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Sight  Sound  Motion
Visualization means thinking in pictures or, more precisely, in individual shots or brief sequences. In television and film, it means thinking in screen images. For example, take a moment and visualize your mother. How do you see her? What is she wearing? What is she doing? If she were to appear on television, would you visualize her in the same way? What if she were to appear on a wide motion picture screen? Would you still visualize her the same way?

Now visualize your favorite car. How do you see it? What environment is it in? Is it moving or standing still? How would you visualize it for television or for motion pictures? Now do just one more exercise and visualize—that is, see as television screen images—the following shot instructions:

### Video
- CU (close-up) of car
- CU of car
- CU of car

### Audio
- Wind-tunnel tested, this sleek beauty holds the road exceptionally well.
- Be careful, there may be a bomb in it!
- The minister of foreign affairs has finally arrived and is greeted by the vice-president.

Exactly how did you visualize each event? You probably had some trouble actually seeing an image in all its detail, but most likely you had some notion of what the shots should contain and how you would like to see the events appear on the screen. Although the video instructions above each read “CU of car,” you probably used a different car and a different environment for each shot. Why? Your choice was inevitably influenced by your personal experience, needs and desires, as
well as by the context of the event and the medium—that is, whether you visualized it for television or a wide movie screen. Additional factors in your visualization are your medium skill—whether you understand the technical and aesthetic limitations and potentials of the medium (in this case, television or film)—and your personal way of seeing things in general, your personal style.

Whatever prompted you to come up with specific pictures, the overriding guiding principle for any visualization should be to clarify and intensify an event for the viewer. Although event clarification and intensification usually go together, I will treat them separately to demonstrate their different visualization requirements.

Here is an example of visualizing a shot for simple clarification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Video</strong></th>
<th><strong>Audio</strong></th>
<th><strong>Visualization</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CU of can (indication of viewpoint)</td>
<td>Be sure to buy this can with the gray brand X wrapper (indication of event context)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All you want to do here is to show the can as clearly as possible so that the viewer can learn more about brand X. To this end, the can is centered within the screen, and the vector field is stable. The can is close enough so the viewer can read the label. No attempt is made to dramatize the event.

Now here is an example of intensification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Video</strong></th>
<th><strong>Audio</strong></th>
<th><strong>Visualization</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CU of can</td>
<td>Get away from it, it may be a bomb!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this instance, the context demands that you visualize the can in such a way as to reveal its potential danger. You must dramatize the shot, load it emotionally, create immediate impact. So you structure the vector field purposely for tension. The horizon is tilted; the mass of the can leans heavily against the frame; the vectors of the can describe the diagonal of the frame. The vector magnitude is increased by the pull of the corners. The can is highly distorted by the wide-angle lens. The distortion of the can and its labile arrangement within the frame reflect and intensify the precariousness of the event. Within its context, the shot is properly visualized. A series of such visualizations is called a "storyboard." The storyboard shows the key points of view of an event (Fig. 11.1).

Let's now go over some of the more basic visualization factors relative to viewpoint. Realize that your visualization will also be influenced by the intended shot sequence, which I will take up in Chapter 14. For now, I will discuss the following visualization factors: (1) ways of looking, (2) field of view, (3) above and below eye-level camera position, (4) subjective camera, (5) over-the-shoulder and cross-shooting, (6) angles.
Ways of Looking

When working with television or film—or any other photographic medium for that matter—we need to decide on a basic way of looking at an event. We can, for example, merely observe an event and report it as faithfully as possible, or else we can look into an event and try to communicate its complexity and psychological implications. We can also choose to use the technical potentials of the medium to create an image that can only exist on the screen. Examples of creating such unique screen events are a superimposition or a specific digital video effect. Thus, we have three basic ways of looking and using the medium for optimal communication: (1) looking at an event, (2) looking into an event, and (3) creating an event.

Looking At an Event

When you merely want to report an event, use an approach that comes as close as possible to the point of view of an observer, someone who
Figure 11.2 Looking At
When using the medium for looking at the event, we simply try to assume as neutral and objective a point of view as possible.

Figure 11.3 Looking Into
When using the medium to look into the event, we provide a deeper insight into what is going on.

Figure 11.4 Creating
In this case, the medium is essential for creating a screen event. The event exists only as a screen image.

watches an event without much involvement. Use the camera and microphones simply to report what is going on. Most live or live-on-tape sports events or news events fall into this category. Even if we are using a selective point of view for clarification, we are basically looking at the event (Fig. 11.2).

Looking Into an Event
Looking into an event means to scrutinize the event as closely as possible, to look behind its obvious outer appearance, to probe into its structure and, if possible, into its very essence. Looking into means to communicate to the viewers aspects of an event that are usually overlooked by a casual observer and to provide an insight into the true nature of the event (Fig. 11.3).

Creating an Event
Creating an event means that you use the technical devices and potentials of the medium to build a unique screen event that depends entirely upon the medium. You can use either an actual event as the basic energy source and manipulate it through DVEs (digital video effects), or you can create an event entirely through digital electronics. Creating an event does not mean manufacturing an event in order to mislead the public, such as inventing and reporting a big story on a slow news day. Rather, this approach refers to manufacturing a screen event through various special electronic and/or optical effects (Fig. 11.4).

Let's use a simple action, such as placing a telephone call, and visualize the event according to these three principal ways of looking.

Event 1: Looking At
All you need to do is to communicate as simply and accurately as possible the action of placing a phone call. The woman walks up to the phone, picks up the receiver, dials the number, waits for the other party to respond, and starts her conversation. You
Figure 11.5 Looking At

a Here the woman is simply placing a routine call. We look at it as objectively as possible. Viewers see her walking up to the phone.

b She picks up the receiver and dials the number.

c She engages in a rather simple conversation. The shots for this sequence are not dramatic. They should simply tell us what is going on.

Figure 11.6 Looking Into

a Now the woman is under stress. You need to let the viewer experience the event’s intensity and complexity. The close-up of the dialing action intensifies the importance of the call.

b By partially blocking her face with the phone, you can emphasize the negative aspects of the phone call.

c An even tighter close-up will further intensify the event.

could easily cover this sequence with a single camera on a medium shot with a possible zoom-in when she makes the connection to the other party (Fig. 11.5a–c).

Event 2: Looking Into Now the event calls for intensification. You need to communicate the urgency of the call, the emotional state of the caller, and the overall tense atmosphere. The easiest way of fulfilling these communication objectives is to use tighter shots. But this means deciding just which part of the event you show in your tight shots. Do you need to show the woman walking up to the phone? Probably not. You can start with a close-up view of the dialing. Under stress, the woman will probably misdial the number, having to dial all over again. You may not even want to show the redialing but instead switch to, and stay on, a close-up of her face after the first dialing action. As you can see, your choice of shots becomes quite important with the “looking into” approach (Fig. 11.6a–c).
Event 3: Creating  In order to show the relative complexity and/or intensity of this event, you may use any one of the many available special effects, such as “supers” or DVEs. In this example, a simple super communicates the increased complexity of the event. Note that this new series of shots exists only as a screen event. Under normal circumstances, we do not perceive the world as a superimposition. The event has been created by the medium, using the actual event—the phone call—as raw material (Fig. 11.7a–c).

Field of View

As you have seen, varying the field of view from a longer to a closer shot not only clarifies the event but also intensifies it (see Fig. 11.6). Field of view means how much territory a shot includes and from what distance or how far away we seem to look at the event. We traditionally have five designations of fields of view: extreme long shot (XLS or ELS), long shot (LS), medium shot (MS), close-up (CU), and extreme close-up (XCU or ECU) (Fig. 11.8a–e).

But exactly how close is a close-up or what is a medium shot? How much territory should a long shot take in? How big should the steps, the changes in image size, be between an extreme long shot and a close-up? These field-of-view designations are relative and depend, like other viewpoint factors, largely on the context and interpretation of an event. You will be greatly aided in deciding on the basic field of view by determining as early as possible your principal way of looking—that is, whether you are using the medium to look at, into, or to create the event. This does not mean, however, that once you have decided on a principal way of looking, you cannot change. Most of the time, you will move freely among the three approaches. But an
Figure 11.8 Field of View
The five common field-of-view designations are: extreme long shot—ELS or XLS (a), long shot—LS (b), medium shot—MS (c), close-up—CU (d), and extreme close-up—ECU or XCU (e).
Figure 11.9 “Looking At” Field-of-View Range
In this shot sequence, we establish the scene through an ELS, and then show some event detail through progressively tighter shots. Note, however, that even the last shot of the series (c) is still an LS of the cowboys talking to each other.

early determination of the principal way of looking will help you establish a basic visual approach. As you have seen, the field of view is generally much wider when looking at an event than when looking into it (see Figs. 11.5 and 11.6). Figure 11.9 (a–c) and Figure 11.10 (a–c) show the same principle in a different context.

Looking-Up and Looking-Down Camera Position

For some time, kings, schoolteachers, preachers, judges, and gods have known that sitting up high had important consequences. Not only could they see better and be seen more easily, but they could also look down on people, and people had to look up to them.

Physical elevation has strong psychological implications. It immediately distinguishes between inferior and superior, between leader
and follower, between those who have power and authority and those who have not. Phrases like "the order came from above," "moving up in the world," "looking up to and down on" (rather than looking up and down at), and being "on top of the world" are all manifestations of the strong association we make between physical positioning along a vertical hierarchy and feelings of superiority and inferiority.

The camera viewpoint can evoke similar feelings in an audience. When we look up with the camera (sometimes called low-angle or a below eye-level point of view), the object or event seems more important, more powerful, more authoritative than when we look at it straight on (normal angle or eye-level point of view) or look down on it (high-angle or above eye-level point of view). When we look down with the camera, the object generally loses somewhat in significance; it becomes less powerful, less important, than when we look at it straight on or from below. As viewers, we readily assume the camera's viewpoint and identify with its superior high-angle position (looking down on the object or subject) and its inferior low-angle position (looking up at the subject or object).
Statues of famous people are either huge, such as those of the kings in ancient Egypt, or are put on pedestals to force people to look up at them or, more appropriately, up to them, which makes viewers assume an inferior position relative to the statue (Fig. 11.11).

When speakers address large crowds, they usually stand on fairly high platforms with the audience looking up to them. If you want to duplicate this effect and intensify the authority and power of a speaker,
have the camera look at him or her from a below eye-level position. This has the camera assuming the audience's point of view (Fig. 11.12).

You can emphasize the power of heavy machinery or the menace of machines designed primarily for destruction by shooting them from below. Again, as audience members, we are put in an inferior position (Figs. 11.13 and 11.14).

Even our perception of movement varies with whether we observe the motion from a low- or high-angle position. When shot "from above," a car seems to move more gently and somewhat slower (Fig. 11.15) than when shot "from below" (Fig. 11.16). Note that the wide-angle lens distortion contributes greatly to the power of the above and below eye-level scenes.

### Subjective Camera

The possibility of the viewer assuming, however temporarily, the camera's viewpoint and position has prompted media people to use the camera subjectively. When used subjectively, the camera no longer tries to observe an event but rather participates in the event. To do this, the camera can assume the role of a person who is actively engaged in the screen event, occasionally substituting for this person's eyes. For example, we may see a child running through the woods and then have the camera take on her point of view. When this happens, we see the trees go by or feet pounding the road, all from the child's and, in this case, the camera's point of view (Figs. 11.17 and 11.18).
Or, as viewers, we may be discovered by one of the screen characters and forced to participate in the screen event directly from our viewing position. In this case, the camera now substitutes for our—the viewers’—eyes. I describe this technique more thoroughly later in this section.

Assuming the Character's Point of View

Because as viewers we can readily adjust to, and even identify with, the camera's point of view, we should quite easily be enticed to participate in the screen event through subjective camera techniques. Unfortunately, this transformation of the viewer from event-spectator to event-participant rarely occurs, especially if the camera is used to represent the point of view of one of the screen characters. Most often, viewers remain in their seats observing the screen event from their rather comfortable and safe positions. They do not feel catapulted out of their chairs onto the screen to mingle with the other screen characters. The desired “bi-sociation,” in which viewers forsake their own perspective and position for that of the camera's, may happen more readily in scenes displayed by laser holograms and even three-dimensional displays where the z-axis extends into the audience. As you read in Chapter 9, the z-axis in normal film and television presentations extends from the screen to the background but not toward the audience.

Nevertheless, instances do occur where the subjective camera can persuade us at least to associate closely with the camera's point of view and occasionally with its action. Such involvement depends on the motivation to participate in, rather than merely observe, the event.
The most effective motivational factors seem to be (1) a strong delineation between protagonist and antagonist so that the viewer can easily choose sides and identify with one of the two or else switch back and forth comfortably between the two, (2) a highly precarious situation including physical discomfort or psychological stress, and (3) a situation in which the viewer's curiosity is greatly aroused. These are all preconditions for viewers to participate in an event psychologically (feeling of being part of the event) and occasionally even kinesthetically (reacting physically to the screen event, such as shouting approval, clapping, or moving one's arms when watching a boxing match).

Here is an example of viewers assuming the role of one of the characters in the screen event. The scene is from a boxer's story. The protagonist, a very likable fellow, is badly beaten by the antagonist, who is a despicable tough guy. When watching such a contest, we will obviously side with the good guy. There is a good chance that we will become so much identified with the good guy's fate that we may, on occasion, switch from psychological support (hoping he will win after all) to kinesthetic action (rooting for him). Once the viewer reaches this perceptual stage, a subjective camera treatment is more likely to succeed. The viewer will now accept the shift from the objective two-shot of the fighters to the single shot showing the protagonist's point of view more readily as a logical and organic intensification of the event rather than an artificial camera trick. At least the viewer will feel deeply involved in the protagonist's fate when the subjective camera goes out of focus and begins to convey the defeated boxer's impaired vision.

Now you have not only motivated the viewers through a strong identification with the protagonist, but you have also presented them with a precarious physical dilemma. Will the boxer be all right? Will he be able to see again? The camera racks slowly into focus, looking up at the happy faces of the operating team. Yes, he can see again! Because of the strong empathetic involvement of the viewer with the protagonist, the subjective camera simply underscores, but does not superimpose, the viewers' event participation.

One popular, yet rarely successful, subjective camera technique is to mount a camera to a racing car, strap it to a ski racer's helmet, or run with it through a city street. The assumption is that this type of subjective camera will make the viewer experience what driving a race car, skiing down a steep slope, or jogging through a city street feels like. But unless the viewer is highly motivated, such a position switch does not occur. Rather than participating in any of these screen events, we are likely to dispassionately watch a street relentlessly rushing toward the screen, snow moving up the screen with the horizon line tilting from one side to the other, or simply a landscape jerking up and down. Even actual war footage, shot in subjective style by extremely courageous camera operators while on the run, rarely makes the viewers experience to even a small degree the horrors of battle. This type of subjective camera may perhaps indicate the speed or relative precariousness of an event to us, but we nevertheless remain observers.
Another way of using a subjective camera approach is to have the screen action directed toward the viewer. The objective camera view of the sniper already provides the context of a precarious situation.

When the sniper suddenly points the gun into the camera and so toward the viewer, the viewer is discovered by the screen event and is, inadvertently, forced into participation.

If, however, the screen action is aimed directly at us in our viewing position, we feel discovered and, thus, inevitably linked with the screen event. Because this subjective camera technique does not require us to assume a screen position but allows us to remain in our seats, we may be more inclined to accept this use of the subjective camera as a direct link between us as the viewer and the screen action.

Let's say we see a sniper shooting at anything that moves. The police are inching carefully toward his stronghold (Fig. 11.19). Suddenly he turns the gun on us (into the camera). This action does not require us to assume the position and point of view of the police officers. Rather, we have become the direct target of the sniper and, thus, participants in the event (Fig. 11.20).

The direct-address method of television, in which the performer speaks directly to the viewer, is another form of the subjective camera "discovery" technique. The difference is that this time the television performer does not really discover and surprise us; rather he comes into our home as an invited guest or at least as a tolerated communications partner. But as with the direct discovery technique, the communication is aimed from the screen directly at us in our viewing position without requiring us to assume anyone else's point of view.

Television is ideally suited for such a direct-address method of communication. The relatively small screen size permits close-ups that approximate our actual experience when talking with someone. Even
a tight close-up of the performer is not large enough to intimidate viewers. We accept the television medium, and most of its content, as an important and intimate part of our daily routine. We feel in close communion with our favorite performers and accept them as welcome companions. It seems perfectly natural to us that some of them tell us about the benefits of a certain brand of soap, others about the day's happenings, and still others about their troubles at the office, even if the office happens to be the Oval Office at the White House. Good television performers are very much aware of this close relationship. They do not try to address the millions of viewers "out there in video-land" but instead communicate in a low-key, intimate way with a single viewer—you. In fact, we as viewers are so used to this close relationship with the television performers that we even accept actors addressing us directly during a story and thus drawing us into their plot. We are no longer simply watching a play but are coerced into participation.

Film is quite different in this respect. We look up to film actors. They are not part of our daily lives—they represent something special, they are stars. We do not expect film actors to turn to us from time to time and include us in a conversation they are having with other actors on the screen. Indeed, we would feel uncomfortably jolted out of our fantasies and the security of the darkened, popcorn-flavored environment if such an invasion of our dream world by the screen image occurred. This does not mean that the direct-address method is impossible in film, but for other than comic effect, it is quite difficult to achieve with any degree of believability. Because as viewers we still suffer from a slight psychological shock when being discovered watching the happening on the screen, we feel more comfortable when this subjective camera technique is used for comic, rather than for dramatic, reasons.

**Over-the-Shoulder and Cross-Shooting**

Over-the-shoulder and cross-shooting are favorite ways of structuring close-ups of two people talking to each other. Both techniques employ reverse-angle points of view in order to structure the close-ups of two people conversing together. Such shots are especially effective on the relatively small television screen. In using reverse angles to show alternately the faces of one and the other person, you can block the people more or less along the z-axis (see Figs. 15.20 and 15.22 in Chapter 15).

In over-the-shoulder shooting, we literally look over the shoulder of one person at the other person and vice versa (Fig. 11.21a–b).

In cross-shooting, the camera has moved past the shoulder of the foreground person to get a tighter close-up of the background person (Fig. 11.22a–b).

In both these reverse-angle shooting techniques, we have no trouble accepting the shifting points of view as long as the man and the woman remain in their assigned screen positions, such as the man on
One of the most common and frequently used reverse-angle shots in covering a conversation is the over-the-shoulder shot. In this z-axis shot sequence, we alternately see one person’s face with the other person’s back of the head and shoulder in the foreground. In this shot, we are looking at her over his shoulder.

Now we see him over her shoulder. Note that both people remain in the same screen position despite the reverse angle.

In cross-shooting, we simply move in tighter on the person facing the camera. He has now moved out of the screen, and we only see a close-up of her looking in his direction.

Now we have reversed camera angles to show a close-up of him looking in her direction.

What if, in simulated cross-shooting, each of two people (A and B) looks directly into the camera (Fig. 11.23a–c)?

Are we now using the camera subjectively, with the viewer alternatingly associating with the person not seen on the screen? Not really. Even if the person on the screen (A) speaks directly to the camera, we know from the context that person A’s target is not us, the viewers, but
Angles

When we shift the camera's viewpoint, we create a variety of angles, a distinct vector field that can help us clarify and intensify a particular screen event. Although I have already talked about the various aesthetic implications of certain shooting angles (like the looking-up and looking-down camera positions), let's take another brief look at angles and their usefulness in building effective screen space: (1) for vector continuation, (2) for point-of-view clarification, (3) for event intensification, and (4) for style setting.
Figure 11.24 Angles for Vector Continuity
The most elementary function of camera angles is to provide vector continuity in a series of shots.

Figure 11.25 Jump Cut
a A jump cut occurs primarily in the absence of shooting angles.

b Even a slight change in the field of view (in this case, we shot a little tighter) and a minimal change in screen position will show up prominently as a jump cut unless we change the angles of view.

Figure 11.26 Simultaneous Screen Space
When you show the various shooting angles simultaneously, such as in a super, you create a new visual experience that lets viewers experience an event from various points of view, very much as in a cubist painting.
Angles for Vector Continuation

When you shoot a scene out of sequence for postproduction, a change of angles between shots will generally avoid jerky action during post-production editing (Fig. 11.24).

If you do not change the angle from shot to shot, any slight misalignment from shot to shot will show up quite prominently. The so-called jump cut, in which a misaligned object seems to jump or jerk from one screen position to another, is a direct consequence of slight, but significant, misalignments of the camera from one shot to the next (Fig. 11.25a–b).

By changing angles from shot to shot, you will introduce directional shifts that are perceived as a change in viewpoint rather than positional jumps. Like the cubist painters, you are helping the viewer see an object or event from various points of view, thereby providing a more complete and intensified screen space than would be possible without such angles. (See Fig. 11.32.)

Simultaneous Screen Space The relationship between shifts of viewpoint through camera angles and the variable viewpoints in cubist paintings shows up especially in the display of simultaneous screen space, such as superimpositions, electronic matting, or multi-screens.

By showing various angles of an object simultaneously, you create a unique vector field that can exist only as screen space. Because in our real space-time environment we cannot be in two or more places at once, we can only observe real events from one point of view at a time. But when you use the unique potentials of the medium, a simultaneous display of various points of view provides a new visual experience that permits the viewer to experience the whole complexity of an event all at once. The new vector structure can transcend the original event, creating a new, synergetic field of experience that, though based on an original event, communicates a greatly increased amount of aesthetic energy (Fig. 11.26).

Angles for Point-of-View Clarification

An important use of angles is to clarify and reinforce the point of view of the people appearing on camera, that is, in what direction and at what they are looking. The camera angle is basically dictated by the direction and angle of the index vector.

Index Vector Consistency When a tall person talks to a shorter one, the tall person obviously looks down at the shorter person, and the short person up at the taller one. You will notice, however, that many times the camera angle does not seem to change whether it assumes the point of view of the short or the tall person. Such a discrepancy is especially noticeable in close-ups where the camera seems to be adjusted to the eye-level of the person being looked at rather than to the one doing the looking. Figure 11.27 shows the general angles of the index vectors of a tall person talking to a shorter person.
When a taller person talks to a shorter person, the camera needs to be positioned at a height resembling the eye-level of the person doing the looking. The camera has to assume the taller person’s index vector and, in the reverse angle, the shorter person’s index vector.

When the woman is shown in a subsequent close-up, the camera should assume the boy’s point of view. This means the camera needs to be adjusted to the eye-level of the boy looking up at the woman. The woman is, therefore, viewed from below her eye-level (Fig. 11.28).

When cross-shooting to a close-up of the boy, the camera now needs to be adjusted to the higher eye-level of the woman looking down at him. The camera is now above the boy’s eye-level (Fig. 11.29).

**Index Vector–Target Consistency** The index vector–target consistency is especially important if you have a person looking at something in one shot and then show the target object in the following shot. For example, if in the first shot you show a balloon escaping a child’s grip and the floating balloon in the second shot, then the camera needs to look as much as possible along the child’s index vector. You must shoot the balloon from below and place it close to the upper screen edge, utilizing the magnetism of the frame. This way, you achieve smooth continuity from the child’s high-magnitude index vector (Figs. 11.30 and 11.31).

**Angles for Event Intensification**

As with wide-angle lens distortion, you can use angles to intensify an event or to reveal the underlying feelings of a person in a particular situation. Take a look at Figure 11.32.

As you can clearly see, the camera position intensifies the dancer’s upward movement. When the dancer is curled up in a relatively low position, the camera looks down on her (Fig. 11.32a). When she is about to stretch and reach up, the camera moves to slightly below eye-level (Fig. 11.32b). At the peak of the upward movement, the camera
looks at the dancer from a very low position and frames her along the screen diagonal (Fig. 11.32c). The camera point of view and the tilted angle make a simple movement look dramatic.

Even if you change the field of view from a medium shot to a close-up, the absence of angles makes the same dance movement less dramatic (Fig. 11.33a–c).

To demonstrate how you can use camera angles to reveal and perhaps even intensify a person’s attitude and feeling in a specific situation, let’s go downtown together and observe a variety of people entering an exclusive, expensive department store for women. Here is what we observe:

Event 1  A woman does some browsing in an expensive department store since she has some time to spend before her champagne luncheon with the other women from the club. She enters the store swiftly and surely, much like entering a supermarket. She knows where to go. She knows that the sales staff are here to serve her.

Event 2  Another woman, who cannot afford to shop in such an expensive store, has saved up some money to buy a present for her friend who is more impressed by fancy labels than product quality. She enters hesitantly, does not quite know what to say to the hostess who greets her at the entrance, and feels quite embarrassed by the cool stares of the salesladies.

Event 3  A little girl wanders into the store. Her mother is busy talking to a friend outside the store. She simply wants to look at all the wonderful things in the store.

Now try to visualize these three events. How do the different attitudes and feelings of the women and the girl influence your camera
viewpoints? What are the predominant angles? Without trying to tell you specifically how you should visualize these three events, let me simply describe one possibility for deciding on camera viewpoints and angles.

**Event 1**  The woman pays the cab driver, walks quickly to the store, and enters without hesitation as though the doors were nonexistent. She gives the hostess (store manager?) a polite smile and proceeds to the elevator. She is obviously doing a routine thing. The shooting angles, therefore, should comply with the routine character of the event. They, too, are normal and routine with a
Figure 11.33 Lack of Angles

a The lack of different camera angles makes the same dance sequence less dramatic even if we move from a LS to a CU.

b Moving in tighter on the action helps viewers see better but does not intensify the upward movement.

c A tight close-up helps viewers associate more closely with the dancer’s feelings than with experiencing an intensified upward movement.

minimum of viewpoint shift; the vector field is stable. Angles should contribute more to the clarification than to the intensification of this event. The camera objectively follows the woman’s actions; no attempt is made to shift to the woman’s point of view.

Event 2 This woman walks by the store once or twice before entering, pretending to study the window displays. We see her from inside the store looking through the window. Even the building appears threatening to her. Camera looks up at the building. She finally gathers enough courage and enters. The door still in hand, she sees the smiling hostess. We see a close-up of the host-
ess's forced smile from the woman's point of view (POV). The camera pans slowly, revealing the huge store (wide-angle lens distortion) and the other salesladies, all bearing similar forced smiles. Again, this sequence is shot from the woman's POV, and approaches a subjective camera technique. Depending on whether you want her to gain gradually more confidence or become progressively more ill at ease, the angles should either stabilize or become more acute and labile.

**Event 3** We see the little girl from above as she walks to the door. From inside the door the camera watches the girl trying to open the heavy doors. She walks inside the store. Shift to girl's point of view (low camera position looking up at people and things). This will emphasize the girl's fascination with the store and its people. Shift back to hostess's point of view, looking down on the girl. If the girl becomes more and more captivated by all the wonders of the store, the camera may switch more frequently from the girl's point of view to close-ups of the girl's face looking here and there. If, however, the girl becomes frightened, the viewpoints would become more and more subjective (the girl's point of view) and the angles more acute (tilted horizon line, wide-angle distortion).

One word of caution, however. Avoid becoming angle crazy. If your basic visualization is determined by a simple looking-at context, keep your angles and points of view to a minimum. There is no need to shoot a newscaster from below eye-level, then from above, then from her left, and then from her right, especially if all she is doing is reading the weather report.

A dull, uninteresting speech will not become more exciting even if you use many extremely varied angle shots. As a matter of fact, with your visual acrobatics, you will probably destroy the little information the speaker has to give to the audience. But if, on the other hand, you want to emphasize the menacing power of a demagogue, you may very well want to cover his speech from various extreme angles.

**Angles for Style Setting**

Even if the event context, the thematic implications, and the actions and attitudes of the on-camera people dictate the basic use of angles to a large extent, you still have rather wide latitude in what angles to use and how to use them. Your visualization is finally determined by your basic aesthetic concept of the event and your knowledge of the technical and aesthetic requirements and potentials of the medium through which you communicate this event. While recognizing the usual determinants for camera angles, which I have just discussed, you may still choose different angles in order to satisfy your sense of style. But as with all good things, your style should remain subtle. It should not draw attention to itself but should become yet another element in the totality of aesthetic communication. Like your handwriting, your shooting angles should not become the communication; instead they should simply be a reflection of your personality and aesthetic sensitivity.
Summary

Visualization means thinking in individual pictures or brief shot sequences. It refers to imagining how a camera would see a particular event from a specific point of view. Visualization is principally guided by the event context, your personal insight into the event, and your skills in using the medium of television or film to clarify and intensify the event for a particular audience.

The basic visualization factors are (1) ways of looking, (2) viewpoint, (3) above and below eye-level camera position, (4) subjective camera, and (5) angles.

We can use the medium to look at, look into, or create an event. Looking at means to observe an event as objectively as possible. Live or live-on-tape sports and news events fall into this category. Looking into means to scrutinize an event as closely as possible and to provide the viewer with insights into the event. Creating means to use the medium to create images that can exist only as a screen event. A superimposition is an example of creating a screen event.

A shot can vary in how much territory it includes and how close the shot appears to us. This is the field of view. The usual shot designations range from an extreme long shot (ELS or XLS) to an extreme close-up (ECU or XCU).

When the camera takes a looking up position with respect to an object, person, or event (sometimes called a low-angle position), the object or person seems to be more powerful than when the camera looks at the event straight on (eye-level) or down (high-angle position). When the camera takes a looking down position, it assumes a superior point of view, making the object, person, or event look less powerful.

Subjective camera means that the camera no longer observes an event but participates in it. One subjective camera technique is to have the camera temporarily assume the point of view of one of the screen characters. Under certain conditions, the viewer will then identify with this screen character. Another type of subjective camera is when the viewer is discovered by one of the screen characters (the camera). The attention and action of the character is then aimed directly at the viewer (the camera), thus forcing the viewer to participate in the screen event. The direct-address method, in which a television performer or actor speaks directly to the viewer (the camera), is another form of subjective camera technique. While common in television, this method is rarely effective in film presentations.

In over-the-shoulder shooting, the camera looks over the shoulder of the person who stands with his or her back to it at the person facing the camera. We usually see parts of the shoulder and head of the “close” person and the face of the “far” person. When cross-shooting, we move the “close” person entirely out of the shot, leaving only a close-up view of the “far person.”

Angles are useful in (1) helping vector continuity, (2) clarifying and intensifying an event, and (3) setting a style.

Varying angles from shot to shot will generally avoid jerky action when the shots are assembled in postproduction editing. Angles also
aid vector continuity. By displaying different angles simultaneously (through a superimposition or multiple screens, for example), we experience a new screen space that reveals or creates a complex event.

When intended for point-of-view clarification, the angles are dictated by direction and angle of the index vectors of people appearing on camera. When, for example, a tall person (A) talks to a shorter one (B), we will need to see B from above (A’s point of view looking down on B) and A slightly from below (B’s point of view looking up at A). Thus, angles contribute to an index vector consistency. To achieve index vector–target consistency, it is important to show the target object from the point of view (index vector angle) of the person doing the looking.

You can also use angles for event intensification to reveal the underlying attitude or feeling of a person in a particular situation. A secure person will look at an event differently than an insecure one will, and an adult will most likely see an event differently from how a child does. The angles must reveal such differences.

Finally, angles help to set style. Like handwriting, camera angles can reveal the personality and creative trademark of the television or film artist.

Notes

3. While proven successful over many centuries and in various situations by practical application, the psychological implications of looking up and looking down have not yet been substantiated by rigorous experimental research. Studies in this field are not conclusive and are, in fact, sometimes contradictory. See: