he begins to move out of the house and walk to the pool, the camera becomes subjective so that we see the short journey through the hero's eyes, including a view of the flippers protruding ahead, as he takes each step and the sound of the breathing apparatus is in our ears.

Fig. 5-8 Hand-holding the camera

°One student felt that he needed some sort of dolly, so he borrowed his little sister's tricycle and mounted the camera on it. The tricycle worked quite well.

In this instance the subjective experience is not only useful, it is vital to the scene. The shot was accomplished, of course, by mounting a face mask on the camera to simulate the real framing of the mask. The camera operator wore flippers and hand-held the camera as he stomped his way to the pool.

The hand-holding technique is not as simple as it might seem. The camera can be held in one of several ways, depending upon the camera and the movement that is to be carried out. Some cameras—Bell and Howell Filmo and Eyemo, Doiflex, Bolex, etc.—are held by a handgrip located beneath the camera. The standard grip on the Arriflex 35IIC is on the side, but many cameramen hold both the side grip and the motor, which is on the bottom, for maximum control. The operator's wrists and forearm carry the weight of these cameras. *Body braces* and *shoulder pods* are available, and they help relieve the weight of the camera considerably. Other cameras, especially those with a rear-mounted magazine (the 16mm Eclair, for example), can be supported partially by the shoulder, with the wrists and forearms providing the remainder of the support. These cameras are also generally used with a body brace. This manner of handholding affords greater steadiness to the picture. No matter what technique is employed, handholding requires great stamina on the part of the cameraman.

The camera operator needs to work out a method of moving with the camera so that the resulting picture will not look as though the operator were bounding along on springs. For a steady picture the best lens to use is a short focal-length lens. If you attempt the shot with a long focal-length lens, anything that causes the slightest movement of the camera will be magnified ten-fold—a slight breeze, the breathing of the camera operator, even the operator's heartbeat. A student film-maker destroyed a beautifully composed shot that psychologically and emotionally projected exactly what he was seeking. The shot was taken with a 75mm lens. It consisted of a long view of a gently sloping snow-covered hill, backed by a line of evergreen trees, and broken only by a flight of stone steps. Into this tranquil setting comes one tiny lone figure who descends the stone steps. Within the framework of the film, this shot depicts the movement of a character who feels lonely and alienated from everyone around her. The shot, as conceived, worked perfectly in projecting just such an impression. But the director destroyed the effect by handholding the shot. The weather was cold and so was the camera operator, and to make matters worse, the director chose to move the camera parallel to the movement of the subject. With the long lens taking the shot, the movement of the camera left one with the distinct impression that the operator was moving along ground zero of a bomb blast as the frame of the picture violently bobbed and danced around.

In conclusion, one usually handholds only if:

1   the task is a moving shot;
2   the subjectivity of the hand-held movement is desired;
3   a short focal-length lens can be used;

4 the weight of the camera can be supported so as to insure the best possible picture steadiness.

Never set out intentionally to shoot a film without a tripod. You will be constantly hampered and severely limited in what you can shoot. The tripod will give you a firm support that will produce steady pictures and also assure you smoother panning movements because of the flexible tripod head.

Camera Angle

You have an infinite variety of choices as to where to place the camera to view the scene. The selection of a particular position should never be based upon a haphazard decision, for camera angle is a useful and powerful factor in audience comprehension of the action and audience involvement. Camera angle specifies the position of the spectator in relation to the action being carried out. It can also determine the extent of the spectator's view of that action, and it can communicate to him the psychological implications of the view—like the high- and low-angle shots utilized by Losey in *The Servant.*

However, the spectator must also be placed in a *possible* position. The "creative" director who has placed his camera inside of the fireplace to view the action taking place in front of the fire has certainly not selected a "possible" position. How many people sit inside a fireplace? Who wants a burned backside? As a result, the impossibility of the camera angle signals to the audience the unreality of the action taking place in front of the camera, and the unwelcome knowledge that contrivance is present.

By controlling the extent of the spectator's view of the subject, camera angle also serves the film-maker as a means of controlling the spectator's attention and of indicating to the viewer the point of dominant dramatic emphasis in the action.

BASIC TYPES OF CAMERA ANGLE

Should you reach the decision that you wish to place the spectator outside the action, viewing it through the eyes of an unseen, omniscient eavesdropper, you would select *objective camera angles* (Fig. 5.9). The camera is used as an unseen observer. The angles are more neutral and impersonal. The scene takes place oblivious to the camera and no one within the scene must ever look into the camera lens. Most films are shot utilizing a majority of objective angles.

Should your decision be to place the audience within the scene, you would employ *subjective camera angles* (Fig. 5.10). The subjective camera can serve as the eyes of the spectator actually being involved in the scene, or as the eyes of an involved participant through which the audience sees the action. It is not inconceivable that a scene might employ objective angles as well as both types of subjective angles. The film *Bullitt* utilizes both of these types of subjective angles interspersed with objective angles in a most exciting automobile chase sequence. The

Fig. 5-9 An objective camera angle
(*Paths of Glory*, released by United Artists, ©
Harris-Kubrick Pictures Corp., 1957)

Fig. 5-10 A subjective camera angle

spectator is placed at times in the seat next to the driver, viewing the action through the windshield of an auto involved in the chase; at other times he actually sees the action through the eyes of the driver of this same car; and at still other times he views the action from outside, watching the chase objectively, from the sidelines.

The drunk scene in *The Last Laugh* is another example of the involving of the audience in the film's action; the camera's spinning and stumbling as in a drunken stupor here serves as the eyes of the audience. The example given earlier from *The Graduate* shows the use of the camera as if it were a participant in the scene—we see the walk to the swimming pool through Benjamin's eyes. Remember when using the subjective angle that any subject in the scene relating to the subject represented by the camera *must* look directly into the lens of the camera. This is essential for the proper subjectivity. Sudden shifts from an objective angle to a subjective angle can have great shock value, for such a shift tends to disorient the audience. Be certain that such a shock and disorientation is desired before using this technique. The subjective angle can be an interesting way of treating an action and involving your audience, but be especially careful in what you involve them and for how long. Carried too far, the subjective angle can alienate the spectator who may not wish to be involved in the action in that particular way for that length of time. In other words, the involvement is not left to the choice of the spectator, and so it is important that the director act for the spectator as the spectator would wish him to.

The final classification of camera angle falls somewhere between the objective and subjective angles. This camera position is called the *point-of-view angle*. This angle views the scene or action from the viewpoint of a particular participant, but is not a subjective angle because it does not show the action directly through this participant's eyes. Rather it is objective and views the action as though the camera were standing next to the participant as an unseen observer seeing the action from this participant's point of view. As a result, the spectator gets a closer view of the action without becoming involved as a participant.

A common practice when filming a scene between two or three people is to gradually bring the audience in closer to the action by first utilizing over-the-shoulder shots and then cutting to point-of-view angles. In the point-of-view shots *the subject does not look into the camera,* for that would mean the shot was from a subjective angle and that we were seeing one participant through the eyes of the other. The camera, you will remember, is next to the subject, so the other person looks to the side of the camera lens; which side of the lens is determined by the *imagainary line* (see page 149).

Another conventional use of the point-of-view angle is to show the audience what a subject is seeing when he looks off-camera. This is commonly referred to as a *reverse angle* (Fig. 5.11). In the first shot we see the subject look to the right or left frame of the picture and we realize that he sees something beyond the range of this shot. The camera then steps to the side of the subject, so to speak, and looks in the direction the subject is looking, and so the audience sees what the subject was seeing off-camera. Again, the film-maker must not allow anyone to look into the lens or the shot will become one of a subjective angle. This must be of vital concern because the subjective angle has an impact which may not be desired.

Cutting from an objective angle to a point-of-view angle creates no difficulty because both shots are in a sense "objective" angles. But by utilizing the two, you move the audience from its position as unseen observer on the sidelines into the center of the action, but still as an unseen observer.

Fig. 5–11   A point-of-view camera angle. In the first shot we see the subject looking off-camera; and the next shot shows us what he sees (Mel Wittenstein)

THE COMPONENT PARTS

Camera angle involves several decisions on the part of the film-maker: the *size of the image* desired, the *angle at which the image is viewed,* and the *height at which the camera is placed.*

IMAGE SIZE   The size of the image desired will determine the type of shot that is selected. Shots are divided basically into three categories. The *long shot* (Fig. 5.12) gives us a wide view of an area, but the objects are small in scale. When we wish to orient the audience and familiarize it with the locale, the people, and the objects located within that locale, we employ a long shot. Entrances, exits, and movements from place to place which have a dramatic purpose are also generally depicted in long shot. The long shot used as an establishing shot generally appears at
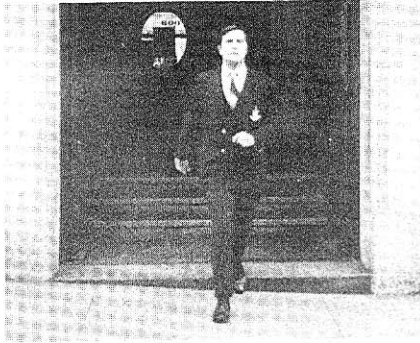
Fig. 5-12 A long shot

Medium shot

Close shot (Mel Wittenstein)

Fig. 5-13 A 2-shot profile

Angled (Mel Wittenstein)

or near the beginning of a scene in order to orient the audience. Then the camera's view is moved closer into the action, focusing on the most important parts of the whole action. Normally the film-maker might move back to a long shot after the scene has progressed for a time in order to reorient the audience to the geography of the scene, and then again at or near the end of the scene. These long shots add a sense of scale to the scene, allowing the audience to refamiliarize themselves with the location and the positions of the subjects within that locale. Yet often we hesitate to go back to a long shot because it reduces the size of the subjects and because the action gets lost in the clutter of objects and people. The long shot lessens our control of the audience's attention. The long shot should normally be kept on the screen for only a short time, unless it serves some definite dramatic purpose, and should never be employed when important action is taking place that could be viewed better at a closer range.

The *medium shot* presents a midrange in both the extent of the view and the scale of the image (Fig. 5.12). The subjects are generally shown from above the knees or from just below the waist. The medium shot can include more than one subject, viewed from a closer range so that the spectator will be able to see facial expressions, movements, and business.

One of the most useful shots of the medium range category is the two-shot in which two subjects carry out dialogue or action, or both. A two-shot can be staged with the two subjects in profile, or it can be angled, an important variation giving a sense of depth to the shot and increasing its dynamics (Fig. 5.13). The major problems with the profile are that it is not a particularly interesting shot since the subjects are in an obviously symmetrical composition, and it is difficult to give dominance to either of the subjects. To provide interest and dominance when needed, you must rely on lighting, action, dialogue, or color, when applicable.

When the two-shot is staged by angling the shot and creating a sense of depth, the major problems with the profile shot are eliminated. With this type of medium shot the subject nearest the camera is usually closed to (turned away from) the camera to whatever degree desired, and the other subject is generally seen in a three-quarter open position—three-quarters of his front visible to the camera. Obviously the subject that is more open to the camera receives dominance and the different positions of the bodies create a more interesting composition. If you wish to then switch the dominance you only have to reverse the preceding shot.

The *close shot* encompasses a narrow, constricted view with the objects seen in a large scale (Fig. 5.12). Several variations of the close shot can be employed. The *medium close shot* shows one person from the mid-chest and up. A *close-up* will reveal just the head or head and shoulders. The *extreme close-up* includes only some portion of the subject's face. All of these close shots naturally fill the entire screen with their image. The close shot is an extremely powerful shot and so nor-

mally is used only when we wish to add emphasis to some detail. It is such an important filmic device that we will discuss it at some length shortly. Of course, the close-up can be used with great effectiveness in presenting objects and portions of the body other than the face.

Although the above types of shot are the basic choices in determining the image size and range of the scene, a wide variation of these basic shots exists. These variations range from the *extreme long shot* (Fig. 5.14) that shows a large expanse of area, to the extreme close-up that fills the screen with a view of the human eye (Fig. 5.15). To provide you with rules or procedures to follow in determining when you might use each particular shot would be foolish. The selection must be based upon considerations of the complexity of the action, the importance of the action, the rhythm of the scene, and the visual style, to name only a few. Generally a film is composed of a predominance of medium range shots with the long shots and close shots being used for orientation and emphasis, respectively.

SUBJECT ANGLE   The main thing to remember in establishing the angle at which the subject will be photographed is that you are preparing a film dealing with a three-dimensional world to be projected onto a two-dimensional screen. Therefore, to achieve this sense of depth the subject must be viewed so that two sides are shown, and, when possible, either the top or bottom. For example, viewing a building from a straight front position gives a flat appearance; it has no solidity (Fig. 5.16). The human subject is also best viewed at a three-quarter angle rather than straight on. The use of proper angling of the image in the creation of depth is further strengthened by lighting, movement (camera and subject), use of short focal-length lenses, color, etc. Always strive to achieve the three-dimensional; it not only creates a greater sense of reality, it is more aesthetically pleasing.

CAMERA HEIGHT   The height at which the camera is placed is a very important factor in the effective quality of the camera angle, and yet it is a factor that is frequently neglected, especially in nontheatrical subject film production. Too often the camera height is determined by the position that is most comfortable for the camera operator or by the position that provides an "interesting" picture. Both of these elements can be considerations, but the height should never be arbitrarily arrived at without some concern and consideration of the aesthetic, dramatic, and psychological implication which are part of the effectiveness of a shot. As we discussed in Chapter 4, the height of the camera can have a considerable effect upon your audience, especially in shaping its reactions and involvement in the film.

When filming at a *level angle* the camera is placed at the eye-level of the subject or at the level that corresponds to the eye-level of a person of average height. When employing the *objective camera angle* and shooting from a level angle, always select the eye-level of the subject being photographed whether he is sitting or standing. Too many cameramen consider eye-level to mean their eye-level (or rather, normal tripod level) and not the subject's. When the subject is sitting, the camera should be

Fig. 5–14 An extreme long shot (Mel Wittenstein)

Fig. 5–15   An extreme close-up (Mel Wittenstein)

Fig. 5–16   Subject angle: flat

In-depth (Mel Wittenstein)

dropped down to the eye-level of the sitting subject and not placed at the eye-level of the cameraman. The latter would be a case of a high-angle shot looking down on the subject, not a level angle.

When the *point-of-view angle* is being used, the level is determined by the eye-level of the one from whose point of view we are seeing. If one subject is standing and one is sitting, the camera will look down on the sitting subject and look up at the one standing.

The *subjective close shot* is generally placed at the eye-level of the person being photographed, unless some psychological factor dictates otherwise. For example, the subject through whose eyes we are seeing the person may feel dominated by that person; therefore, we project our subject's feelings by shooting the close shot of the person from a slightly lower angle rather than the eye-level of the subject.

A *high angle* is achieved when the camera is pointed downward at the subject being photographed. The high-angle shot has practical, as well as aesthetic and psychological, uses. On the practical side, the high angle can make it easier for the audience to orient to the area of the scene. A common practice is to open a scene with a high-angle long shot of an area, such as a city, a factory complex, a village nestled in a valley, etc., and then to drop down for a level angle as we move into the area. Remember the superb opening to Olivier's *Henry V*, as the camera sweeps in over sixteenth-century London, or *West Side Story*, with a similar descent into New York on a summer morning. First, the audience is provided with an aerial map of the region, and then it is moved into the location, thus allowing the viewers in the audience to orient themselves fully.

Another practical consideration occurs when we must film an action that takes place over a large depth of field. Filming the action at a level angle or a low angle will record in sharp focus only the action taking place in the foreground, but by shooting the same action at a high angle we can provide a view of the entire action that is in sharp focus. Actually, level or low angles could not record the entire action even if sharp focus over the complete area could be achieved because the action in the background would be blocked by the action in the foreground (Fig. 5.17). This is, of course, the main reason why sporting events are filmed from a high angle.

Aesthetically, high angles are much more pleasing in presenting areas with a complex pattern. In a travel film on Peru produced by the authors, we opened the sequence in Lima with an aerial shot of the city at night and then dissolved from this to a moving shot through the streets of Lima. This combination was aesthetically pleasing because of the fascinating patterns of lights in the opening high angle and the multicolored neon lights of the street rushing by in the moving shot.

One important point to remember about the high-angle shot is that it tends to give the impression that the speed of the action is slowed down because of the large area encompassed in the camera's range. An excellent example of the use of a high-angle shot to purposely slow the action, so as to achieve a particular psychological reaction in the audi-

Fig. 5–17 The level angle shot: a limited range of view because objects in the foreground block objects in the background The high angle shot is free of these obstructions (Mel Wittenstein)

ence, occurs in a Japanese film entitled *The Island*. This film deals with the hardships and struggles of a Japanese family living on a tiny island off the coast of one of the main Japanese islands. Near the end of the film one of the children becomes seriously ill and the father races for the doctor. He must first row across the expanse of water that separates the small island from the main island. The father must then run to the doctor's house, which is some distance from the dock. To psychologically expand the distance and slow the speed of this life-or-death race, director Kaneto Shindo shot the father running down the road to the doctor's house in extreme long shots at a high angle. The audience sees a large expanse of the countryside including the doctor's house and the road leading to it. The tiny figure of the father running as fast as he can appears to be moving at a snail's pace.

However, if the action you are filming is fast-moving, and you wish to project that accelerated pace, you must take care in filming the action from a high angle. As illustrated in the above example, your action will be slowed down considerably and you will lose the impression you wish to project.

When the camera is tilted upward to view the subject from below, it is called a *low-angle* shot. This angle can range in height from just below eye-level downward to an extreme worm's-eye view of the action.

The low angle is useful in establishing emphasis or dominance in a scene (Fig. 5.18). That piece of action or subject you wish to emphasize is placed in the foreground with the camera at a lower angle looking up at the action or subject. This will cause this action or subject to appear to be towering over anything that is going on in the background.

The low-angle shot has practical uses as well. One way to eliminate unwanted background or to obtain a previously missed close-up, is to drop the camera to a low angle and isolate the subject against the sky or any other nondescript background. Many of the effective close shots of athletes in Reifenstal's great film of the 1936 Berlin Olympics were made in this way. Practically speaking, too, the low angle will also tend to indicate a separation between persons or objects. Lastly, if a wide-angle shot contains too much unwanted foreground the camera level can be dropped down a bit and the camera tilted up, eliminating the unwanted material.

Fig. 5-18 The low angle provides dominance for the subject in the foreground (Mel Wittenstein)

A useful procedure to follow is to change camera angle every time you record a different take of a continuous action that will later be cut together in a series. If such a practice is not carried out, grave problems can arise in the editing room. Before-the-camera subjects may be able to duplicate their actions, but chances are the duplication will not be exact. Without the changes of angle to cover the discrepancies in the action, no matter how slight, jumps in the movement will result when the pictures are joined together. Some film-makers only change the lens, or use a zoom lens and merely change its focal length. In some cases this is a necessary practice, such as in switching from an over-the-shoulder shot to a point-of-view shot. In this instance the over-the-shoulder shot

3   more than a long shot of the action is desired.

The single shot technique normally is best if:

1   visual variety and a dramatic purpose to each shot is desired;
2   the action is completely controllable;
3   untrained before-the-camera subjects are being used;
4   the budget is tight, necessitating a firm control over the amount of film used, but extra shooting time is available;
5   improvisation is necessary.

Obviously you do not have to use one or the other of these techniques for the entire film. The technique employed should be selected because of the advantages it offers for any given situation, whether it be the entire film or only a scene or sequence. You may select the master scene for a portion of a scene that involves some very complex action and then go to the single shot technique to complete the scene. When to use each technique will be dictated by each situation for there is no overall rule one can or should follow.

PUTTING THE CAMERA TO WORK

Before we turn our attention to the technical aspects of the use of the camera, you should first be made aware of the basic purpose the camera must serve. When deciding how and what the camera will record, consider first your interpretation of the subject of the film, and then how the projected shot can convey that interpretation to the audience. The shot will probably never convey to the audience the full implications of the meaning it communicates to you (unless your film is instructional and must communicate specific information). But the shot should say something to the spectator if he is to become involved mentally and emotionally with the film. You will use visual symbols to carry the meaning and emotional involvement to the audience. But if the symbols are to have a chance to accomplish their task, you must control the attention of the audience, project the mood of the scene, and establish an emotional climate. The symbols visually project your interpretation of the scene and the film, and the manner in which the camera is used will contribute greatly in controlling attention, projecting the mood, and establishing the emotional climate. Above all, the symbols, not your camera technique, should reach the attention of the spectator. You want the audience to see, understand, and be affected by the symbols, not the clever way you manipulate the camera; but unless the camera is used properly, it will call attention to itself. One basic function of the camera is to imitate or replace the physical and mental controls of the spectator over his optical system. It becomes, so to speak, a second optical system for your audience, a mind's eye, and we control its attention to see only what we wish it to see.

In life we control our own attention through both a physical and mental process. The eyes physically focus on an object; the physical action of the eye is triggered by a mental process. Mentally we fix our

whole vision onto an object, and thereby that object receives our full attention. The mind says that we must see only that object, although physically the view of the eyes takes in other objects, but the mind ignores them. No actual change in the scale of the object takes place, but there is a mental change in scale, for the mind has caused the object to fill the entire "screen" of our mind.

When something happens in film that warrants the spectator's full attention, the film-maker will duplicate this mental process. However, in film the scale of the object is actually changed and the entire screen is filled with a close-up.

In life our eyes often first wander over many nonessentials until they come to rest upon an object that then catches their complete attention. This state can be duplicated on film in several ways:

1 By panning the camera to the essential article and then cutting to a close-up.
2 By panning the camera to the object of attention and then zooming into a close-up.
3 By tracking into a close-up of the object.
4 By zooming into a close-up of the object.
5 By duplicating the physical focusing of the eye by focusing the lens. We have already learned that the eye brings the essential details into sharp focus, allowing the nonessentials to blur out. We also know that the lens is capable of duplicating this exact process when the proper focal length is employed.
6 By setting up certain situations that allow the spectator to use his own mental and physical controls as he normally would:
   (a) A moving subject in contrast with static objects will catch our attention in life; so will it on film.
   (b) A figure, because of its importance to an action, will catch the spectator's attention in the real world; this figure holds the same power on film.
   (c) Any contrasting object or person gains our attention, and we can contrast by color, size, height, or spatial distance.

The camera can capture the attention of the audience by duplicating or replacing the human system of focusing attention, in many ways even improving upon it. The use of any one of these techniques is dependent upon the degree of attention you desire and the situation in the scene. When the technique is too emphatic or too far removed from the spectator's daily use of his own vision, it calls attention to itself. You have committed the sin of overacting with your camera. The audience should be more concerned with the action, not with a virtuoso performance of the camera. This in no way inplies that your camera work must be prosaic and ordinary. On the contrary, it must be highly imaginative if it is to unobtrusively control the attention of the audience, help maintain the mood of the scene, and create the proper emotional climate. It must accomplish all of this while being consistent with the physical and mental powers of the spectator's vision.