A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTOR PERCEPTION

AND AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF VLADIMIR AND

ESTRAGON IN WAITING FOR GODOT

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The purpose of this study was to discover what relationship, if any, exists between the actor's perception of audience feedback concerning his portrayal of a character in a drama and the audience's perception of that particular character.

The study was designed as a five-stage process: (1) the establishment of a theory of a drama as communication; (2) the design of an instrument for measuring the perception of a character in a drama; (3) the production of a play for separate test audiences; (4) the administration of the "character perception" instrument (semantic differential) to both audience and actors after each performance (requiring the actors to rate the character as they thought the audience had); (5) the compilation and correlation of the data generated by the instrument. The report was presented in three chapters.

In Chapter I, drama was defined as communication of a playwright's messages to the audience by all possible means. Both the means and the messages were seen to be modified as a result of the feedback received from the audience. Chapter II dealt with the method of the experiment: subjects, instrument,

and procedures. The final chapter presented the results, a summary, and conclusions from the study. The correlational data, a factorial analysis, and suggestions for further research were included in the conclusion.

The analysis of the correlational data indicated that the audience's perception of Estragon and Vladimir in the first scene of Sameul Beckett's Waiting for Godot was strongly related to each actor's perception of audience feedback concerning his character. The correlation coefficients obtained (.56, .61, .55, .46, .76, and .75) were all significant to the .01 level of confidence. That is, the probability that the measured relationship happened by chance was less than one in a hundred. Thus, audience feedback seemed to be measured by the instrument.

A factor analysis of the scales employed on the semantic differential indicated five factors which defined the semantic space employed by the subjects when judging the characters in the scene. These five areas matched quite closely three previously documented dimensions noted in prior research: the evaluative, potency, and activity dimensions of meaning. The factor analysis and the significantly high correlations appeared to prove the value of the semantic differential technique when examining the dramatic process.

Although the study revealed a strong communicative relationship between audience and actor, the inability to separate some communicational sources and to establish cause and effect relationships because of the correlational techniques employed

may have partially limited the scope of the experiment. The results of the study, however, should provide some basis for future research into the dramatic process.

The results of the study indicated that the audience's perception of a character in a drama is related to the actor's perception of the audience feedback concerning the character. The study also demonstrated the efficacy of the semantic differential technique for evaluating dramatic performances.

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

By common consent, drama is the communication of a play
to an audience by an actor. The relationship among these ele-
ments has been studied by theatre artists and technicians, and
by theorists and critics, for the purpose of understanding
drama. Nevertheless, although different aspects of the audi-
ence have been described, there are few systematic studies of
audience behavior at a play (8, 16, 17, 18, 30, 31). Some rea-
sons for this neglect are (1) the uniqueness of each audience
and performance practically defies control; (2) variables are
not only difficult to define and manipulate, but their number
approaches infinity; and causations are difficult to prove
because of drama's communicative nature. Is an audience merely
the total of its individuals' responses? What is its purpose
in relation to the drama? Is it participatory in nature? How
can the quantity or quality of its responses be measured? What
is actually happening at the performance of a drama?

Although this thesis does not attempt to answer all of
these questions, it may shed some light on an otherwise dark
corner of dramatic theory. Thanks to progress made in recent
years by behavioral scientists, objective studies of the audi-
ence's relation to drama are now possible.

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The problem with which this study was concerned may be stated as follows: What relationship, if any, exists between the actor's perception of audience feedback concerning his portrayal of a character and the audience's perception of that particular character?

The study followed a process with five stages: (1) the establishment of a theory of a drama as communication; (2) the design of an instrument for measuring the perception of a character in a drama; (3) the production of a play for separate test audiences; (4) the administering of a "character-perception" instrument to both audience and actors after each performance (requiring the actors to rate the character as they think the audience has); and (5) the compiling and correlating of the data generated by the instrument.

The analysis of the data revealed the degree to which the audience's perception of a character in a drama is proportional to the actor's perception of the audience feedback concerning that character. The study also demonstrated the efficacy of the instrument for evaluating dramatic performances.

Drama as Communication

Warren Weaver defines communication to "include all of the procedures by which one mind may affect another. This, of course, involves not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballet, and, in fact, all human behavior (24, p. 95)." Examined as a communication net, this behavior may be represented by the schematic in Figure 1.

PLAY (MESSAGE)

ACTOR
(TRANSMITTER)

AUDIENCE
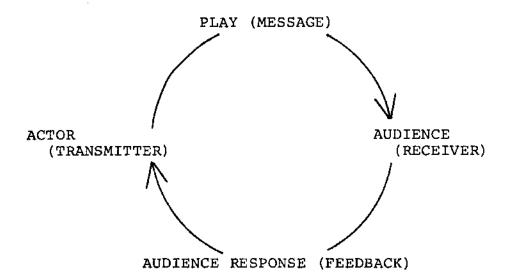(RECEIVER)

AUDIENCE RESPONSE (FEEDBACK)

Fig. 1--Drama as Communication

In this schematic, the "performance" is the actor-audience process of interplay. Both audience and actor perceive the drama through a system of mutual feedback. Since the actor is "playing a character," ultimately it may be the perception of character that guides the audience and the actor into the drama. Of all the variables which affect the communication, this achievement of the playwright's characters is the most fundamental.

A review of drama theory and criticism discovered two approaches: (1) esthetic theories which examine dramatic communication in terms of purpose, style, and form (1, 2, 3, 7, 14, 15) and (2) statistical studies which can measure the on-going and organic activities inherent in both drama and communication (4, 5, 6, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29). If the contributions from both approaches are summarized, a combined theory is possible. In this view, drama as communication

focuses on the transmission of the playwright's messages to the audience by all possible means and on the modification of both the means and the messages as a result of the feedback received from the audience. The chief medium is the actor's performance, which presents the audience with a set of cues to the characters in the drama. Through feedback, the audience keeps the actor aware of how successful the communication is at each moment in the drama. The actor modifies his performance according to the information he receives in this manner. In this situation, feedback includes all verbal and non-verbal messages trans-mitted by the receiver of the orignial message, the audience in this case, to the original transmitter, the actor.

Measurement

In a general way, this theory of communication has been practiced by every actor since Thespis. To provide objective means of testing "what every actor knows," however, an instru-ment that evaluates both audience and actor perceptions of a character in a play is necessary. For the purposes of this instrument, a character in a play is presumed to have a dis-tinct personality or self-image that operates just as observably as that of a "real" human being. Murphy's observation (19, p. 715) that self-images are consistent enough to formulate measurable "stands or roles" has been employed by psychologists, sociol-ogists, and communications theorists to construct tests which note changes in personality or character, and differences

between self-image and image-to-others (4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29).

These tests have proven invaluable because of their sensitivity and versatility. The correlational methods which can be employed on these tests have also proven invaluable. Although the correlations provide no reason for inferring cause-effect relationships, their revelation of hitherto unknown influences on complex human behavior patterns has indicated new ways for understanding that behavior. Plutchik explains that these correlational methods of testing measure the relations between two or more phenomena that have been observed or evaluated. There are no attempts to manipulate or change conditions, the time sequence has no particular relevance, and if the correlation between the two variables turns out to be high and reliable, it can be used for prediction. Frequently, in fact, the correlational methods suggest hypotheses which may be tested by other means of experimentation (21, p. 51).

The instrument used in the present study was designed to evaluate audience and actor perceptions of a character in a drama. It was assumed that a character in a drama could be defined by noting the consistency of both audience and actor perceptions on such an instrument. Throughout the study, Sherif's concept of "attitude" served as the basis for measuring those perceptions:

> When we talk about attitudes, we are talking about what a person has learned in the process of becoming a member of a family, a member of a group, and of society that makes him react to his social world in a consistent and characteristic way, instead of a transitory and haphazard way. We are talking about the fact that he is no longer neutral in sizing up the world around him: He is attracted or repelled, for or against, favorable or unfavorable. We are talking about the fact that his behavior toward other persons, groups, institutions, and notions takes on a consistent and characteristic pattern as he becomes socialized. . . . We refer to how we see ourselves and others after we have attended to some aspect of the multi-faceted world about us (25, p. 2).

With this concept of attitude in mind, Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (20) develop and justify the semantic differential technique for testing perceptions such as those which are the subject of this thesis. Their point of view, which states the concepts of dramatic communication and perception measurement used in this thesis, is summarized below:

> The language channel is admittedly the most finely coded and coupling between human communicators, but it is not the only channel. There is also, for example, the visuo-gestural channel of facial and postural expressions-- one may study the efficiency of communication between intentions of "actors" and significances in "judges" via this medium. . . . Similarly, aesthetics may be studied as a kind of communication: the source (artist, composer, writer, poet) encodes in the medium of his special talent, presumably expressing his own meanings or intentions by his selection among alternatives (colors, texture, tempo, harmonics, metaphor, word-choice, etc.); there is aesthetic communication to the extent to which receivers (the audience) experience corresponding meanings or significances upon decoding the signs produced by the source (20, p. 273).

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CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

Decisions as to the play, actors, and audiences employed in the experiment were inter-related to a great extent by the arbitrary limitations of time, space, cost, and availability of various materials. A play of relatively short length or one conducive to cutting proved to be the first consideration. Since the experiment was to focus on characters in a drama, a short play with good contrast between characters was preferable. A play employing only two characters, for example, would allow the audience to concentrate more completely on the characters being evaluated, and hence provide more precise data. Since time, space, and money for producing the play were severely limited, a play requiring little or no scenery, costumes, or lights was also a necessity.

Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot fulfilled all of these requirements--and more. The dramatic action to be played (waiting) was relatively uncomplicated yet truly entertaining. With captive audiences, entertainment was not a luxury item. Since the play is recognized as a significant and relevant work of modern drama, directing it was also expected to prove challenging and rewarding. Finally, Richard Schechner's

article on structural theory as applied to modern drama provided the justification and advantage of this specific cutting of Beckett's first scene from <u>Godot</u> (2, pp. 20-53).

Once the first scene had been prepared, the next important decision was the selection of actors to play Vladimir and Estragon. Availability of competent actors was the major consideration. Interviews with about a dozen possibilities from the Division of Drama led to several decisions about obviously competent pairs of student actors. Was experience with <u>Godot</u> desirable, for example, or extensive experience in theatre a necessity? Would some professional experience make any difference in the experiment? Should the director, who was also the author of the experiment, attempt to use the normal criteria for the casting of <u>Godot</u> in this particular experiment?

It was necessary to answer these questions, at least to some extent, in order to produce a workable play and valid experiment. Arbitrarily the decision was made to cast entirely on theatrical considerations, employing the norms of traditional directors—that is, casting mainly on the compatability of the individual actor's style and type to the requirements of the play. Thus, two actors who seemed best able to play the aged, French vaudevillians waiting for the nebulous Godot appeared to be proper choices. This decision narrowed the field of available actors to four. One of these then removed himself from consideration because of insufficient time for rehearsals. As a result, an interesting choice between two older actors

(both with amateur and professional experience) of the same
physical type and style was then presented. The third actor,
Jim, was relatively less experienced, but seemed to provide
the necessary contrast with either of the two possible Vladimirs.
The actor selected for Vladimir, Harry, appeared to have unusual
comic abilities and promising possibilities as the intellectual
vaudevillian needed for the role. The least experienced actor,
Jim, then provided the comic and physical contrast required of
Estragon.

As with play and actors, the choice of audiences was again
limited solely by material considerations. A classroom group
was all that could be used. Yet behavioral scientiests have
discovered that a university class provides a reliable pool
from which to draw representative and somewhat random sample
audiences for experimental productions (1, pp. 71-75). By
drawing from three separate departments in the school--English,
psychology, and speech and drama--a relatively diverse compo-
sition of audiences was achieved without the expensive method
of random selection from the entire undergraduate population.
Besides, if classes were required to attend the experiment for
their course work, benefits to all parties became evident.
The experiment acquired captive, diverse, and relatively random
audiences, and the experiment itself provided an educational
service by relating to the needs of each of the three classes.
In the psychology class, a discussion of the test procedures
and semantic differential technique followed the production.

The English and speech and drama classes were provided with discussion material pertaining to the production of a relevant piece of modern drama.

Instrument

The semantic differential technique is ideally suited for measuring the perception or meaning of a character in a drama. Osgood defines this experiment's specific process as the successive allocation of the dramatic character "to a point in the multidimensional semantic space by selection from among a set of given scaled semantic alternatives (1, p. 32)." The semantic differential is not a specific test, but a generalized technique adapted to the individual research problem: in this case, comparing actor perceptions and audience perceptions of the characters being played by the actors. A high correlation between actor and audience responses presumably would indicate the presence and degree of feedback decoded by the actor.

As with every semantic differential, it is necessary to select the concepts and scales that are most appropriate for the specific study. Since this study focused on feedback of character perception, the concepts chosen were the characters in the drama. These two concepts meet the pre-requisites set by Osgood in his comments on proper selection (1, p. 26): (a) we can expect individual differences in the responses from the audience and actors, (b) the character will have a single, unitary meaning for each audience member because of their

concentrated acquaintance with him through the play, and (c) the audience would be sufficiently familiar with the two characters because the instrument would be administered immediately after the play.

Osgood goes on to note the criteria for selecting proper scales: their factorial composition, relevance, and semantic stability. In order to insure a proper selection, about one hundred and fifty descriptive pairs of polar terms were collected from previous semantic experiments, current dramatic literature and theory, and the text of the play itself. The factorial composition was approximately equal: about fifty pairs each of the evaluative, potency, and activity factors (1, pp. 77-78).

The one hundred and forty-one pairs eventually chosen were then distributed to graduate students and faculty of the Speech and Drama department. This test group was asked to rate the importance of the pairs in making meaningful judgments about a character in a drama. The rating involved a three-point scale, which insured the relevance and semantic stability of the selected pairs. The resulting, most-chosen forty pairs (as seen on the instrument) were surprisingly well-balanced in factorial composition. This was surmised by comparing those pairs that had already been analyzed by many of the previous factorial studies cited in The Measurement of Meaning (1) with the equally distributed new pairs generated from current dramatic sources.

Procedures

The experiment was divided into three general time
periods: (1) the pre-production period, which included the
rehearsals and the planning of the experiment; (2) the pro-
duction period, which covered the experimental process itself;
and (3) the post-production period, which consisted of the
compilation and correlation of the data generated by the
experiment.

The pre-production period was dominated by two major
factors: dramatic preparation and experimental preparation.
In order to have a good play, strenuous rehearsals were in
order; to have a valid experiment, sound methodology and
discipline were necessary. Rehearsals began five weeks before
the first production date. They progressed slowly at first,
but gained momentum as the actors achieved the necessary
ensemble experience. Harry, the more experienced actor,
began to create a consistent Vladimir by the second week,
while Jim struggled for an appropriate voice and set of
body movements consistent with Estragon.

The main directing approach was to recognize, capture,
and project the comedy in Godot. Only after this was achieved
could the characters and their tragic waiting be developed.
Since the dramatic action was their waiting, the actors drew
from old burlesque, vaudeville, and film comedies for gags
and bits appropriate when two old performers were waiting
for anything. Harry and Jim needed to learn how to play

vaudeville comedians before they could successfully play their waiting. Again the more experienced actor thrived while the less experienced actor floundered. What Jim needed was a crash-course in old comic bits and routines. With a few extra individual rehearsals, citing performers and performances he had seen and researching those he had not, he soon caught on to the comedy and rivalled Harry with some of his more structured and formal comic bits. Jim began to loosen up, and to search for and play Estragon.

By the last week of rehearsal, both actors were playing consistently and more freely. More and more new bits were suggested, digested, and polished by both actors. Harry and Jim were contributing equally, and were ready to play before an audience.

In the meantime, three classroom audiences had been selected from three different departments in the university: a combined class from two speech and drama courses (thirty-seven students) was to be the first audience, a beginning psychology class (thirty-two students) the second, and two undergraduate English classes (thirty students) the third. Each class provided an audience of between thirty and forty members. Larger audiences, though perhaps desirable for the experiment, were impractical in the Rehearsal Hall in which Godot was to be played.

The semantic differential, the perception of character instrument, was printed so that the concept (character, in this case) to be rated was not only written at the top of

the rating sheet but pictured in costume. The test was admin-
istered to both actors after the last rehearsal with specific
instructions to rate their two characters as <u>they</u> perceived
them to be. This was done to monitor any change between their
perception of the characters and their forthcoming predictions
of audience perceptions.

The play was then performed on each of the three following
days with an audience. The same instructions and procedures
were used after each performance. The members of the audience
rated their perception of each character, and the actors
recorded their predictions of each audience's set of responses.
Each performance was separated from the other by about twenty-four
hours. The cutting from <u>Godot</u> lasted thirty to thirty-five
minutes; rating time for both actors and audience lasted ten
to fifteen minutes. The complete experiment lasted four days:
Tuesday was the final rehearsal complete with instrument,
Wednesday through Friday the performances with an audience.

The post-production period, which consisted of the com-
pilation and correlation of the data generated by the study,
is reported in Chapter III along with implications and sug-
gestions for further research.

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CHAPTER III

RESULTS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study sought to discover what relationship exists
between the actor perception and audience perception of a
character in Waiting for Godot. The correlation coefficients
obtained were high enough to indicate a strong relationship
between actor and audience perceptions. A factor analysis
of the ratings employed by both audience and actor, moreover,
justified the use of the semantic differential technique. At
least, the data generated in this study matched that of pre-
vious studies dealing with meaningful human conceptual judg-
ments.

Results

The generated data was collected and transferred from each
instrument to computer cards. These were fed into the NTSU
computer, which was instructed to determine the correlation
coefficient for each actor and audience by the date of the
rating and by the character rated. This would provide the
quantification of feedback suggested by the hypothesis. If
the correlation was higher than could be expected by chance,
then it would have to be conceded that something--and how much
of that something--was operating between audience and actor.
The computer was also instructed to analyze the forty polar

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pairs of words used in the test to determine what dimensions or factors of meaning were involved in judging the characters in this experiment. Such an analysis provided for the evaluation of this specific semantic differential and each of its forty component scales.

The correlation coefficients (r), as seen in Table I, were generated by comparing the mean audience ratings on each scale of the instrument with the actor's rating of the audience perception on that same scale concerning the same concept. These coefficients proved very high. The lowest r in this study was 0.4641, which occurred for the first audience and Jim, the least experienced actor. His correlation with the next two audiences, however, jumped to a highly predictable 0.7584 and 0.7519. Since an r of 0.3000 can be explained or expected by chance, any scores above the chance r of 0.3000 positively indicate that something other than chance was operating on the subjects in the experiment. In fact, the significance of the correlation coefficients also was found to be quite impressive. Any r above .403 is significant to the .01 level of confidence. That is, the probability that the measured relationship happened by chance was less than one in a hundred. Since the actors were rating what they perceived to be the audience perceptions of their characters, therefore the resulting r seems to quantify the communication of those perceptions. It is a measurement of audience feedback.

TABLE I

ACTOR-AUDIENCE CORRELATIONS

Concept: Vladimir	First Audience	Second Audience	Third Audience
Harry	.5556*	.6115*	.5547*
Jim	.2773	.4451*	.4362*
Concept: Estragon			
Harry	.8385*	.8253*	.8714*
Jim	.4641*	.7584*	.7519*

*p $<$ .01

Two interesting phenomena should be noted from the table: (1) Harry's correlations with all three audiences on both concepts are consistently higher than Jim's and (2) correlation coefficients for the concept of Estragon are all higher than those for Vladimir. Some implications concerning these two highly visible coincidents will be discussed later in this chapter. At this point, it is enough to remark that the data generated by this study's semantic differential most definitely indicates a strong relationship between how the audience perceives a character and how the actor perceives the audience feedback concerning that character.

A factor analysis of the data reveals a close correspondence to similar studies cited by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (2, pp. 33-66 and 177-186). The five factor groups in this study, however, display a bit more sensitivity to activity and humanness. This can be explained by noting that Osgood's factor studies concern both animate and inanimate concepts, and relatively

few character concepts, while this particular study concerns two human characters acted in a play.

Osgood describes the three major factors or dimensions of meaning as evaluative, potency, and activity. The five factors from this study, as seen in Table II, correspond quite closely to Osgood's main three: (1) an intellectual factor which seems to be a combination of both activity and potency dimensions; (2) a definite potency factor typified by the strong-weak adjective pair; (3) a definite evaluative factor represented by practically the same pairs offered by Osgood; (4) an emotional factor that seems to be another combination of activity and potency dimensions; and (5) an adaptability factor that appears to be a combination of the previously defined activity and evaluative dimensions.

The first and most dominant factor includes pairs of words defining an intellectual quality or role of the characters. In other words, the polar terms loading highly on this factor were very sensitive to the individual perception of respondents, whose responses tended to be similar in direction and intensity for the whole factor group on each concept. Intellectual-physical had the highest loading on this factor; grouped in order of highest loadings, eight other word-pairs helped define this area of semantic space when judging Vladimir and Estragon: leader-follower, adult-child, sophisticated-naive, mature-youthful, complex-simple, purposive-aimless, deep-shallow, and wise-foolish.

TABLE II

ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS

Variables	Loadings
Factor I	
intellectual-physical.	.80324
leader-follower.	.74044
child-adult.	-.72009
sophisticated-naive.	.71959
mature-youthful.	.70326
simple-complex	-.66696
aimless-purposive.	-.62161
deep-shallow	.59825
foolish-wise	-.56503
active-passive	.47800
Factor II	
strong-weak.	-.72462
delicate-rugged.	.65210
evasive-direct	.58472
dreamer-realist.	.57994
cowardly-brave	.57110
feminine-masculine	.52772
indecisive-decisive.	.52589
powerful-powerless	-.50437
confident-insecure	-.42756
obvious-subtle	-.41903
Factor III	
honest-dishonest	.76602
bad-good	-.70233
sincere-insincere.	.63438
kind-cruel	.53963
gentle-violent	.52172
incomprehensible-understandable.	-.45683
sane-mad	.38689
boring-exciting.	-.34620
Factor IV	
emotional-rational	.64428
humorous-serious	.56308
dreamer-realist.	.41368
changing-stagnant.	.41308
chaotic-ordered.	.37369
constrained-free	-.35384
Factor V	
inflexible-adaptable	.56264
depressed-cheerful	.55632
suspicious-trustful.	.54594
constrained-free	.53412
tenacious-yielding	.35490
pessimistic-optimistic	.34065
relaxed-tense.	-.33348
self-assertive-submissive.	.30659

Moreover, this factor provides a clear differentiation between the two characters in each of the performances: Vladimir was defined as intellectual, leader, adult, sophisticated, mature, complex, purposive, deep, and wise; while Estragon was defined as physical, follower, child, naive, youthful, simple, aimless, shallow, and foolish.

This intellectual-physical dichotomy became evident to the play's director early in rehearsals. Since the cast was using the usual interpretation of Beckett's two characters as the two sides of man (physical and spiritual, feeling and thinking, earthy and intellectual), the dominance of this factor may have been consciously initiated by the actors. Thus, the fact the audience employed it as the main factor for judging the characters may reinforce the traditional views about the actor's messages to the audience. Nevertheless, the actors' sensitivity to the audience's perceptions probably reveal the degree to which audience feedback was operating.

The second factor identified itself quite clearly as a potency or strength variable. Its correspondence to potency factors of other studies was very great. Weak-<u>strong</u>, delicate-<u>rugged</u>, evasive-<u>direct</u>, dreamer-<u>realist</u>, cowardly-<u>brave</u>, and <u>feminine</u>-masculine characterized this area of semantic space. Other pairs that helped define this dimension, but that also had high loadings on the first factor, were indecisive-<u>decisive</u>, <u>powerless</u>-powerful, insecure-<u>confident</u>, and subtle-<u>obvious</u>. This contamination (loading on two or more factors) was expected

because it had occurred in other studies and because it is
very difficult to find pairs of words with "pure" loadings
on any one factor.

A similar correlation to past studies and the contamination
on other factors can be seen with the third factor. It was a
definite evaluative factor consisting of honest-dishonest,
good-bad, sincere-insincere, kind-cruel, and gentle-violent.
Pairs with loadings on other factors, but which load highly
on this one were incomprehensible-understandable, sane-mad,
and exciting-boring.

The fourth factor seemed to define an emotional dimension
which appeared to be related to the activity variable already
defined somewhat by factor one. Most of the polar terms have
loadings on other factors. Factor four is represented by
emotional-rational, humorous-serious, dreamer-realist, changing-
stagnant, chaotic-ordered, and free-constrained.

Although factor five accounted for a relatively small
amount of variability when compared to factor one or two,
definite loadings did occur which seemed to indicate an adapat-
ability variable: inflexible-adaptable, depressed-cheerful,
suspicious-trustful, and constrained-free. This factor seems
to have provided a finer distinction for the tradition activity
dimension.

The significance of this particular factor analysis is its
contribution to a definition of audience behaviors and attitudes
at the performance of a play. Specifically, it delineates the

semantic tools employed by an audience when defining a
dramatic character. Osgood gives a more general justifi-
cation:

> What have we learned about the dimensionality of the
> semantic space from this series of factor analyses?
> For one thing, it is clear that it is a multidimen-
> sional space. In every analysis more than three factors
> have been contributing to the meaningful judgements by
> subjects. It is also clear that these N factors or
> dimensions are not equally important in mediating
> judgements, or perhaps better, are not equally used
> by subjects in differentiating among the things judged.
> Three factors appear to be dominant, appearing in most
> of the analyses made and in roughly the same orders of
> magnitude--evaluation, potency, and activity. However,
> it is also evident the functional semantic space is to
> some degree modifiable in terms of what kinds of con-
> cepts are being judged, i.e., the relative importance
> and relationship among factors may vary with the frame
> of reference of judgements. Certainly, specific scales
> may change their meaning, in the factorial composition
> sense, as a function of the concept being judged
> (2, pp. 71-72).

Summary

The study involved a five-stage process. The first stage
established that drama as communication focuses on the trans-
mission of the playwright's messages to the audience by all
possible means and on the modification of both the means and
the messages as a result of the feedback received from the
audience. The actor performs a set of cues indicating a
"character," the audience "feeds-back" their reception of the
cues, and the actor modifies his manipulation of the cues
accordingly.

The design of an instrument for measuring the perception
of a character in a drama consituted stage two. Among a num-
ber of possibilities, Osgood's semantic differential technique

proved most useful for this purpose. It was flexible enough to evaluate the concepts of dramatic characters inherent in this particular study: reliability, validity, sensitivity, and comparability were assured by the exhaustive tests done on the technique during the almost twenty years of its employment.

Stage three was the production of a play for separate test audiences. The first scene from Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot was chosen, and two student actors were selected to play Vladimir and Estragon. Classroom audiences were obtained from three different departments in the university, and the play was performed on three successive days in a common location.

During stage four, the actors and audience were administered a semantic differential test measuring the perception of each character in the drama. The audience rated their perception of each character; the actors evaluated each character as they thought the audience had.

The compilation and correlation of the data generated by the test occurred in stage five of the study. The analysis of the data revealed the degree to which the audience's perception of each character in the drama related to the actor's perception of the audience feedback concerning that character. Both the correlation and factor data indicated the appropriateness of the semantic differential technique for evaluating the on-going communication process inherent in drama.

Conclusion

A definite relationship exists between actor perception
and the audience perceptions of characters in a play which
the actor is performing. The audience "talks back" to the
actor in many ways. How important, then, is the actor's own
perceptions of his character <u>before</u> he plays with an audience?
This study attempted a partial answer to this question by
requiring the actors to rate their own perceptions of their
characters in a pre-test administered on the last day of
rehearsals. The results presented in Tables III and IV indi-
cate a definite relationship between original actor perceptions
and the resulting three sets of audience perceptions. Yet there
is no significant difference between pre-test and production
coefficients (1, pp. 271-283). In other words, this study was
unable to separate quantity of communication from actor to
audience and audience to actor. Thus, the quantification of
feedback discovered in this study may be contaminated somewhat
by an inability to separate actor preconceptions of his character
and conceptions of audience feedback.

Correlations also may be affected by other considerations,
i.e., the "concreteness" of the character itself. If an actor
plays a character in a unidimensional manner, for example,
the audience perception of this character would be limited to
that one-dimensional protrayal. A certain actor plays a
tree-a petrified tree--and does so clearly and consistently.
Audience ratings on a semantic differential would probably

TABLE III

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Semantic Differential Ratings	Mean Audience Ratings	Harry's Pre-test	Jim's Pre-test
Concept: Estragon (played by Jim)			
First Performance			
Jim's rating of audience perceptions	0.4641*	-0.0960	0.4752*
Harry's rating of audience perceptions	0.8385*	0.8425*	0.6711*
Mean audience ratings	1.0000	0.6106*	0.7761*
Second Performance			
Jim's rating of audience perceptions	0.7584*	0.5860*	0.7446*
Harry's rating of audience perceptions	0.8253*	0.7636*	0.5549*
Mean audience ratings	1.0000	0.7573*	0.6983*
Third Performance			
Jim's rating of audience perceptions	0.7519*	0.5262*	0.7434*
Harry's rating of audience perceptions	0.8714*	0.7887*	0.6187*
Mean audience ratings	1.0000	0.7779*	0.6378*

*$p < .01$

TABLE IV

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Concept: Vladimir (played by Harry)			
Semantic Differential Ratings	Mean Audience Ratings	Harry's Pre-test	Jim's Pre-test
First Performance			
Harry's rating of audience perceptions	0.5556*	0.6299*	0.2657
Jim's rating of audience perceptions	0.2773	0.1464	0.4438*
Mean audience ratings	1.0000	0.7112*	0.3361
Second Performance			
Harry's rating of audience perceptions	0.6115*	0.7429*	0.2201
Jim's rating of audience perceptions	0.4451*	0.4520*	0.5132*
Mean audience ratings	1.0000	0.6776*	0.3829
Third Performance			
Harry's rating of audience perceptions	0.5547*	0.7231*	-0.0046
Jim's rating of audience perceptions	0.4362*	0.2895	0.7152*
Mean audience ratings	1.0000	0.7337*	0.4001

*p $<$ .01

correlate quite highly with the actor's ratings of audience feedback even if the actor was blind and deaf. The reason for this kind of result, then is the simplicity of the role itself. The choice of Vladimir and Estragon for this study was intended to reduce the chances for this type of contamination.

Another source of possible contamination in this study, however, could have been that drama as communication is only partially quantified. Audience feedback may play only a subsidiary part in the production of a drama, especially with regard to written plays. The actors would be seen as being well-rehearsed in their original message to an audience. Although they would analyze their performance throughout the play with audience feedback as their guide, they would not be told by the audience how to play the role. At the most, they would be forced to anticipate the efficacy of alternative dramatic means to the various goals of the drama.

Looked at another way, the actor would have a preconceived means to achieve a playwright's goal. He could either achieve it or not. If he did, either the preconceived means were followed or they were not. The original means would be employed if no alternatives were suggested by audience feedback. Alternative means would be necessary when the audience showed confusion or boredom, but the actor would simply alternate approaches as he continued to lead the audience toward the playwright's original goals. If the playwright's

goals seemed unachievable, the actor would resort to playing alternative goals broadcast by the audience. In any case, not the _play_, but the _means_ to reach its goals would be performed. This kind of theoretical base would explain the higher correlations for Estragon and lower correlations for Vladimir by both actors in this study.

In Tables III and IV on pages 29 and 30, therefore, a review of those correlation coefficients seems to indicate that either Harry was a better rater than Jim of audience feedback or the concept of Vladimir provided a more difficult task for both actors in decoding audience feedback. If the former assumption were correct, Harry's being the more experienced actor would account for the difference. If the latter were correct, either Vladimir's character might have more dimensions than Estragon or both Harry and Jim might have "deliberated" unnecessarily over this concept. Such a conclusion might be inferred from the higher correlations between actor pre-tests and audience as opposed to actor predictions and audience. No doubt this phenomenon indicates principally a need for further research into the dramatic process as communication.

As was stated at the beginning of this study, the data from this experiment ought to be used as a basis for further research. Hypotheses derived from correlations discovered in this study ought to be tested empirically. The major empiric aspect of this study was the use of the semantic

differential. Its administration was controlled throughout the experiment in order to determine its value as a research tool into the dramatic process. Table V is one result of this study's experimental control.

TABLE V

SCALES WITH THE PUREST LOADINGS

Factors	Scales
Factor I.	intellectual-physical leader-follower adult-child sophisticated-naive mature-youthful
Factor II	strong-weak rugged-delicate direct-evasive brave-cowardly masculine-feminine
Factor III.	honest-dishonest good-bad sincere-insincere
Factor IV	emotional-rational
Factor V.	inflexible-adaptable

A review of the factor analysis employed in this study indicates some discriminative word pairs that ought to be tested further in future studies. Is there a semantic base for judgments concerning the dramatic process, for example, and what are the dimensions of that semantic base? Table V includes fifteen of the more purely loaded pairs identifying the five semantic factors of meaning found in this study. That is, their extracted variance occurs almost entirely on

their respective factors. Thus, the subjects of the experiment seemed to employ these particular scales in a common manner. These pairs could serve as a foundation for building future semantic differentials dealing with the dramatic process.

These five factors may be peculiar to a certain play or set of raters. As indicated earlier, however, a comparison with Osgood's previous factor work (2, pp. 176-186) revealed similar definitions of semantic space. Further research could discover what the common basis is for judgments of dramatic events. In a practical sense, this kind of analysis could clarify educational objectives when teaching the various roles involved in playing drama.

Thus, study of drama as communication allows the objectivity necessary for systematic studies of the complete dramatic process. This particular study attempted to shed some light on one particular activity inherent in drama: audience feedback. Although the correlational method employed does not allow for statements concerning causality, the communicative relationship between audience and actor was indicated. The analysis of the data revealed the degree to which audience perception of a character in a drama is related to the actor's perception of that character. The study also demonstrated the efficacy of the semantic differential technique when evaluating the dramatic process.

CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this study is to measure the meanings of the two characters (not actors) in the production just presented by having you judge them against a series of descriptive scales. In taking this test, please make your judgements on the basis of what these two characters mean to you. Atop both pages of the test you will find the picture and names of the character to be judged, and beneath them a set of scales. You are to rate the character (not actor) on each of these scales in order.

Here is how you are to use these scales:

If you feel that the character at the top of the page is very closely related to one end of the scale, you should place your check-mark as follows:

    fair   X : __ : __ : __ : __ : __ : __   unfair
                          OR
    fair   __ : __ : __ : __ : __ : __ : X   unfair

If you feel that the character is quite closely related to one or the other end of the scale (but not extremely), you should place your check-mark as follows:

    strong __ : X : __ : __ : __ : __ : __   weak
                          OR
    strong __ : __ : __ : __ : __ : X : __   weak

If the character seems only slightly related to one side as opposed to the other side (but is not really neutral), then you should check as follows:

    active __ : __ : X : __ : __ : __ : __   passive
                          OR
    active __ : __ : __ : __ : X : __ : __   passive

The direction toward which you check, of course, depends upon which of the two ends of the scale seem most characteristic.

If you consider the character to be neutral on the scale, both sides of the scale equally associated with the character, or if the scale is completely irrelevant, unrelated to the character, then you should place your check-mark in the middle space:

    safe   __ : __ : __ : X : __ : __ : __   dangerous

IMPORTANT: 1) Place your check-marks <u>in</u> <u>the</u> <u>middle</u> <u>of</u> <u>spaces</u>,
                   not on the boundaries.
            2) Be sure you check every scale for both characters--
                   <u>do</u> <u>not</u> <u>omit</u> <u>any</u>.
            3) Never put more than one check-mark on a single
                   scale.

Sometimes you may feel as though you've had the same item before on the test. This will not be the case, so <u>do</u> <u>not</u> <u>look</u> <u>back</u> and <u>forth</u> through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the test. <u>Make</u> <u>each</u> <u>item</u> <u>a</u> <u>separate</u> <u>and</u> <u>independent</u> <u>judgement</u>. Work at a fairly high speed through this test. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feelings" about the items, that we want. On the other hand, please do not be careless, because we want your true impressions.

Semantic Differential

REMEMBER: Rate the character, <u>not</u> <u>the</u> <u>actor</u>!

constrained	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	free
mature	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	youthful
humorous	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	serious
inflexible	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	adaptable
kind	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	cruel
emotional	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	rational
sane	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	mad
active	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	passive
bad	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	good
gentle	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	violent
chaotic	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	ordered
dreamer	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	realist
suspicious	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	trustful
tenacious	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	yielding
boring	__: __: __: __: __: __: __	exciting

sophisticated	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	naive
pessimistic	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	optimistic
confident	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	insecure
aimless	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	purposive
changing	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	stagnant
depressed	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	cheerful
sincere	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	insincere
incomprehensible	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	understandable
leader	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	follower
intellectual	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	physical
obvious	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	subtle
honest	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	dishonest
evasive	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	direct
self-assertive	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	submissive
feminine	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	masculine
simple	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	complex
powerful	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	powerless
indecisive	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	decisive
relaxed	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	tense
child	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	adult
strong	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	weak
foolish	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	wise
deep	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	shallow
delicate	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	rugged
cowardly	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__:	__	brave

APPENDIX B

COMPLETE CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
FOR THE CONCEPT OF
VLADIMIR

First Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1)	1.0000	0.1103	0.5556	0.6299	0.2657
(2)	. . .	1.0000	0.2773	0.1464	0.4438
(3)	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.7112	0.3361
(4)	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.2224
(5)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000

Means

(1) 3.6000   (2) 3.8750   (3) 3.6919   (4) 4.0250   (5) 3.8250

Standard Deviations

(1) 1.7946   (2) 1.8143   (3) 0.7136   (4) 1.8465   (5) 1.9466

Second Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1)	1.0000	0.1057	0.6115	0.7429	0.2201
(2)	. . .	1.0000	0.4451	0.4520	0.5132
(3)	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.6776	0.3829
(4)	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.2224
(5)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000

Means

(1) 3.7750   (2) 3.8500   (3) 3.7023   (4) 4.0250   (5) 3.8250

Standard Deviations

(1) 1.7612   (2) 2.1549   (3) 0.7368   (4) 1.8469   (5) 1.9466

Third Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1)	1.0000	0.0780	0.5547	0.7231	-0.0046
(2)	. . .	1.0000	0.4326	0.2895	0.7152
(3)	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.7337	0.4001
(4)	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.2224
(5)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000

Means

(1) 3.6000   (2) 3.9750   (3) 3.7350   (4) 4.0250   (5) 3.8250

Standard Deviations

(1) 2.2736   (2) 1.9675   (3) 0.8037   (4) 1.8465   (5) 1.9466

(1) = Harry's rating of audience perceptions (he played Vladimir)
(2) = Jim's rating of audience perceptions (he played Estragon)
(3) = Mean audience perceptions
(4) = Harry's pre-test on his own perceptions
(5) = Jim's pre-test on his own perceptions

APPENDIX C

COMPLETE CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
FOR THE CONCEPT OF
ESTRAGON

First Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1)	1.0000	0.1663	0.8385	0.8425	0.6711
(2)	. . .	1.0000	0.4641	-0.0960	0.4752
(3)	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.6106	0.7761
(4)	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.4588
(5)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000

Means

(1) 3.9750   (2) 3.6250   (3) 3.9493   (4) 3.8500   (5) 3.7500

Standard Deviations

(1) 2.3369   (2) 2.3500   (3) 0.9791   (4) 1.8474   (5) 2.0724

Second Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1)	1.0000	0.6418	0.8253	0.7636	0.5549
(2)	. . .	1.0000	0.7584	0.5860	0.7446
(3)	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.7573	0.6983
(4)	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.4588
(5)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000

Means

(1) 4.0250   (2) 4.1000   (3) 3.9180   (4) 3.8500   (5) 3.7500

Standard Deviations

(1) 2.0567   (2) 2.1932   (3) 0.9704   (4) 1.8474   (5) 2.0724

Third Performance

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1)	1.0000	0.6482	0.8714	0.7887	0.6187
(2)	. . .	1.0000	0.7519	0.5262	0.7434
(3)	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.7779	0.6378
(4)	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000	0.4588
(5)	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	1.0000

Means

(1) 3.9500   (2) 4.0750   (3) 3.8808   (4) 3.8500   (5) 3.7500

Standard Deviations

(1) 2.2298   (2) 2.0430   (3) 1.0632   (4) 1.8474   (5) 2.0724

(1) = Harry's rating of audience perceptions (he played Vladimir)
(2) = Jim's rating of audience perceptions (he played Estragon)
(3) = Mean audience perceptions
(4) = Harry's pre-test on his own perceptions
(5) = Jim's pre-test on his own perceptions

APPENDIX D

ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS

VARIABLE	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4	FACTOR 5
constrained-free	.22200	.31222	.11695	-.35384	.53412
mature-youthful	.70326	.08382	.00029	-.08380	.24107
humorous-serious	-.25407	-.12401	.03292	.56308	-.22085
inflexible-adaptable	.09648	.04978	-.17949	-.27783	.56264
kind-cruel	-.07924	.09927	.53963	.29519	-.19123
emotional-rational	-.27010	.16290	.10817	.64428	-.03746
sane-mad	.21439	-.32265	.38689	.23855	.11438
active-passive	.47800	-.19738	.07531	-.28729	-.03519
bad-good	.01253	.03976	.70233	-.01493	.16989
gentle-violent	-.04674	.22383	.52172	.01619	-.26401
chaotic-ordered	-.48012	.18174	-.01800	.37369	.05909
dreamer-realist	-.02768	.57994	.09692	.41368	.04419
suspicious-trustful	.11243	.04795	-.30238	.12534	.54594
tenacious-yielding	.37883	-.27834	-.27086	-.00520	.35490
boring-exciting	.36854	.19329	-.34620	-.28889	-.05556
sophisticated-naive	.71959	.01157	-.17427	-.21360	-.04745
pessimistic-optimistic	-.31436	-.09145	-.11445	.25221	.34065
confident-insecure	.40456	-.42756	-.24964	-.05350	-.31168
aimless-purposive	-.62161	.03914	-.15553	.12614	.13224
changing-stagnant	.21469	-.10595	.04626	.41308	.02698

APPENDIX D

ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS
(continued)

VARIABLE	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4	FACTOR 5
depressed-cheerful	-.08565	.25136	-.14684	-.05233	.55632
sincere-insincere	.09181	-.01175	.63438	.11295	-.00212
incomprehensible-understandable	-.07048	.35862	-.45683	.14962	.00318
leader-follower	.74044	-.09158	-.02673	.10528	.12676
intellectual-physical	.80324	.32129	-.03321	-.12221	.08409
obvious-subtle	-.29204	-.41903	.20580	.17039	.01084
honest-dishonest	-.16170	-.01955	.76602	.01197	-.11229
evasive-direct	.13657	.58472	-.17864	.04546	-.17947
self-assertive-submissive	.47145	-.31508	-.08744	-.02395	.30659
feminine-masculine	-.01472	.52772	-.16669	-.05867	.05548
simple-complex	-.66696	-.13111	.12691	.08102	.05018
powerful-powerless	.37146	-.50437	-.10592	.08003	.11148
indecisive-decisive	-.41281	.52589	.04019	-.06504	-.09070
relaxed-tense	-.47324	-.38761	.01887	-.14776	-.33348
child-adult	-.72009	.10802	.03776	.02099	-.05888
strong-weak	.28304	-.72462	-.10146	.16009	-.07303
foolish-wise	-.56503	.28828	-.02525	.24833	-.15676
deep-shallow	.59825	-.13105	.12460	-.00138	.02834
delicate-rugged	.38095	.65210	.06135	-.09815	.00470
cowardly-brave	-.21134	.57110	.08737	.09316	.24298

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