

**Horwitz, Jonah, University of Wisconsin-Madison. "The Aesthetics of Live Anthology Drama, 1948–58"**

This paper analyzes the aesthetics of American live-television anthology drama from the late 1940s through the 1950s. I focus on two of the most prominent anthologies, NBC's *Philco Television Playhouse* (1948–55) and CBS's *Studio One* (1948–58). My analysis traces the historical development of a unique style of cinematography, editing, sound, set design, and performance in the anthology format. I go on to compare the styles cultivated by the different programs (and networks).

I argue that as audiences and budgets grew, these anthology dramas moved from a *découpage* defined by a shallow playing space, frontal staging, and simple editing patterns to one that favored deep sets, deep staging, elaborate camera movement, and long takes. The model of Orson Welles was crucial to these New York-based productions as they sought to develop a "sophisticated" stylistics within the unforgiving exigencies of live television. At the same time, the model of radio drama, so important at the shows' inception, began to wane. However, anthology series differed in the degree to which they sought to showcase the virtuosity of their production crews and technological apparatus. Many NBC anthology dramas remained tied to a conception of live drama that placed style at the service of the well-told story, while CBS dramas moved increasingly toward a reflexive aesthetic that self-consciously tested the limits of the format.

The WCFTR's extensive kinescope collection, particularly its robust *Philco* holdings, permits a fine-grained look at the year-by-year (often month-by-month) changes in the style of these programs. Such analysis will shed light on the relationships between film and a developing televisual aesthetic in the 1950s.

**Jonah Horwitz** is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison.