Frame Analysis: The dominant theme is the criss-cross, mentioned in the dialog and a visual theme throughout. The lost lighter, possessed by Bruno, is the lock of the "contract" that binds Guy to Bruno, and its flame is used in relation to lenses on two occasions related to murder by strangulation. The poché space of the amusement park creates an acousmatic space where "things heard" (Bruno strikes the bell; shouts are heard on the island); Bruno’s house commands silence when Guy visits to warn the father; the two conversations on the train (with Bruno; with the drunk professor) are mi-dire: spoken and/or heard by half. It is the performative of Bruno’s and Guy’s conversation (each name is a reversed antinomasia, a form of metonymy turned into a proper name). The train is acousmatic in terms of the half-speeches there (Bruno, the drunk professor); the carnival substitutes acousmatic light for sound: light is inverted by the tunnel of love and used to identify Miriam. Light as “extimate” becomes Fate (A_{n}) in the terminology of the uncanny. It’s counterpart, D_{s}, is Guy, caught in the contract and between Miriam and Anne. Lacan’s rule, that “the letter always returns to its destination,” is carried out literally when the lighter is recovered from Bruno’s dead hand. The anthology structure of the story is symbolically spun to its conclusion by the merry-go-round’s dysfunction, which is a dysfunction of a dysfunction (the merry-go-round “goes nowhere” but pretends to universality in its decoration and ritualized imitation of dance.

Background: Strangers on a Train is an American psychological thriller produced and directed by Alfred Hitchcock. It was shot in the autumn of 1950 and released by Warner Bros. on June 30, 1951. The film stars Farley Granger, Ruth Roman and Robert Walker, and features Leo G. Carroll, Patricia Hitchcock and Laura Elliott. The film was based on the 1950 novel of the same name by Patricia Highsmith. The mi-dire of the a-symmetrical contract involve (in)transitivity: performing an act in isolation that “completes” an act failed to be done elsewhere. Many details of the film illustrate this rule of transitivity. Bruno crashes the Senator’s party and demonstrates how easy it is to choke a victim; he sees Anne’s sister, who wears glasses, and a flame reflected in her glasses, and begins to actually strangle his elderly volunteer: “His hands were on her neck, but he was strangling me.” Bruno’s infantilism is related to this common claim of the child who, when he hits another, says “He hit me!” Bruno “takes the place of his father” literally and psychologically. The film is actually an anthology built around the train as “linking tale,” the Möbius-band contract that binds Guy to Bruno by means of the lost lighter.

Contribution to the General Idea: The train connecting Philadelphia and Metcalf to Washington constitutes the basis for an anthology and an image of the (in)transitive contract, a line explained by the diamond on the cab in the opening scene. The film is a poinçon: ITOA, “I to A” to A’, 1020/1975”). A to G are the initials engraved on the lighter that binds Guy to Bruno and when the music of the carousel (Compare the engraved “S to R” on the band of the ring given to niece Charley by her uncle Charlie in Shadow of a Doubt, also about a strangler.) The ‘I’ could be the linear train logic, where the ‘A’ becomes the split narrative with its anamorphic bridge, the same design Poe used in “The Purloined Letter.” The train image, becomes an A through the “in-train-sitive” contract using the anamorphic bridge devices that connect the acousmatic amusement park scenes, cued by the song, “The Band Play On.”

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