

WORKPAD: North by Northwest (Hitchcock, 1959)

AUTHORS:

HITCHCOCK: *amour* status = repetition/compulsion, akin to Roussel's *procédé*.

POE: midpoint/templum as police/CIA transfer; sacred text obscured by airplane sound. Crop-duster vs. park cafeteria; Townsend estate vs. modernist house; UN photographer vs. park binoculars; etc.

ROUSSEL: key phrase transform (truth/expedient exaggeration becomes ...). Small image becomes a portal (matchbook); TV screen anamorphs Thornhill. "Impossible detail at a distance": Kaplan as template (they "know all about 'Thornhill']"). Spying as *Fernsehen*.

LYNCH: death-dream thematic; separation motif in fugitive theme.

other(s):

VanDamm/Professor; password ("truth/expedient exaggeration") inadvertently spoken; Fan is partly deaf. RøT does not hear the call for George Kaplan (nobody). Message to mother, who is "out of place."

PAINTING: Desmoiselles d'Avignon

Key points: double prostitutes ('dolls') = double agent, ken-doll. Melancholy as RøT. Two masters as two agents holding curtains at front and back.

FILM: Wizard of Oz

Dorothy (an orphan) 'errs' in her Kansas sequence and loses her place in the family. Oz allows a correction through separation and trial, with disguised beings and a return to a 'corrected' Kansas.

Double Terms:

Bay Wood, Glen Cove, Towns-end, Thorn-hill, Rush-more, Kap-lan(d)

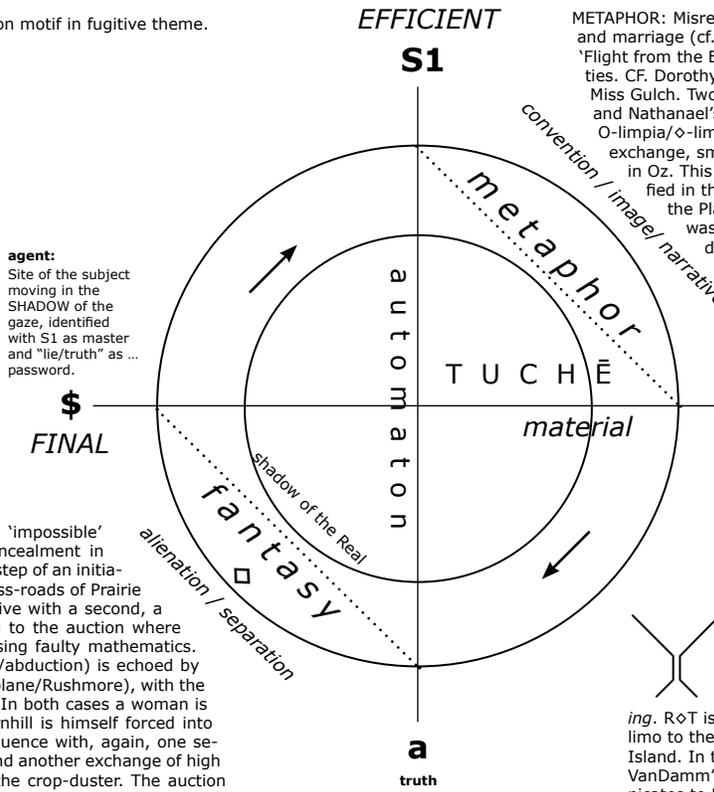
Landscape terms (land, hill, town, wood, glen) and riparian terms (cove, cape for Kap) combine into a topography of a wooded hill topped by a "thorny" fortress dominated by S1, where the scale inversion (figures climbing over faces, <>) echo the theme of microfilm inside the statue, imprisonment of secrets within the "maternal body." The statuette echoes RøT's mother's being "out of place" at her bridge game in the opening scenes.

The fantasy hinges around Thornhill's 'impossible' escape centers around Eve, whose concealment in her small train compartment is the first step of an initiation trial, a test of his devotion. The cross-roads of Prairie Stop 41 link the first part of the narrative with a second, a 40-step sequence with a 1-link leading to the auction where Thornhill connives to be arrested by using faulty mathematics. The first sequence (highrise/cab/drinks/abduction) is echoed by the final sequence (penetration/drinks/plane/Rushmore), with the \diamond matchbook serving as the password. In both cases a woman is being forced into a vehicle. When Thornhill is himself forced into the limo, he establishes the middle sequence with, again, one sequence ending in a high-rise (the UN) and another exchange of high for low (<>) with the encounter with the crop-duster. The auction link emphasizes authenticity, when Thornhill questions whether or not a work of art is genuine, and a patron calls him a "genuine idiot." Again, he is forced into a car, the police car, and taken to the airport to be put into custody of the Professor. \diamond is not only a password, a "nothing," but also the confined passage, <>, of cabs, limos, airplanes, and sleeping compartments. Even Kaplan's clothes are "too small" for Thornhill. Identity and scale inversion, the two aspects of the poignon, are coupled in the coupled theme of identity (Thornhill \neq Kaplan) and abduction (the <> inversion of being stuffed into limos, cabs, airplanes, sleeping compartments).

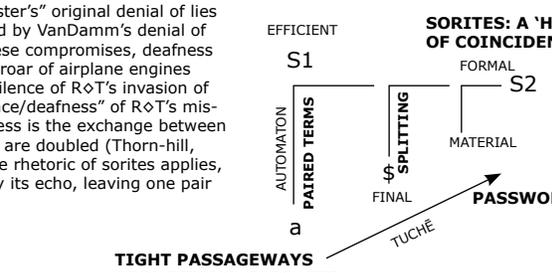
The automaton is structured by the "master's" original denial of lies (only "expedient exaggerations"), echoed by VanDamm's denial of truth ("only innuendos"). In between these compromises, deafness (the deaf colleague at the Plaza bar, the roar of airplane engines when the Professor "abducts" RøT, the silence of RøT's invasion of VanDamm's estate) automates the "silence/deafness" of RøT's misidentification with Kaplan. Silence/deafness is the exchange between elements that are halved and terms that are doubled (Thorn-hill, Towns-end, Rush-more, Van-Damm). The rhetoric of sorites applies, where each element is "cancelled out" by its echo, leaving one pair remaining (RøT and eVe).

SUMMARY:

Poe's design accounts for NxNW's "upper" and "lower" chiasmic structures. The upper 'V' involves (20x20?) scenes starting from the abduction and leading to Thornhill's meeting with the Professor. The first sequence (office to Plaza Hotel abduction) and the last sequence (penetration of VanDamm's modernist house) are parallel. This hour-glass design facilitates the use of coincidence as a "sorites," where each element is echoed by a "lost half" that, when returned to it, completes a whole and/or cancels it. As in other Hitchcock films (e.g. *Shadow of a Doubt*, whose title expresses this idea in a nutshell), the theme of doubles/two's is instrumental (the efficient cause). The echo aspect is acousmatically present in the form of unwitting passwords (Thornhill unwittingly provides this when he summons the porter in the hotel bar) and phrases that the audience may miss but which complete the story ("no such thing as lies" / "not truths but innuendos"; cf. Vertigo's "power and freedom"). The hour-glass design and split terms identify key elements of the film: Eve as a fulcrum, who can be written as "eVe"; the points of abduction as "restricted passage," foretold by Hitchcock's cameo appearance as a man who just misses a bus; and the use of cabs, limos, airplanes, and trains to effect transformations, often involving the theme of concealed or mistaken identities. Picasso's "Desmoiselles d'Avignon" is revealed to have a similar hour-glass design, a passage mediated by doubles and doubt/Melancholy, just as *The Wizard of Oz* combined two chiasmic fields (the Kansas farm and Oz) with the restricted passage, suitably combining optics and identity, of the tornado. David Lynch's use of doubles in *Mulholland Drive* also necessitates an "impossible passage" through the blue box after the scene in Club Silencio — a suitably "acousmatic" formula for the automaton of paired terms, Betty/Diane, Rita/Camilla.



acousmatic:
"lies/expedient exaggerations" becomes "truth/innuendos." Turn of the key phrase. RøT. \diamond as passage through a small opening (cf. pullman sleeping compartment, "tight spots," careening car, climbing into the house, escaping crop-duster.



TIGHT PASSAGeways ABDUCTIONS, CARS, ETC.

METAPHOR: Misrecognition for a 'nobody' as prelude to romance and marriage (cf. *Much Ado about Nothing*). Gaze reversal and 'Flight from the Enchanter' (VanDamm). 'Forest/desert' polarities. Cf. Dorothy is an orphan, in flight from the 'enchanter' Miss Gulch. Two "fathers" (VanDamm/Professor), cf. Coppellius and Nathanael's father, later Coppolo and Spalanzani/Olimpia. O-limpia/ \diamond -limpia (clear-eyed). O/ \diamond transform = scale <> exchange, small point becomes a portal to infinite variety, as in Oz. This infinity is portrayed as randomness, intensified in the 'accidental' mis-identification of Thornhill in the Plaza Hotel bar, diagrammed in the agricultural waste-landscape where he encounters the crop-duster without crops. Thornhill is both a 'nobody' and an 'anybody', with his anybody credentials presented in the urban scenery of the opening.

FORMAL S2
The series of signifiers is the arrangement of coincidences that, based on the misidentification of Thornhill, constitutes a downward digression spiraling around the character of Eve Kendall, whose temptations to attract Thornhill qualify her as a true "Eve" and call attention to the fact that Eden had two competing "masters."

The first scene, from high-rise office building to the Plaza Hotel bar, involves forcing a woman (Thornhill's secretary) into a conveyance (cab); Thornhill goes in for drinks with a gentleman ("Fan Nelson") who is hard of hearing. RøT is then abducted at gunpoint and transported by limo to the "Town's End / Townsend" — an estate on Long Island. In the final scene, RøT is invader not prisoner of VanDamm's estate, but he must remain silent and communicates to Eve using his monogrammed matchbook. Eve's planned end is to be forced into an airplane, her excuse to go back to the house is to get "ear-rings." The gun "does not work" in the final scene, opposed to the gun that does work in the first. Drinks arrive but are not drunk in the first scene, drinks are served in the last to "celebrate" Eve's trip, which is planned to be an execution. Events in the introductory scene turn out to be "halves" that are "completed" by the final. The theme of deafness also appears when the Professor tells the "authenticated" RøT his plan, drowned out by airplane noise. The "intro" chiasmus is echoed by a larger chiasmus, where the train escape foretells an echoing hotel concealment, "crossed" by the cross-roads scene. Eve (eVe) is the fulcrum of the upper chiasmus, initiating the train sequence and terminating the auction sequence. The lower chiasmus' fulcrum is the limo used in RøT's abduction¹ and the Northwest Airlines plane in his abduction² by the Professor. The two chiasmic structures follow Poe's model in by using conveyances and halved elements/themes. The Hitchcock theme of the extended hand is literally portrayed by the upper chiasmus, the tenuous link, \diamond , and the lower chiasmus. Even this link is chiasmically split into a '-x' and '1/x' aspect as identity dominates the abduction scenes. Scale inversion, <>, is key to entrapment inside vehicles/clothes/roles that are made "too small" by their use as traps.