

The Exact Remake: A Statistical Style Analysis of Six Hollywood Films

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ABSTRACT

The Prisoner of Zenda (1937), *Psycho* (1960), and *The Omen* (1976), and the new versions made from the same scripts in 1952, 1998 and 2006 respectively, are given a detailed statistical analysis. This produces new evidence of stylistic differences between the originals and the form in which they were remade, and new conclusions are drawn from this. A new analytical technique for studying acting is also introduced.

Keywords

remakes, film style; statistical analysis, actor movement analysis; *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *Psycho*, *The Omen*.

Introduction

The shooting scripts of the films *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1937), *Psycho* (1960) and *The Omen* (1976) were all re-used, with only minor alteration, to make new versions of these films in 1952, 1998 and 2006 respectively, and all these films will be analysed for their stylistic differences and similarities.

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The Prisoner of Zenda

The Prisoner of Zenda (1937) was a typical David O. Selznick production for his Selznick International production company, in that he took a middle-brow literary best-seller, and made an expensive and faithful film adaptation of it. Although an earlier stage version of Anthony Hope's 1893 novel is mentioned in the film credits, the screenplay is actually adapted straight from the novel, with a good deal of Hope's original dialogue left intact. The cinematography by James Wong Howe is striking, with a strong tendency to low-key lighting, allied with a number of distinctive compositions.

The director of this version, John Cromwell, had previously worked for David O. Selznick on the first film Selznick produced for his own company, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1936). Cromwell had never directed any action subjects, and indeed *Zenda* actually contains little physical action other than the big swordfight finale. The film was very successful at the box office.

At some point in the 'forties, Selznick sold the script and rights of the novel to MGM, and they remade the film in 1952 in Technicolor, directed by Richard Thorpe. Usually when Hollywood studios remade earlier films, they made substantial alterations to the previous script, but in this case there was very little change in the dialogue and action. The only real change was a little rewording of the dialogue and its phraseology to reduce Anthony Hope's 1893 style of speech. Even more unusually, there was a real effort to reproduce the scene dissection of the original, with Richard Thorpe consulting a print of the 1937 version on set. The two versions are almost exactly the same length, with 1952 version only seven seconds shorter than the original version. The 1952 remake was also extremely successful at the box office.

The way John Cromwell's original version is shot is fairly close to the general norms of the period, though with an ASL of 6.5 seconds, the cutting is appreciably faster than the norm for 1937. (The mean Average Shot Length (ASL) for a sample of 63 American films from 1937 is 8.4 seconds.) The main non-standard feature of the shooting is the use of Close Up shots on reverse angles with the actors looking straight into the lens. This trope was used extensively by Cromwell in his *Of Human Bondage* (1934), but here it is restricted to two peak dramatic moments -- the first meeting of Rassendyl and Princess Flavia at his coronation, and then their next moment of intimacy at the subsequent reception. This choice of angle means that the shots concerned are classified as both reverse angles (RAs) and Point of View (POV) shots. There is also some interest in creating bilaterally symmetrical compositions in the shots, which probably comes from the director, though it not impossible that they were pre-designed by the art director.

The core statistical figures for the two versions of *The Prisoner of Zenda* are as follows, and are contrasted with the average figures for a fully analysed sample of American films from the nearest periods I have available; namely a

random sample of twenty films from 1939 and 1959 respectively. This comparison is valid because I believe there were no significant general stylistic changes in American films between 1937 and 1939, and also hardly any between 1952 and 1959. (The introduction of 'Scope in 1953 produced only a small hiccup in film style for a few years, as recounted in my *Film Style and Technology* (Salt, 2009b).) The figures for these comparative samples come from my previous articles (Salt, 2013) and (Salt, 2009a)

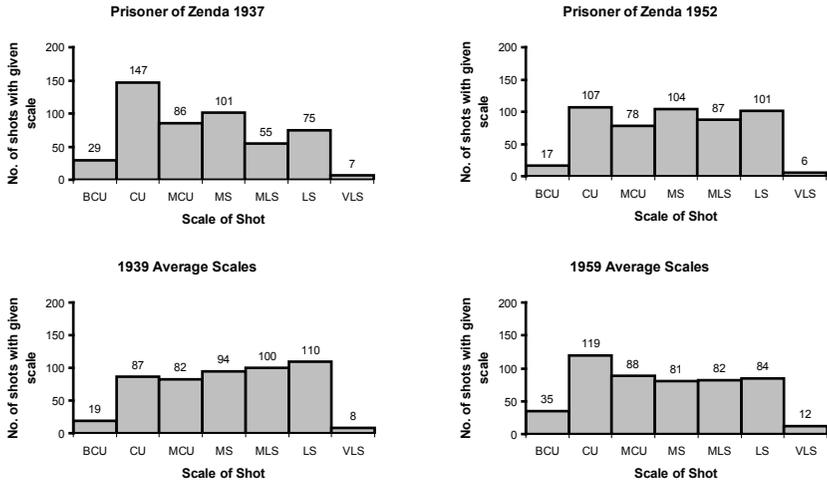
	ASL	% RA	% POV	% INS
Average of 20 films from 1939	8.8	30	7	5
<i>The Prisoner of Zenda</i> (1937)	6.5	41	1.5	4.5
US Average 1959	9.3	40	10	7
<i>The Prisoner of Zenda</i> (1952)	7.6	39	1	4.5

The respective quantities of reverse angles, POV shots and Insert shots for the two films are very close, as would be expected if the shot breakdown of the same script was the same, and the small differences indicate the small divergence in treatment. The 1952 version covers the scenes with less shots, and so its ASL of 7.6 seconds is larger, and closer to the period norm of 9.3 seconds. It is quite possible that this is because the director, Richard Thorpe, may have supplied pretty much the same coverage of the scenes as the original, the editor did not break the rushes down into quite so many separate shots for the cut. Both films use many less POV shots than the period norm, and the smaller number of POV shots in the remake is largely down to Richard Thorpe not copying John Cromwell's use of looks straight into the lens, of the kind already mentioned.

The other general style variables for the two film, as against the period norms, can be summed up by the comparative Scale of Shot breakdowns. (For a description of this stylistic framework, see my *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (Salt, 2009b).)

The Scale or Closeness of Shot is measured by the size of the human figure relative to the height of the frame. They are as follows: Big Close Up (BCU) shows head only, Close Up (CU) shows head and shoulders, Medium Close Up (MCU) includes body from the waist up, Medium Shot (MS) includes from just below the hip to above the head of upright actors, Medium Long Shot (MLS) shows the body from the knee upwards, Long Shot (LS) shows at least the full height of the body, and Very Long Shot (VLS) shows the actor small in the frame. As usual, the figures quoted are the number of each scale per 500 shots in the film concerned. An illustration of these scales can be found on the front cover of (Salt, 2006) and on the Cinematics website, at: <http://www.cinematics.lv/salt.php>.

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The obvious point about these statistics is that *Zenda* (1952) is much closer to the 1959 norm than *Zenda* (1937) is to the 1939 norm, as can be seen from simple inspection of the graphs. As part of that difference, *Zenda* 37 is shot markedly closer in than the 1939 norm -- with 36% of its shots MS or closer, whereas the norm has only 28% of its shots MS or closer. In the same way, *Zenda* 52 has 30% of its shots MS or closer, while the 1959 norm has 32% of its shots MS or closer, which not very different.

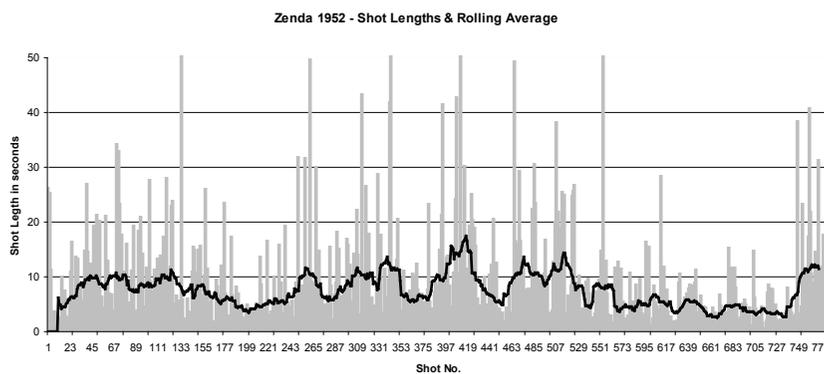
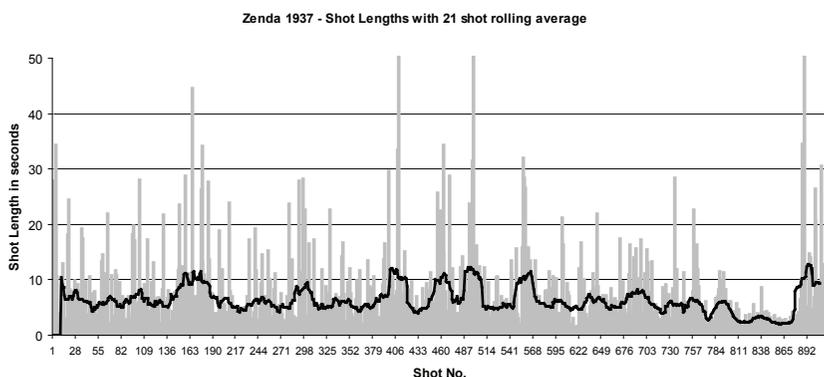
Turning to camera movement, the number of camera movements of the different types per 500 shots are listed below for the two versions of *The Prisoner of Zenda* and the corresponding norms for 1939 and 1959 derived from my 20 film samples for those years.

	Pan	Tilt	Pan w Tilt	Track	Tr w P&T	Crane	Zoom	Total moves
<i>Zenda</i> 37	17	1	3	11	4	2		38
1939 Norm	47	5	16	20	29	3	1	118
<i>Zenda</i> 52	40	8	17	11	19	4		99
1959 Norm	38	6	15	21	27	3	1	110

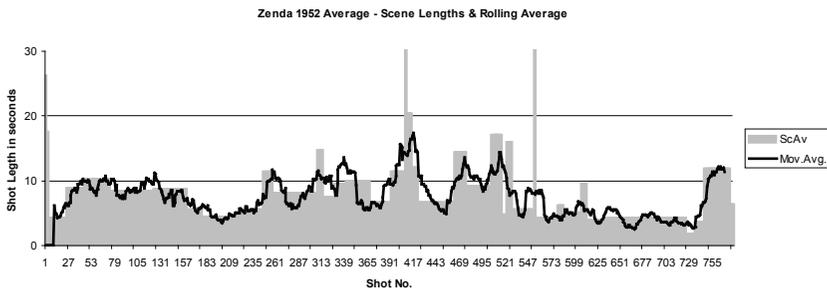
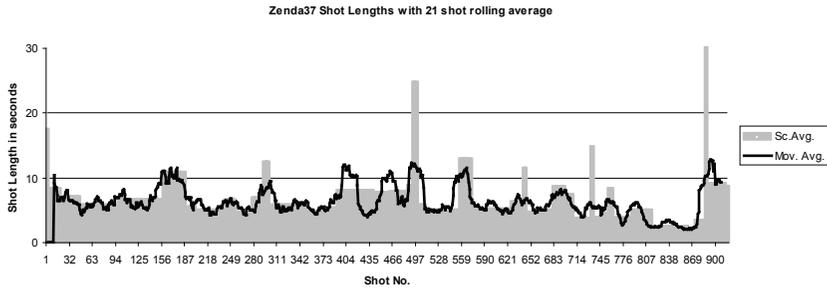
As you can see, the 1937 *Prisoner of Zenda* has far less camera movement of all kinds (except for crane shots) than the norm for 1939, whereas the 1952 version is quite close to the period norm as indicated by the 1959 figures.

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Serial shot length records for the two versions can be compared from the following graphs, which show successive shot lengths as vertical lines, and a thick black line indicating the value of a rolling or moving average taken over the 21 shots around each shot.



One can see a certain vague general resemblance in the pattern of successive shot lengths, and more so in the rolling average traces for the two films. As I have shown elsewhere, the rolling average traces can have a strong connection with the average shot lengths for individual scenes in a film. For this purpose a scene is established in the first place by the standard markers for scene termination in film of the high Hollywood period (from the 'thirties to the 'sixties); that is, dissolves, fades and wipes. In the second place I use dramatic and production criteria, so that when the action moves from one space to another, with a change in the characters involved, this also constitutes a scene change. In the next two graphs, the different lengths of shots within a scene are replaced by the average shot length for that scene, and the moving average is plotted as before.



As you can see, the profile of the moving average has a fairly good correspondence to the graph of the average lengths for each scene. The alternating heights of the average length of shots for each scene arises because there is a tendency for film-makers to match the cutting rate to the content of the scene, with faster cutting for action scenes, and slower cutting for romantic scenes, comedy scenes and ceremonial scenes, with intermediate values for ordinary dramatic scenes. And the standard practice in scriptwriting, taken over from the dramatic construction of 19th century plays, which was to alternate the different types of scene down the length of the play, was to do the same for films when they came along in history.

Psycho

Alfred Hitchcock made the film of Robert Bloch's novel for his own production company, and not for Paramount under the contract that he was fulfilling with his other films around this time. It appears that his intention was to produce a superior rival to the new variety of cheap American horror films that had begun to appear in the late 'fifties. The story structure of the film is unconventional, in that the person who appears to be the protagonist is killed halfway through the film, and then the killer becomes the central figure. The scene structure is also unusual, with a 10-minute dialogue scene between the killer and his victim immediately preceding her murder. *Psycho* was an immense success at the box office, and is considered to be the inspiration for

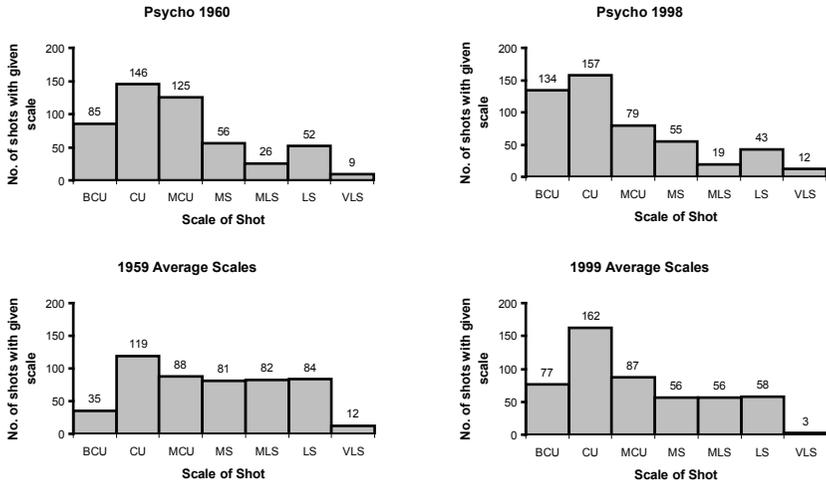
subsequent ‘slasher’ films. Gus Van Sant had wanted to do an identical remake of *Psycho* as an experiment for years before he actually got the chance to do it, which was after the financial success of his film *Good Will Hunting* (1997) made Universal Studios receptive to the idea. Although he expected that his remake would be financially successful, he does not appear to have been aware of the fact that the 1952 version of *The Prisoner of Zenda* was close to being a shot-for-shot remake.

Because there were some cuts made to the script of the original *Psycho* for the remake, it was necessary to cut down the original by removing the shots and parts of shots containing these before I could make an exact comparison of the two films. One complete scene in the latter part of the original film, showing Lila Crane and Sam Loomis meeting the Deputy Sherrif outside a church, was cut, and I also made a number of cuts inside the scenes of the original, to leave out passages of dialogue that were dropped in the remake. This reduced the length of original from 106 minutes 21 seconds to 99 minutes 11 seconds (As always, I am leaving the front and end credits out of the reckoning.) So in what follows I am working with this reduced version of the original film, which contains 947 shots. On the other hand, the remake contains 969 shots and runs 97 minutes 6 seconds. The extra shots in the remake are mostly in the shower scene and the scene in which Lila explores the house and is attacked by Norman. These extra shots, combined with the shorter total length of the remake, reduce the Average Shot Length, as indicated in this summary of the key variables. The 1999 figures come from (Salt, 2004).

	ASL	% RA	% POV	% INS
Average of 20 films from 1959	9.3	40	10	7
<i>Psycho</i> (1960)	6.3	63	13	13
Average of 20 films from 1999	5.5	40	9	12
<i>Psycho</i> (1998)	6	55	12	14

The points to notice are that the original *Psycho* is cut a lot faster than the typical American film of 1959, whereas the remake is near the norm for its period. In other words, most American film makers in 1999 had caught up with the cutting rate Hitchcock was using 40 years earlier. The other major variables show Hitchcock using quite a lot more reverse angle cuts than the average American film-maker of 1959, though not significantly more POV shots and inserts. Since the Gus Van Sant version was intended to be a shot-for-shot remake, it is not surprising that the variables for his film are similar to the origi-

nal, though the smaller percentage of reverse angle cuts indicates that Van Sant's scene dissection is not quite identical to the original. Likewise, the Scale of Shot analysis also shows that the two film are not completely identical:

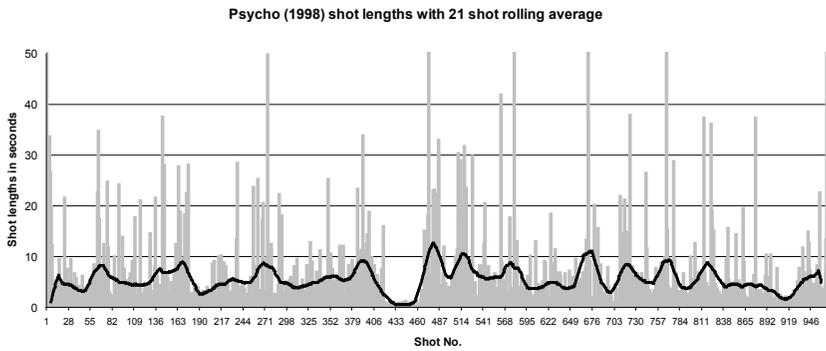
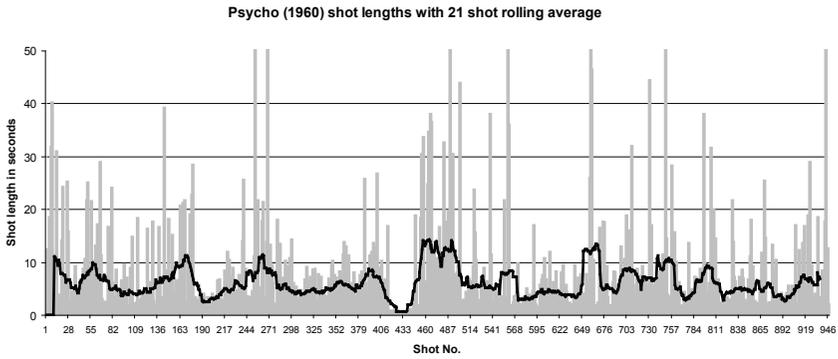


Van Sant has shot his version a bit closer in, with a definite shift towards using more Big Close Ups than Medium Close Ups, though the use of Medium Shot and wider is pretty much the same in the two films. Just as with the previously cited variables, the original *Psycho* has shot scales close to those for the typical 1999 film, which would be shot much closer in than the typical 1959 American film. But the remake is shot only slightly closer in than the typical 1999 film.

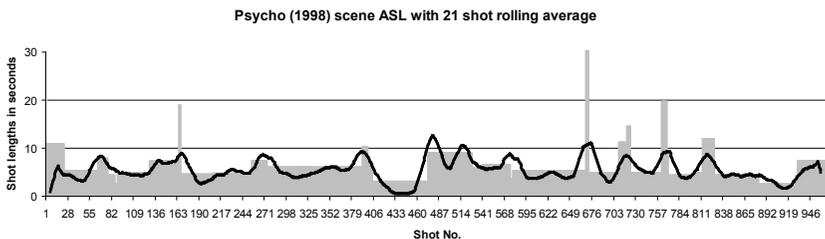
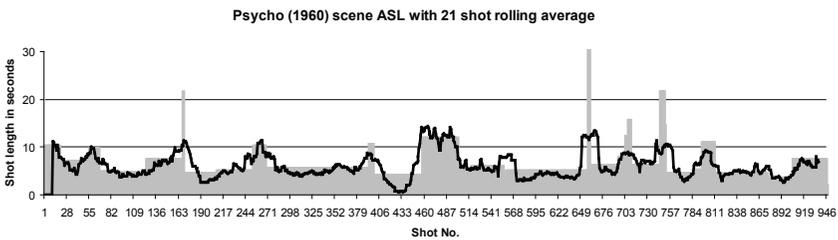
The degree of resemblance in the camera movement in the two versions is quite close, both between the two films, and also with the period norms. However, there is bit more tracking of various kinds in the remake.

	Pan	Tilt	Pan w Tilt	Track	Tr w P&T	Crane	Zoom	Total moves
<i>Psycho</i> (1960)	25	3	17	15	22	1	1	84
1959 Norm	35	6	15	21	27	3	1	110
<i>Psycho</i> (1998)	23	4	18	18	26	2	1	92
1999 Norm	16	5	16	20	30	4	2	93

When we turn to the shot lengths, the close resemblance continues:



The general resemblance is even more obvious in the graphs for the rolling average plotted with the average shot length per scene.



Looking at the closeness of shot for the beginnings and endings of scenes in the two versions of *Psycho*, we find that of the 37 scenes in the original, 11 start on a shot closer than Medium Shot (MS) and 20 end on a something closer than MS, while 8 scenes both start and end closer than MS. In the remake, the figures are 14 scenes starting closer than MS, 22 finishing closer than MS and 10 scenes of the 37 both starting and finishing closer than MS. The difference in this respect between the two version is down to the fact that the 1998 version is shot a bit closer in on the average, as already demonstrated.

Despite being a close reproduction of the original 1960 *Psycho*, the 1998 version was commercially unsuccessful, so the question is, why was it not? The obvious answers, which have been advanced by many people, is firstly that after 40 years the mass audience for 'slasher' films has come to demand more gruesome murders per hour. In fact one every ten minutes or so. The second explanation is in the casting of the leads, and their performances. In the original *Psycho*, Anthony Perkins and Janet Leigh were established stars, and heading into middle age, whereas in the 1998 remake, the leads were Anne Heche and Vince Vaughn, who were younger, and not really established as film stars. There is also the matter of their acting performances. Vince Vaughn has clearly physically modelled his performance as closely as he could on that of Anthony Perkins, though he very much lacks Perkins' innate neuroticism. On the other hand, Anne Heche essentially provides her natural flirty flibbertigibbet performance, which is noticeably different to Janet Leigh's mature reserve, though Heche does use some of Janet Leigh's poses in the big dialogue scene before her murder. The secondary leading actors in the remake are much more equal in weight to their predecessors, though Julianne Moore plays the sister in a much more aggressive way than Vera Miles, as many have noted.

Part of the skill of professional actors is the ability to regulate the breadth of the gestures making up their performance, both physically and vocally, or to put it another way, how much they move the various parts of their body, including their face. In fact regulating this is the principal method stage and film directors have always used in directing actors, as described in pages 280 to 284 of 'Acting In the Movies' in *Moving Into Pictures* (Salt, 2006). The movement involved in an actor's performance can be quantified under certain conditions, and the two versions of *Psycho* are an obvious opportunity to try this out. On page 156 in the article 'Counting in Ones and Twos', also in *Moving Into Pictures*, I developed a method of measuring the area of the frame that is swept by the movement of cartoon characters during a shot, and hence the amount of character movement within the shot. My technique involved much hand labour, and could have been applied to live action films as well. But since then James Cutting and his associates have developed much better computer methods for measuring the total amount of movement in the scene within the film frame in a series of papers : (Cutting, DeLong and Brunick, 2011a), (Cutting, Brunick, DeLong, Iricinschi & Candan, 2011b) and (Cutting 2014).

The technique is based on measuring the changes in the luminance of the individual pixels that make up a digital image of an individual film frame. When working with films in digital form, as from a DVD, it is usual when working in this area to reduce the definition (i.e. number of pixels making up the image), to speed up the calculations subsequently involved. For instance, in my handling of *Psycho* (1960), I started with a Blu-ray disc which had frames of size 1920 x 1080 pixels, and I reduced these to frames of 320 x 240 pixels for my calculations. There is a very important additional benefit to this practice, which I do not think has been recognised, in that high resolution images of old films often suffer from image jiggle, so that what was originally a static background inside a static shot actually shows minute movements through lack of perfect registration of succeeding film images. In theory, since most American films have been shot with pin-registered cameras for nearly 100 years, a digital scan of the original camera negative should give perfect registration of successive frames, but unfortunately the master material available to make digital copies has usually been copied one or more times photographically in film printers before it is scanned. And so it is for the recent Blu-ray copy of the original *Psycho*, where at full resolution background movement is visible in its images. This is not the case for the remake.

My complete procedure is as follows. After reducing the image definition to 320 x 240 pixels for the working video file of the film, I convert it to grey-scale images in Adobe After Effects, and then create a difference matte between successive frames to give a new video file (or clip). Difference images typically look like this from a fixed frame shot:



In this image, the thin white outline indicates the very small amount that Anthony Perkin's body has moved between two frames of film, while his right hand, which was dropping very fast, produces a lot of difference as a grey smear. When there is a cut from one shot to the next, we get the following sort

of difference matte, which makes a kind of superimposition of the two frames on either side of the cut:



The advantage of the difference matte method is that it highlights the movement going on to visual inspection.

The next step is to edit the difference matte file in a non-linear editor (Adobe Premiere Pro) and select the shots with no camera movement from the particular scene under consideration, and which also include just the actor being studied, and then export them as a continuous video file or clip. (I leave out the difference frames across the cut from one shot to the next.) Then a MATLAB program adapted and rewritten from one that James Cutting kindly gave to me was then applied to the video files to get a sum of the luminance values for each pixel in each frame, and then the program averages the results across all the frames. This gives a number that corresponds to the average amount of actor movement in the clip, and which lies somewhere between 0 and 1. If all the difference frames are identically black, and hence there was no movement at all in the original, the value would be 0, and if successive frames in the original film alternated between complete black and complete white, the result would be 1. For the first image shown above, this Visual Activity Index is 0.013, and for the second it is 0.110.

Since the content of the scenes and the way they were shot were so close to being identical, the two versions of Psycho are an ideal testing grounds for measuring comparative actor movement. My subjective impression was that Vince Vaughn and Anne Heche in the 1998 version were making more movements than Anthony Perkins and Janet Leigh did in the original. Comparing them all in the long central conversation in the middle of the film gave the following results. (Since the actors are seated in this scene, and move so little, the direct Visual Activity Index is very small, so from this point onwards I quote the actual values multiplied by 100; that is, as percentages.)

For Anthony Perkins in the 1960 version, this value is 0.209, while in the

remake, the value for Vince Vaughn is 0.347. That is, Vaughn moves 66% more than Anthony Perkins while delivering the same lines in this scene. In the same scene, Janet Leigh's movements produce a value of 0.114, while in the remake, the movements of Anne Heche register as 0.205, which is 80% more.

For the hotel room scene between Marion Crane and Sam Loomis at the beginning of the film, there is obviously a lot more movement from everyone than in the long dialogue between Norman Bates and Marion Crane which has just been discussed. The respective figures for the movement of both actors in the scene taken together are 1.05 for the 1960 original and 1.54 for the 1998 remake.

Cutting out the difference frames at the cuts before calculating the movement is obviously a very laborious process for a film like *Psycho*, which has about 1000 shots in it, but there is a short-cut way of eliminating them. In general, the sum of the luminance for all the pixels in a difference matte frame is a small fraction of 1, even if there is a lot of movement of foreground and background going on, whereas for the difference frames across a cut, the value is very high. So by writing a MATLAB program that rejects all difference frames that have their luminance above a certain point, one can get a total average value for the Visual Activity Index that is approximately correct, without the cut difference frames. The program counts the number of difference frames rejected, and the cut off point is adjusted till the number of rejects is very close to the number of cuts in the film. (This process of working is equivalent to that of the various computer programs that have been created to count the number of shots in a film.) Comparing the result of using this technique with not using it, and letting the cut difference frames count in the total makes an appreciable difference, of the order of 10%, to the amount of movement detected. Since the particular one of James Cutting's papers (Cutting, 2014) which directly inspired my work does not remove the contribution of the cut differences, his results in that paper exaggerate the Visual Activity Index. This would not matter for his survey of the historical development of movement inside the film frame, where what counts for his conclusions are the relative values for different films at different periods, but for the fact that the number of shots in films has increased greatly over the last sixty years. This means that Cutting's results exaggerate the increase in visual activity over this period, though there is no doubt that there has been increase in this variable.

For the record, the total amount of visual activity over the whole film for the remake of *Psycho* is only slightly greater than that for the original (0.825 compared to 0.814 for the original version.) But the remake has more camera movement (92 moves per 500 shots compared to 84 per 500 for the original) so the *total* actor movement in both versions is about the same.

Obviously, I used this technique to compare the performances of Ronald Colman and Stewart Granger in the two versions of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, but for comparable parts of scenes there was effectively no difference in the visual

activity they were creating. This was a disappointment, as I had the impression that Stewart Granger was showing more small scale movement at some times within the same scenes in which Colman was completely still, but I could not bring this out mathematically. The problem was that in these parts of scenes there were always other people in the frame, as happens, for instance, in the very first scene in both versions of the film.

The Omen

A similar problem in using this approach to actor movement occurred with the two versions of *The Omen*, though here the source of the difficulty was that the remake of 2006 had so much camera movement, and particularly very small camera movements, that the leading character's personal movement could not be separated out.

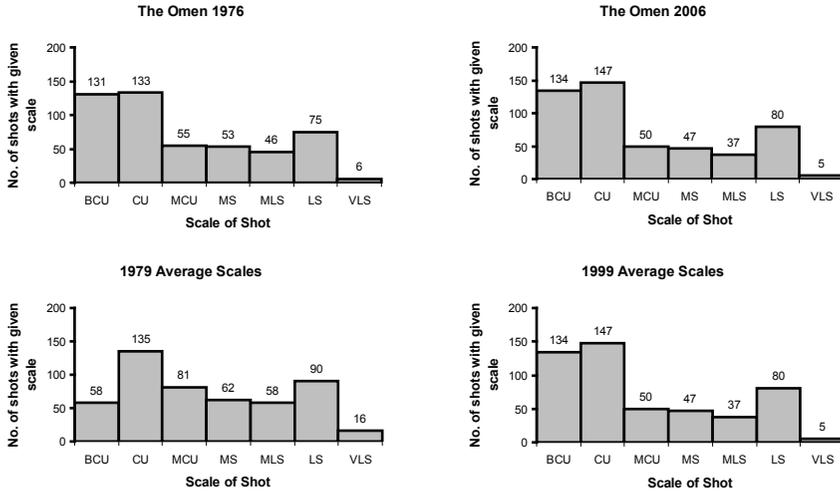
The first version of *The Omen*, released in 1976, was a very big box-office success, so in 2005, with *The Da Vinci Code* in production at Columbia, no doubt Twentieth Century Fox thought that a fast and relatively cheap remake of *The Omen* would be worthwhile. They used the same script as the original, though with a few added scenes. While the script being used was the same, there was no attempt to do a shot-for-shot remake, as was the case for the previous films I have been analysing. Nevertheless, the director, John Moore, claimed he was very familiar with the original version (Staci Layne Wilson, 2006), but pretending that Prague and the Balkans were London and Italy and Israel was bound to put a crimp on any close visual resemblance to the original. The added scenes were easy to edit out, so a direct stylistic comparison is possible with the original 1976 version, in the same way as for *Psycho*.

The major variables for the two versions are again compared with those of random samples of 20 American films that I have nearest in date. The 1979 figures come from (Salt, 2014).

	ASL	% RA	% POV	% INS
Average of 20 films from 1979	6.5	40	9	12
<i>The Omen</i> (1979)	5.6	37	4	15
Average of 20 films from 1999	5.5	40	8	11
<i>The Omen</i> (2006)	3.8	36	4	22

The figures for both versions are mostly quite close to those for the comparable period samples, except that both versions are cut faster than the period norm, and both are relatively lacking in POV shots. My 20 film sample from 1999 is quite a bit off as regards a typical ASL, as another much bigger sample of 172 films from 1998 has a mean ASL of 5 seconds, but that still leaves *The*

Omen (2006) on the fast cutting side for its period. In fact closer to the ASL for the action films that director John Moore usually makes. Turning to the Scale of Shot comparison, we get:



Despite the fact that there was no stated intention to do an exact shot-for-shot remake, as you can see, the Scale of Shot profiles for the two films are very similar, and both are very similar to the 1999 average for my 20 film sample from that year. The 1976 version of *The Omen* was looking forward to where the scene dissection of American films was headed, with its heavier emphasis on close shooting.

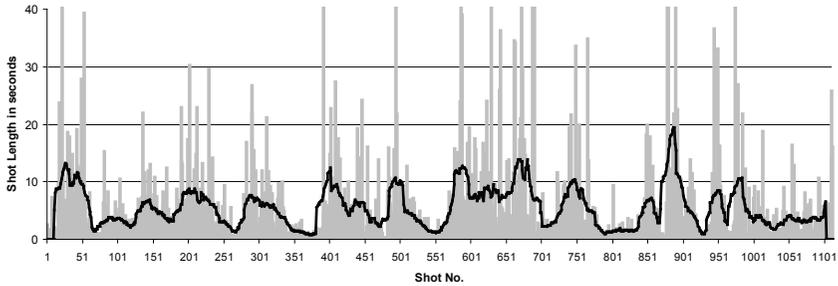
The picture for camera movement per 500 shots is a little different:

	Pan	Tilt	Pan w Tilt	Track	Tr w P&T	Crane	Zoom	Total moves
<i>The Omen</i> 1976	32	8	44	17	19	1	10	131
1979 Norm	31	9	23	16	18	2	8	106
<i>The Omen</i> 2006	23	4	18	18	26	2	1	92
1999 Norm	16	5	16	20	30	4	2	93

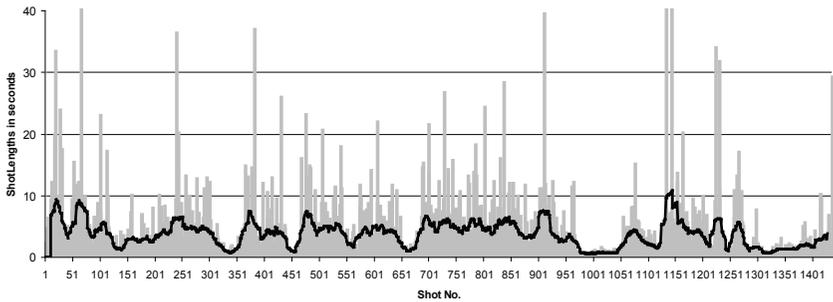
The original 1976 version of *The Omen* has noticeably more camera movement than the period norm as far as combined panning and tilting movements are concerned, while the 2006 remake is almost identical to the period norm in all its kinds of camera movement. What my analysis does not count is the much larger amount of very small camera movements resulting from the use of Steadicam that can be seen in the remake. (I do not record camera movements of less than 10 degrees, to eliminate the automatic reframings allowing for small actor shifts in position.)

There is more difference in the pattern in successive shot lengths between the two versions of *The Omen* than in my previous examples, but the large-scale pattern as represented by the rolling average and the scene ASLs are still fairly similar for these two films:

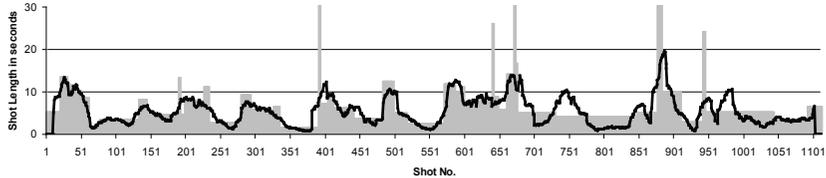
Omen 1976 - Shot lengths & Rolling Average



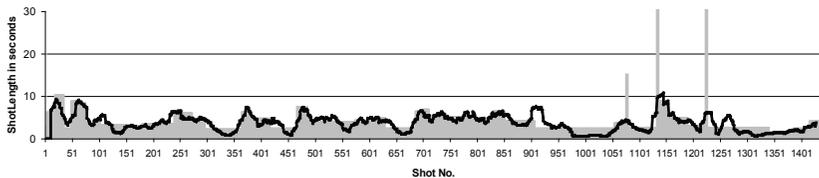
Omen 2006 (Reduced) - Shot Lengths & Rolling Average



Omen 1976 - Scene Average & Rolling Average



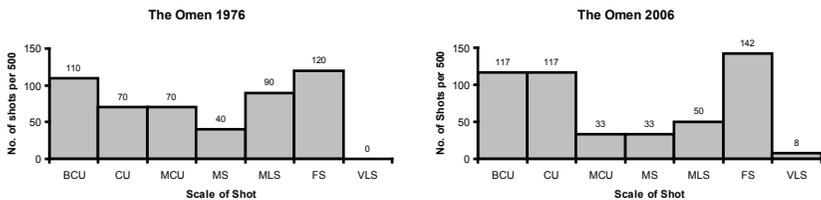
Omen 2006 (Reduced) - Scene Average & Rolling Average



In the graph showing plots for the rolling average and scene average shot lengths, the usual alternation of faster and slower cutting rates through the successive scenes of the films can be seen, and the peaks and troughs match fairly well for the two films. However the correspondence breaks down a bit in the middle, covering the scenes of Mrs. Thorn being irritated by Damien's behaviour, the psychiatrist interview, and Damien knocking his mother off the balcony. (Shots 484 to 571 in the original, and Shots 574 to 686 in the remake.) Although the dialogue in these scenes is the same, John Moore handles them very differently, and much less realistically, than Richard Donner.

Following the general trend of the last three decades, John Moore inserts some mental image flashes at two or three points, showing images that are meant to be frightening, and he uses them to try to make the film more 'visceral' than the original, as he puts in the interview with Staci Layne Wilson (Staci Layne Wilson 2006). These shots are what put the amount of Insert Shots up to 22% from the 15% used in the original version.

The scene of Damien knocking his mother off the balcony is worth analysing in more detail to sharpen this comparison. In the original 1976 version this scene is covered in 54 shots totalling 130 seconds, whereas in the 2006 remake it is expanded to 60 shots running for 150 seconds. All these extra shots and time in the 2006 version are used up in Damien riding his scooter all the way round four sides of the balcony before colliding with the chair his mother is standing on. This whole scene is in two parts; first the Satanic nanny gets him wound up to ride his tricycle (scooter in the remake) out onto the balcony, and then into the actual attempt on his mother's life. The usage of shot scales in the two versions looks like this for the whole scene:



The heavier emphasis on close shots in the remake is again part of its conformity to 2006 general style, but the excess of LS and VLS is not, but again part of John Moore's pointless exhibitionism. He has three long lasting Long Shots emphasising the great height of the balcony from the atrium floor, when one would have been quite enough. And he puts in extra inserts detailing just how the planter suspension chain snaps, and so on.

Richard Donner handled this whole scene in the 'pure cinema' manner, starting with cuts of very close panning shots of Damien riding his tricycle in a tight circle. This series culminates in a hand-held shot that combines pan-

ning and tilting with a rotation of the camera about the lens axis, which is a virtuoso piece of camera operating and directorial conception. His nanny's mind control of Damien is indicated by intercutting a series of bigger and bigger close ups of her eyes throughout this scene. Extra dramatically relevant complexity is introduced with shots of his mother hanging a suspended planter on the balcony cut into the first part of the scene. The subsequent ride to the attack is also faster in the original version. All in all, a demonstration of the expressive technique of classical film-making. Against this, all John Moore can think of is having the nanny get Damien to attempt the murder of his mother by feeding him strawberries. This is just silly in any worlds, including that of horror films.

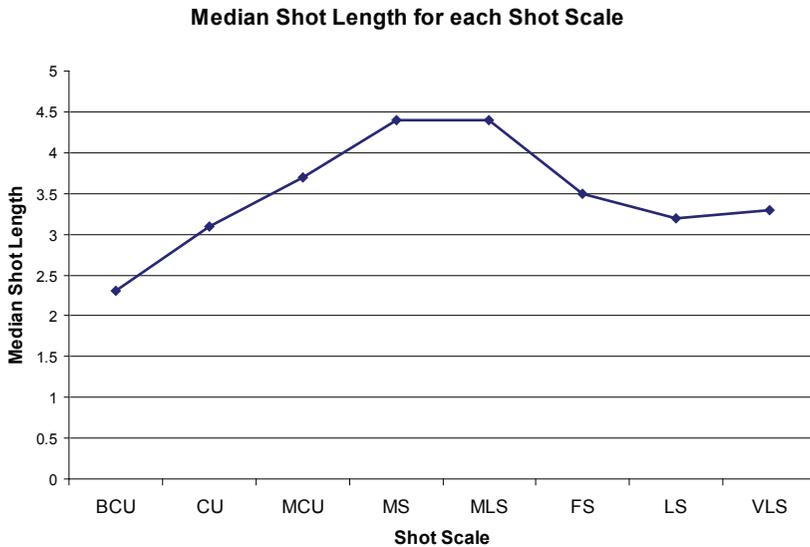
Interrelationship of the Variables

Since I have recorded the various stylistic variables for each individual shot in all these films, it is obviously appropriate to study their interconnection. The simple way to do this is to look at the correlations between the major stylistic variables for each film. These are Scale of Shot, shot length and camera movement. Scale of Shot is given a numerical scale by substituting 1 for BCU, and so on up 8 for VLS. The camera movements for each shot are scaled from 1 for static shots through 2 for pans and/or tilts, 3 for straight tracking, 4 for tracking with pans and/or tilts, 5 for zooming, and 6 for crane shots. Taking these variables pairwise, we get these results:

Film	Scale vs. Shot Length	Movement vs. Length	Scale vs. Movement
<i>Prisoner of Zenda</i> 1937	0.068	0.245	0.091
<i>Prisoner of Zenda</i> 1952	0.058	0.398	0.183
<i>Psycho</i> 1960	0.121	0.535	0.109
<i>Psycho</i> 1998	0.109	0.423	0.128
<i>The Omen</i> 1976	0.076	0.293	0.071
<i>The Omen</i> 2006	0.087	0.347	0.288

It has been suggested, though not by me, that there is generally a correlation of the Scale of Shot with the length of a shot, but from these figures this can obviously only be partially true, at best. An alternative method for investigating the relation between shot length and Shot Scale has been used by James Cutting and Kacie Armstrong (Cutting & Armstrong, 2016), which looks at the distribution of shot lengths for each category of Shot Scale in a sample of

24 American films. I followed their procedure for my sample of six films, and aggregated the values of lengths for each scale. I then took the median of the lengths, as the distribution of shotlengths for each scale of shot is approximately LogNormal, just like the distribution of shot lengths for whole films. This gives the following graph:



As you can see, there is a marked tendency for shots to get longer as we go from BCU to the mid-range of MS and MLS, but then the typical shot length becomes shorter again as we go to the more distant shot range. This is similar to the results that Cutting and Armstrong get in the paper cited. The results for my films taken individually are also similar. So the suggested general tendency for shot lengths to be longer, the more distant the shot, is definitely not completely true. The situation would be better described as a tendency for shots in the middle range to be longer.

However, in my results for amount of camera movement against shot length there is a significant correlation between camera movement and the length of a shot, obviously because the more complicated movements need more time to actually carry them out. For Scale of Shot versus camera movement there is very little correlation, except for the 2006 version of *The Omen*. This may be a personal stylistic indicator, but more examples are needed to decide this point.

Another long and widely held belief about film structure is that film scenes usually begin and end with more distant shots. This is a long way short of being true for all these films, as you can see for the percentages of scenes that begin or end with a close shot in the table below:

Film	First Shot less than MS	Last shot less than MS	First & last less than MS
<i>Prisoner of Zenda</i> 1937	26%	39%	9%
<i>Prisoner of Zenda</i> 1952	20%	30%	5%
<i>Psycho</i> 1960	30%	54%	22%
<i>Psycho</i> 1998	38%	59%	27%
<i>The Omen</i> 1976	39%	61%	31%
<i>The Omen</i> 2006	27%	69%	18%

The remake of *The Prisoner of Zenda* has less terminal close shots in its scenes than the original because it is shot further back, as has already been shown, while the 1998 *Psycho* has more terminal close shots for the opposite reason. The two versions of *The Omen* are not that different overall in this respect. There is clearly an evolution with increasing date through this sample, and my subjective impression is that this is true for most films. That is, in recent times, it is more likely that a film scene will end with a close shot than with a more distant shot, though it is still true that a scene will more probably start with a distant shot.

Conclusions

Apart from the results immediately above, which cast doubt on the received idea that the standard method of scene dissection is to start and end a scene with a wide shot, my results suggest that film style is not a major determinant in the box-office success of feature films. This follows from the fact that *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1952) was a commercial success, while *Psycho* (1998) was not, even though both were stylistically very similar to the original versions of these films. The formal characteristics of *The Omen* (2006) follow the norms of its date of production, but this difference did not help it succeed, either. The simpler common notion, that the content of a film is what matters most for its success, is not really tested by what I have done. The two major parts of the content are of course the script and the actors. Here we have the same scripts for the remakes, which leave differences created by using differing actors. The two failures amongst these remakes are *Psycho* (1998) and *The Omen* (2006). In the first case, the style of the performances is mostly not that far away from the original, although the acting is a little broader from the principals, as I have demonstrated. In the second case the acting of the two leads in the remake is also further away from that in the original. The major difference from the box-office perspective is that both unsuccessful remakes have markedly less star power than the originals. The remaining factor in the differences

in the commercial success of the remakes is the fact that generic story norms for mass-market movies have changed over time. In the case of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, only 15 years elapsed between the original and the remake, and what would be expected by the audience from a historical romance had not changed at all, whereas for *Psycho*, 38 years separate the remake from the original, and as already remarked, for the slasher genre, over that time, audiences have become used to many more gruesome murders per hour. As for *The Omen*, the makers did supply one extra horrific killing, not to mention some additional visual horrors. Given this story updating, together with the stylistic updating covered in my analysis, the other major negative difference again reduces to the deficiencies of the casting.

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