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Lines of Flight:  
Mediation  
and the  
Coding of  
Narrative Knowledge  
on the  
American Screen  
in the Seventies  
( 2 Volumes )



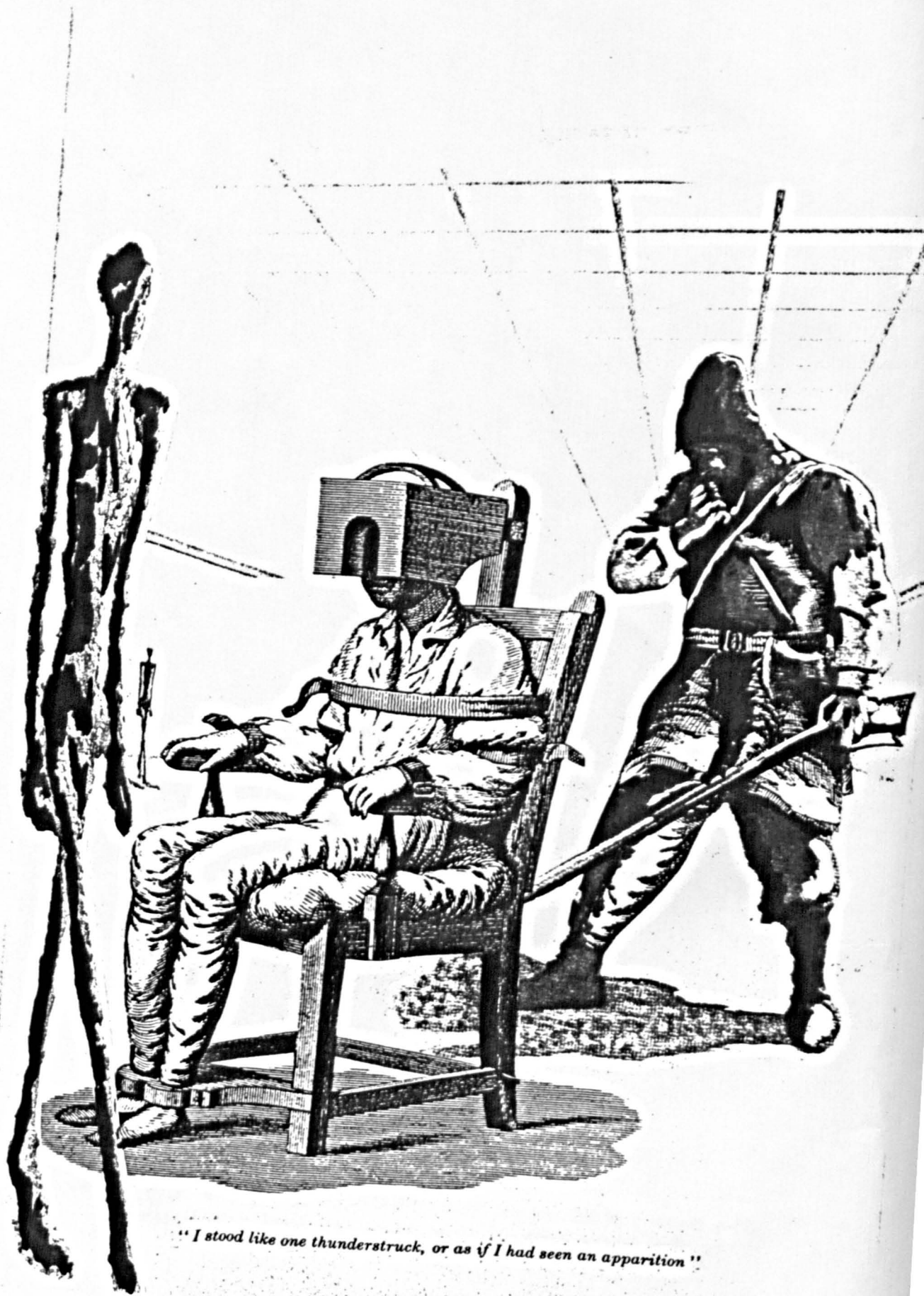
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*" I stood like one thunderstruck, or as if I had seen an apparition "*

## Summary

This thesis, a two volume study of aspects of those popular cultural forms which increasingly prevail over the home television and video environment (American narrative film in feature and series formats), attempts to identify there a narrative mode of production. The specific problem traced through such a production is that of the outer/inner (visible/invisible) metaphor as it informs the construction of points of 'individualism' in or through the textual surface. This problem is considered in relation both to certain traditional ways of thinking about the American 'imagination' and to specific examples of popular film in the seventies. These considerations are progressively focussed on the question of ideological recognition and on an enlargement of the concept of 'channel' to include those mimetic impulses which maintain a contact between text and reader. Around the theme of an extending 'discourse relation' which establishes certain limits and levels of practice, the thesis considers the relationship of level and metalevel; particularly the idea that an event at one level of description may be 'caused' by an event at another level by virtue of being a 'translation'. The crucial instance relates the spatial positioning of the body, on the screen and in front of it, to 'extrinsic' conditions. Conditions are formulated in terms of a late capitalist transition to unstable postindustrialia, at which point the study of narrative systems of signification becomes an exercise in reading structural mediation between popular culture and surrounding socio-economic and historical realities. This shift between significations and communications brings a critical perspective to bear on the dominant ideology thesis and begins to engage with a grounded method of theorising; suggesting that detailed work on textual features of popular culture is not finally discontinuous with the level of description which takes as its object the hypothesised new communication order.



When I study what I mean in saying that it is the body that sees, I find nothing else than: it is 'from somewhere' (from the point of view of the other—or: in the mirror for me, in the three-paneled mirror, for example) visible in the act of looking—

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

'Group' was imported in the seventeenth century—somewhat late in the day—from the vocabulary of the fine arts (a set of painted or sculpted figures) into that of literature (a group of living characters) .... The fact that current vocabulary still leaves us with the abstract and strictly useless individual/society couplet, divorced from the concrete mediations between the two, obliges political criticism to work with the words of others until such time as it can forge a language of its own.

Régis Debray

Between material artefacts like wooden planks, shoes, or automobiles, and linguistic artefacts like words, sentences, or discourses, a constitutive homology can be traced. It can be baptized with the brief expression homology of production. If we use 'production' in its general sense, the homology is internal to it .... The similarities which they will present to homological enquiry are not similarities to be traced empirically, by an a posteriori application of some criterion ... instead, the two different artefacts are taken into consideration all along the range of the work regarding them.

Ferruccio Rossi-Landi

[The genre] is an 'institution'—as Church, University or State is an institution. ... One can work through, express himself through, existing institutions, create new ones, or get on, so far as possible, without sharing in politics or rituals; one can also join, but then reshape, institutions. ... Genre should be conceived, we think, as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific meter or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose—more crudely, subject and audience). The ostensible basis may be one or the other ... but the

critical problem will then be to find the other dimension, to complete the diagram .... Men's pleasure in a literary work is compounded of the sense of novelty and the sense of recognition ... in the murder mystery there is the gradual closing in or tightening of the plot—the gradual convergence (as in Oedipus) of the lines of evidence.

René Wellek and Austin Warren

The sequence was probably inevitable: an enlarged federal government, heightened public expectations, a turn to the president as the personification of how these might be realized .... It is hard to say whether the First Family is so often represented as being uncommonly close because it is thought that family unity will serve as a metaphor for national unity or because it is presumed that we will trust the man more if he is the patriarch of a brood .... Under Carter, the ideal was realized: '...For the first time since the days of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, the mansion on Pennsylvania Avenue houses an extended family'.

Barbara Kellerman (quoting New York Times)

There becomes a more and more pronounced incompatibility between the function of the father, as the basis of a possible solution for the individual of the problems of identification inherent in the structure of the conjugal family, and the demands of industrial societies, in which an integrating model of the father/king/god pattern tends to lose any effectiveness outside the sphere of mystification.

Félix Guattari

There exists an erroneous opinion...that the sociological method comes into its own only when artistic poetic form, made complex by the ideological factor (the factor of content), begins to develop historically in conditions of external social reality; while form itself possesses its own special, not sociological, but specifically artistic nature and laws. ... Of course the Marxist sociologist cannot agree with such an assertion. ...The non-artistic social environment, acting on [art] from without, finds a direct, internal response in it. Here is not one alien factor acting on another. ... The aesthetic, like both the legal and the cognitive, is only a variety of the social .... No problems of the 'immanent' remain.

V Voloshinov

The narratorial voice is the voice of a subject recounting something, remembering an event or a historical sequence, knowing who he is, where he is, and what he is talking about. It responds to some 'police', a force of order or law ('What "exactly" are you talking about?': the truth of equivalence). In this sense, all organized narration is 'a matter for the police', even before its genre (mystery novel, cop story) has been determined. The narrative voice, on the other hand, would surpass police investigation, if that were possible.

Jacques Derrida

It is true that as a matter of psychological fact we spontaneously talk about the films we have seen as a kind of continuation of the experience, much like we protract intimacy by talking after sex. In both these cases, it is a certain deep silence, a silence together, which may be wanted instead in order to maintain the intensity. The possibility of silence defines the quality of conversation with which either of these experiences can be accompanied, since the standard topics of conversation—politics, the neighbors, the children, sports, economics—do not have silence as an alternative.

Arthur C Danto

'He caught all of it, you know? But all it could do was cripple him, disfigure him on the outside. Inside ...'

'Inside he limps.'

'You bastard, Rich. You poor bastard.'

'Inside we all limp, Mo.'

'Not Alex.'

Bone shrugged. 'Okay...'

[...]

'You know how I always see myself?' she said. 'How I always picture myself? And I can't stop. I mean, I try. I really do. But I even dream it. It's like a kind of precognition. I'm, oh I don't know, forty or fifty, and even skinnier than now and pale as death and my face is just a kind of blank, you know? ...'

Newton Thornburg, Cutter and Bone

No sooner has a word been said, somewhere, about the pleasure of the text, than two policemen are ready to jump on you: the political policeman and the psychoanalytical policeman: futility and/or guilt, pleasure is either idle or vain, a class notion or an illusion.

Roland Barthes

Think of a field with a fence around it in which there are horses with adjustable blinkers: the adjustment of their blinkers is the 'coefficient of transversality'. ... My hypothesis is this: it is possible to change the various coefficients of unconscious transversality at the various levels of an institution.

Félix Guattari

I found it highly diverting; it consisted mainly of comical policemen pursuing even more comical villains through the streets. Not much of a plot, but the people actually do move in a very convincing and lifelike way. Freud, I think, was not greatly impressed!

D M Thomas, The White Hotel

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# PREFACE

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# THE CAVE

In children memory is most vigorous, and imagination is therefore excessively vivid, for imagination is nothing but extended or compounded memory [211]\*. This axiom is the principle of the expressiveness of the poetic images that the world formed in its first childhood [212]. ... Children excel in imitation; we observe that they generally amuse themselves by imitating whatever they are able to apprehend [215]. This axiom shows that the world in its infancy was composed of poetic nations, for poetry is nothing but imitation [216]. This axiom will explain the fact that all the arts of the necessary, the useful, the convenient, and even in large part those of human pleasure, were invented in the poetic centuries before the philosophers came ... [217]. Wisdom among the gentiles began with the Muse, defined by Homer in a golden passage of the Odyssey as 'knowledge of good and evil', and later called divination. It was on the natural prohibition of this practice, as something naturally denied to man, that God founded the true religion of the Hebrews, from which our Christian religion arose. The Muse must thus have been properly at first the science of divining by auspices, and this was the vulgar wisdom of all nations ... [365]. We shall show clearly and distinctly how the founders of gentile humanity by means of their natural theology (or metaphysics) imagined the gods; how by means of their logic they invented languages; by morals, created heroes; by economics, founded families, and by politics, cities; by their physics,

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\* Numbers refer to paragraphs in The New Science of Giambattista Vico, Third Edition (1744), revised.



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established the beginnings of things as all divine; by the particular physics of man, in a certain sense created themselves ... [367] .

... We should begin our study of gentile learning by scientifically ascertaining this important starting point—where and when that learning had its first beginnings in the world—and by adducing human reasons thereby in support of Christian faith, which takes its start from the fact that the first people of the world were the Hebrews, whose prince was Adam, created by the true God at the time of the creation of the world. It follows that the first science to be learned should be mythology or the interpretation of fables; for, as we shall see, all the histories of the gentiles have their beginnings in fables, which were the first histories of the gentile nations [51] .

There must in the nature of human institutions be a mental language common to all nations, which uniformly grasps the substance of things feasible in human social life and expresses it with as many diverse modifications as these same things may have diverse aspects [161] . ... This common mental language is proper to our Science, by whose light linguistic scholars will be enabled to construct a mental vocabulary common to all the various articulate languages living and dead [162] .

Here, in Vico's strikingly proleptic thought, are laid out the chief preoccupations of Formalist-structuralist inquiry. Closely preceded by Locke's marking out of the semiotic domain as a 'doctrine of signs', and by Spinoza's distinctly structural (if overcoded) concept of 'immanent cause', Vico anticipates some of the major critical strategies of two and a half centuries later. The childhood of memory and the imaginary; the 'gentile' history with its practice of divination or interpretation in which man constructs his own understandings and thereby his institutions and himself; the 'Hebrew' history in which God prohibits interpretation with its inevitable tropes and is Himself the ordering origin of, and presence in, history, beyond the reach of human inventiveness; the necessity for an 'interpretation of fables' as popular history or memory; the 'language' of social life which underpins all its practices: these aspects of Vico's Science re-appear in the psychoanalytical

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concern with primal phantasies and memory-pictures (including, in Vichian fashion, those of the human race in addition to the individual subject's); in an 'archaeology' of history as an interpretable discourse, set strategically against ideas of origin and presence; in Formalist-structuralist narratology in which the study of narrative becomes an attempted description of the fundamental processes of signifying systems; and finally in an anthropology of 'untamed', un-colonised thinking (la pensée sauvage). There is also in Vico's writing a strong sense of the bicameral mind in an exceptional internal dialogue.

Alongside his system-building there are the striking images, such as the giants 'scattered over the earth after the flood' [370]; images drawn from the fabulous histories which manifest a 'poetic wisdom'. As eloquently put by Edward Said, Vico's 'grand ideas' are found repeatedly to 'stand without intermediaries directly next to his descriptions of the primitive fathers copulating with their women in the mountain caves'.\*

In the present study this distinctive bicameral quality, flaunting itself before the risk of bathos, will be modestly assimilated. This for two reasons: abstract theorizing has difficulty making the crossing onto the more earthy terrain of actual exoteric cultural products (an observation stemming directly from the work of this research and writing, not a criticism of the work of others); but more specifically, following Vico's thinking, if the study of narratives is to have an important place in the study of social relations, institutions and histories then it must be allowed to shift back and forth between systematic ideas and the arts of human pleasure practised in the darkness of the cave.

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\* Beginnings: Intention and Method p.350

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# THE STORY

'What's the story?' The question comes from Harv, the detective whom we first see in an extreme low-angle shot like that used to frame the entrance of John Wayne's sheriff Chance in Rio Bravo,—imaging monumentally masculine certainty—and whose appearance, in particular the habitual stetson, recalls also Clint Eastwood's eponymous deputy sheriff Coogan and the whole complex of associations that accrete to the image of the Western law-man. Though set in the early seventies, Electra Glide in Blue (1973, UA, d-J W Guercio) stages its action in and around an evocative Monument Valley and its blue-uniformed motorcycle 'cops' ride across the desert like Ford's cavalrymen.

The main protagonist, one such policeman, is diminutive 'Big' John Wintergreen. He has a dream to match the mythical dimensions of the landscape. He wants, like the frontiersman whose picture hangs on his wall, to assert his individual worth, to escape from the routine, but there is a paradox to be dealt with. The young people who, to the Stockman police, are 'drop-outs' and 'hippies', detritus of the sixties,

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and hence objects of continuous suspicion (Harv even invoking 'conspiracy'), have that mythical landscape painted totemistically on their van and live communally in search of the very freedom which teases Wintergreen; but he is trying to realise it within an institutional framework, within the lines of force which superscribe themselves on the imaginary landscape and drive the old prospectors farther up into the mountains.

His partner Skip has, perhaps, a more realistic assessment of Wintergreen's aspirations: 'You're just hungry to be one of them glamour-boys, ain't ya?' Wintergreen's fatal discovery is that his dream of a merger between frontier individualism and the 'system' has no more substance than Skip's fantasy about a blue Electra Glide with everything chromed. Returned to the grip of the original paradox, Wintergreen dies uselessly in the Fordian landscape which is now drained of the heroic myth of identity-forging domination as surely as the film is drained of colour in its sad, lingering finale.

Yet 'glamour-boys' with badges were seldom off the American screen in the seventies, so clearly the disillusionment of Electra Glide in Blue is exceptional and, retrospectively, can be seen as a prescient critique of much that was to come. When Harv asks him, 'What's the story?' Wintergreen bitterly rejects the conventional mystery-story, the 'case' which Harv has erected around the old man found dead in his desert shack: he rejects, in fact, the notion of deviance as a definable, punishable (or curable) essence which the detective 'glamour-boys' (embodying a countervailing normative essence) prosecute. Wintergreen recognises that the clues, the abused suspects, the spectacular chases, the narrative paraphernalia of policing, disguise the fact that 'frontier individualism' translates ultimately into paranoid isolation; that solitude, separation, dissociation, alterity, the 'granulation' of social relations, 'can kill you deader than a three fifty-seven Magnum'. Try telling that to 'Dirty' Harry, doyen of the 'coercive' school

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of management.

Wintergreen loses his place in a set of terms which can be selected in order to allow significant aspects of contemporary popular cinematic culture to reveal their social and historical grounds; in, to be more specific, the framework or 'armature' through which the masculine style, roughcast in the sub-literary Western and refined by popular detective fiction into a vague 'critique' of urban capitalism, may now be understood to split and codify itself in such a way as to set limits for the variations introduced by individual messages, individual stories. Underpinning 'Harv' as a character in a particular narrative is the term on which the whole armature turns (and it is this toward which Wintergreen is imitatively drawn): with his secretive individualism the 'tough guy' figures sheer power and, when allowed authority as a Hawksian law-man or a contemporary policeman, is a stable centre for a whole ideological offensive. Deviance ( source of the disruption which animates narrative ) is defined in relation to this centre.

Electra Glide in Blue finds significant places on this armature for Harv, for Wintergreen and for Jolene (where their energies most visibly converge) whose Hollywooden dreams and boozy realism precipitate Harv's disintegration and Wintergreen's sole assumption of the 'tough guy' role, now severed from any real authority. While Harv sees in Jolene, to whom he is obsessively but impotently attached, the polar choices of corruption/incorruption, Wintergreen begins to recognise the desolation of atomised existence which, finally, he faces down the barrels of a shotgun poking out of the 'hippie' van with its 'America - Love It Or Leave It' sticker.

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# THE GROUP

The first step towards [the] immanent elaboration of total human energy has taken place in the mechanical field under pressure of the most urgent necessities of life. Historical materialism, Marx would say. In order to obtain the results of collective organisation and discovery necessary for their subsistence, active thinking units are automatically led to form a linked operational group: a 'front-line' of humanity.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

What is the utopian communal group, the subject-group, on the screen in Electra Glide in Blue but the figuration, briefly, for the audience dependent on the screen, of everything which they are not? Corrupted ultimately in the image of the itinerant sniper (speciously concentrating disaffiliation), it returns the audience to itself relatively untroubled, if undoubtedly touched a little by the final pathos.

But must there not be, also, a dim sense of energies dissipated before the screen, of a desire which might have outrun the demand for entertainment and which the fictional subject-group took advantage of and betrayed? And Wintergreen's failure to become one of the detectives mirrors this disappointment even as it distracts attention from it by picturing the

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police, however troubled, as the 'front-line'.

The idea of the pre-institutional group resisting dependence outside itself in the interests of, let us say, 'transversality', is the idea of collective self-emancipation; the overcoming of separation 'from below' rather than by quasi-unities manipulated 'from above'. As a separating object (behind its quasi-unity, its 'shared experience') the screen brings into being the very desire to escape solitary confinement which would question the quasi-unities of a cinematic popular culture were it not for the fact that the screen derealises itself and re-directs or displaces that specific form of desire. (Reproducing the larger pattern by which capitalism brought into being the force which could overthrow it but postponed that day through its ideological apparatuses.)

Julia (1977, TCF, d- F Zinnemann), for example, marks out particularly clearly the common dimensions of this re-direction. Lillian is fascinated by an object of desire which shimmers and oscillates between the emotionally sepia-tinted image of Julia herself and the commitment, belonging, reciprocity, collective struggle and mutual dependence which Julia embodies. Lillian sits, for instance, in a railway carriage approaching Berlin, nervously unsure of whether her fellow travellers in the compartment are with her or not: such is the deeper ambivalence of her longing for Julia. It short-circuits the larger pattern, broadly 'political' (rather than 'personal' in the way Hollywood understands the term), and does so as much for the audience as for Jane Fonda's Lillian who draws the viewer into her multiple reflections with an engagingly ticklish 'Method' performance.

The fact that woman is the term of such a re-direction in many of the other examples we will consider, can be read in various ways: as the first good object the woman is an image of completeness, of wholeness which can draw into itself by its own gravitational pull the desire to escape separation; overlaid

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on this fundamental (but regressive) appropriateness is the conventionally fetishistic representation of the female body, a degree of which is largely taken for granted and hence 'invisible' as such (with conscious disturbance tending only to enter the scene along with the elements of sadism, necrophilia and mutilation which have been developed by certain fashion-image auteurs, such as Helmut Newton, and tentatively appropriated by the Horror genre); and finally it needs to be emphasized that troubling and interrupting the desire to escape powerless isolation through, specifically, the image of woman may also have a strategic significance which exceeds the pleasures of looking. As the isolation and confinement of women in the home is one of the fulcrums of serial separation (it is no accident that Sartre, in the Critique of Dialectical Reason, uses the example of the bakery queue) the 'risk' of the concomitant frustrations leading to a sustained emancipatory backlash may be offset to some extent by (among other ways) forcing women to view and view again an image which is always finally pleasurable at the expense of the woman, requiring therefore of the female spectator a masochistic over-identification.

This last recalls the question of narrative, the question which will complicate such considerations. The regressive appropriateness of woman as the first good object of a desire to escape separation (just as the actual first good object precedes separation) seems to offer a re-experiencing of anxiety appropriate also to that earlier stage and entails a narrative Oedipalisation, now marking the woman as lack, as insufficiency (Julia's wholeness is destroyed, she loses a leg ...). In this way are 'naturalised' the other levels of the embryonically political schema erected on serial separation as a defining feature of infrastructural social relations.

Thus, in Julia, Lillian is finally held in place by Dashiell Hammett to whom she always returns. Played by Jason Robards with the hard-shelled masculine style of Hammett's own creations, he is the fictional hero and the 'author' of a fiction



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artfully combined. Such figures (secretive and yet accepted at face value, watchable because of, rather than in spite of, their unchanging, dependable stability, their Sameness) are nothing other than the ritual condensation of productive forces based on mastery, 'progress' and instrumental reason: cocksure and self-satisfied, they set down limits within which narrative can produce its commodities, its variations. (That Jason Robards' re-appropriation of elements of the acting styles and images of Bogart and Spencer Tracy was almost uniquely capable throughout the seventies of representing such authority is suggested by his subsequent employment as the pivotal character in The Day After (TV film, 1983, d- Nicholas Meyer) to underscore the post-catastrophe collapse of values; but it had also been turned more directly against itself in Washington: Behind Closed Doors.)

What always has to be there in order then to be re-directed under the sovereignty of this archaic, virtually feudal, embodiment of authority (supervising, if not necessarily determining, the whole narrative production) is the anxiety of contemporary atomised forms of life and the desire that stems from this anxiety. This desire, its pressure from 'below', can be apprehended as the Intentionality at work in the narratives of a mass culture, in place of the ultimately frivolous reduction of the communicative sphere either to individual and obsessive thematic-aesthetic intentions or to the thin intention-less forms of grey objectivist criticism and epistemology.

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Concentrating on the 'cave' (the friendly embrace of the half-light spilling from the screen), the 'story' (narrative as a form of reasoning) and the 'group' (the potential of mutual dependence shimmering across the surface of degraded and confining forms of life), this study claims to identify a spatialised set of terms capable of translating features of its textual object into extrinsic social and historical facts.

Accepting and bracketing the theoretical reworking of 'identification' (in terms of the formal binding of the spectator's look into the system across any one-to-one relationship with a character or actor)\* this work re-considers the relationship of the audience to points of 'individualism' in the text, now stripped of 'empathic' qualities and of the vague understandings of human nature from which such qualities can be assumed to have arisen.

Broadly, there are two kinds of elaboration on such points: on the one hand, the 'invention of secrecy' by which the audience is offered an unknownness readable in terms of respectable privacy (the hero) or dark guilt (the villain) and, on the other, the progressive laying out and development of a character across the 'image' of the film as a whole, becoming a kind of structural

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\*see for example the work of Stephen Heath as cited in both sections of the bibliography (Volume II)

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'interiority' established over time. The body of the actor becomes, in the first instance, something like an analogous landscape while, in the second, its moods and appearances take on the function of a sequence of spatial metonymies. One important body traced across the development of this interpretive text is that of the policeman whose death ends the story, a curiously persistent character in the seventies from John Wintergreen on. The material for this story is found by taking specific films and parts of films as 'lexias' within a larger narrative. \*

Two levels of mediation are developed within this narrative: substructural mediation is considered in terms of twinned synchronic and diachronic aspects by which 'actantial' and narrative patterns are established, while structural mediation draws these aspects together in order to locate the text against its grounds. The police film provides the paradigmatic dimension for the construction of such a narrative and two films directed by Peckinpah provide the syntagmatic dimension, allowing the work to find a beginning and an end.

Because of the traditional organisation of postgraduate research this work was carried out in isolation, between, on the one hand, latent institutions with their rules of action and processes of thought which the writer imperfectly replicates and, on the other, the thick granularity of competitive education; but in the absence of a group it was fashioned in imitation of an absent other and the finished thesis (in its relationship, for instance, to the exemplary work of Fredric Jameson) comes partly to embody a desire to be one of the 'glamour-boys' who write theory. This fact is not without consequences ...

'Outside', meanwhile, the form and functions of the capitalist State continue to adjust and counter the antagonism of capital and labour and the imbalances and deficiencies of private capital. Interventionist powers are exercised and refined as strategies of crisis-management whether the crises are in 'output' (administrative plans and capacities) or in

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\* see p.109 for discussion of 'lexias'

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'input' (public expectations). Beyond the right-wing populist swings (the 'small' State) lie both the constant pressure of core capital for stabilization and the need for transnational co-ordination: in short, the conditions for increased state management and social engineering backed up by transnational capital. The small State in terms of social welfare conjoins with massive and continued expansion of the State in terms of surveillance, force and boundary-definition (whether in the management of international relations or of local policing). It is here that the pre-conditional grounds of the thesis itself become accessible, beyond any embarrassing intrusion of biographical asides. \*

As 'hypersigns' texts are, in what follows, persistently divided into three levels or orders of symptomatic meaning according to their implication in the phenomenological constitution by which a spatial 'picture' of social relations forms and re-forms in a subjectivity achieved within the cleft traditions and memberships of Northern Ireland: the social atomisation from which terror ultimately arises; the institutionalisation of a discourse of universal, systematic and manageable relationships from which the violence of the State ultimately arises; and the confused middle-ground, often squeezed to the side, where, for good or ill, people come together in communicative interaction as members of a group.

Shifts within the codification of supervisory and administrative styles (in America, for example, from the post-Nixon crisis in authority to the so-called 'Californization' of national politics, the glossy, hard-sell, single-issue, paternalistic message on which Reagan rode to power and held it) change also the nature of that channelling of autonomous opposition, struggle and desire through which sites for real political debate are opened up and maintained. It is the contention here that, in mass culture, narrative, with its own patterns of supervision and response, is acutely sensitive to such changes, whether 'deposited' by processes that have already taken place or indeed 'anticipated'.

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\* the death of a policeman is not, for example, an 'innocent' choice for the work to make in finding its central image.

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# PART ONE

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CHAPTER 1

THEME OF THE ENIGMA:  
LOCUS, GENRE AND SYMBOLIC  
LANDSCAPE

A question which tends not to be posed often enough in critical work on film genres is simply this: What difference would it make if these characters, events and thematic structures were located in another genre-'reality'? In more abstract terms this is a question about the interaction of the form of the content and its substance. In terms of authorship it leads one to wonder what (if any) fundamentally significant difference it makes that, for example, Peckinpah's Cross of Iron (to adopt the conventional assignment of a title) is a War film while The Wild Bunch is a Western, so strongly do both exhibit the director's very specific preoccupations.<sup>1</sup> \* Taken to an extreme this kind of failure to discriminate can even subsume the generic elements of the work of a self-confessed maker of Westerns

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\* notes and references begin on p.254

into a celebration of expressive individualism: Andrew Sarris suggests that a particular film directed by Ford 'achieves greatness as a unified work of art with the emotional and intellectual resonance of a personal testament'.<sup>2</sup> Such an assessment tends to place the genre elements (is this one of Ford's Westerns or not?) in an incidental position relative to the anterior personality and experience of the author. Apart from the (now heavily worked over) terrain of a debate about the place of authorship within discursive practices, there arises also here the matter of genre boundaries and 'specificity'.

If genres are subsidiary aspects of a text's constitution according to the theory (miscognised as common sense) of expressive realism, then presumably it does not matter very much whether a Ford or a Peckinpah has chosen to express himself in a Western or a War film, and, as a corollary, the difference between the genres is largely superficial--reducible perhaps to a somehow neutral and often loosely defined iconography and a repertoire of basic actions. Indeed, given an implicit assumption that the genuine

auteur is always making and re-making the same film, there is a sense in which iconographical categories conveniently enable this process to be successfully disguised. But there is a certain kind of criticism that can always see through the disguise to the underlying reality of experience as expressed by the distinctive thematic concerns of the director in question: a criticism which values continuity, supposedly fundamental sameness, consistent patterning, sedimented meaning, the oeuvre, at the expense of discontinuity, rupture, difference, de-sedimentation, the text. It is, for some reason, widely considered to be better (on the evidence of much critical writing) if one can assert that, for instance, the protagonists in Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Hell is for Heroes, Two Mules for Sister Sara and Dirty Harry all essentially manifest the 'Siegel' theme of distrust for women and sexual betrayal, than to suggest that the films are essentially different, particularly in being respectively Science-fiction, War, Western and Detective films.<sup>3</sup> So, for example, Kaminsky, in a chapter entitled 'The Genre Director: Siegel', lets 'genre' slide out



of sight under 'Siegel' as the ultimately significant constitutive term and enlists the director's own testament to do so: 'Almost 20 years and 18 feature films later, Siegel continues to think of Invasion of the Body Snatchers as the film which best expresses his world view.'<sup>4</sup> The other films mentioned above simply slip back into this 'world view' with the rest of the Siegel oeuvre as so many variations, enabled largely by the surface differences derived from the available iconographical categories. In this way the typical Siegel (Mann, Fuller...) hero may be dressed as a westerner, a detective, a soldier, may move within the iconography of a frontier, city or battlefield milieu, but beneath these distinctive generic surfaces the same form of content, the same thematic structure, is at work, supported by forms of expression which may also be distinctively the work of the particular director or his habitual collaborators.

Just why it is better to be able to say 'unified' rather than 'different' is seldom stated: after all, that one director's work should be different from another's is considered to be a good thing so why, within 'his' own films,

difference should be shifted towards the superficial while unity emerges as the essential is a question no less perplexing than it is basic. And the tropes of conventional interpretation can be particularly devious here. In a useful monograph on Siegel, for example, we find Two Mules for Sister Sara identified as an 'aberration' (which is to say that it refuses to fit) but later neatly recovered, made to fit elsewhere: 'Budd Boetticher produced the original idea and script and the final script, though rewritten, bears the mark of his work in films such as Comanche Station and Ride Lonesome.'<sup>5</sup> The film's difference is a problem to be solved.

What appears to happen is that the name of the auteur commonly comes to signify another, in some ways stronger, genre: 'Ford' is a genre, 'Siegel' is a genre, 'Peckinpah' is a genre... . Many statements about genre could, in fact, equally apply to the idea of authorship:

Genre--A body, group, or category of similar works; this similarity being defined as the sharing of a sufficient number of motifs so that we can identify works which properly fall within a particular kind or style of film.<sup>6</sup>

The master image for genre criticism is a triangle composed of artist/film/audience. Genres may be defined as patterns/forms/styles/structures which transcend individual films, and which supervise both their construction by the film maker, and their reading by an audience. Such a model also implies a number of internal relationships between the various constituents of the genre (the individual films), and a controlling relationship between the film-maker, the genre and the audience.<sup>7</sup>

A framework which transcends individual films and establishes their interconnectedness: whether genre or oeuvre, this kind of construct mediates the reading of particular films (and the notion of 'supervision' is sufficiently ambiguous for it to suit, say, a George Lucas production better than it does a film noir). Kitses can repeatedly employ a revealing syntactical arrangement of the kind 'in Mann', 'in Boetticher' because, as equally implied by 'in the Western', what is being proposed is a kind of set-theory of pertinent elements.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, the critical consolidation since the fifties of the auteur as such a set overlaps with the emergence of the director as a particularly significant factor in super-  
vising the viewing of the popular audience, even as the importance of genre as such a factor has appeared to decline. So an audience's expectations

are more closely controlled by the anticipation of a 'Spielberg/Lucas' film (perhaps more closely than since the heyday of the 'Busby Berkeley' film in the thirties) than by the anticipation of a Science-fiction or Adventure film. 'A De Palma film' signified, for a time, a more meaningful set than the iconographical elements of the Horror film, the Thriller, or the Musical which interweave in 'his' actual films. So too with the 'Coppola' film and the War, Gangster or Musical iconographies. There are numerous examples in the seventies (even if some, like the 'Cimino' film, were short-lived).

The 'Clint Eastwood' film draws the star into the equation (as does the 'Woody Allen' film), and to such a marked degree that one tends to forget that Eastwood did not actually direct such films as The Enforcer or Any Which Way You Can.<sup>9</sup> This suggests that a general element of 'authorship' has always had a crucial place within genre. Rick Altman indicates as much in the case of the musical, combining an emphasis on the authorising 'personality' with the studio as a subsidiary classificatory device: 'MGM in the later 1930s had the successful pair of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy; Fox was characterised

from the 1930s through the 1950s by its policy of one blonde at a time (Shirley Temple, Alice Faye, Betty Grable, June Haver, Marilyn Monroe); the later Paramount musicals had the inimitable Bing Crosby.<sup>10</sup> Buscombe expands on a similar point about Humphrey Bogart and Casablanca:

It doesn't help much to have seen other Curtiz films, but one's enjoyment is enormously enriched by having seen Humphrey Bogart and the rest in other films of the period. It may be objected that strictly speaking this has nothing to do with genre, since the qualities which actors can bring to a film cut across genre. Yet is it not a fact that Bogart's battered face instantly communicates a blend of cynicism and honesty, weariness and generosity, that is genuinely part of a tradition of the American film noir?<sup>11</sup>

The basic point here is that popular films and genres (and studios once) are frequently characterised, in a strong sense of the adjective: for the audience the fact that a film is a Musical, a Western or whatever, tends to be inseparable, at any particular point in time, from the 'Astaire/Rogers' characterism of the Musical or the 'Wayne' characterism of the Western. Extensive paradigms are gradually built up so that the less well-known performer--say Jock Mahoney in the Western Joe Dakota<sup>12</sup>--derives a certain authority by paradigmatic

association. Similarly, iconographical features accrete to the character/performer as 'trait-connoting metonymies'.<sup>13</sup>

The tendency for genre to disappear into authorship constructed in terms of directorial expression may be read as a critical displacement and revision of this fundamental characteristic of films and genres. Meanwhile, given an apparent decline both in some genres themselves and in the widespread ability of performers to characterise genres in this way, the audience has also turned (or been turned) to the directorial image in order to characterise groups of films (largely to substantial commercial advantage).

Buscombe's suggestion (borrowing a distinction from Wellek and Warren) that in American film genres 'outer' form (particularly iconography) determines 'inner' form (tone, purpose, attitude--the form of content or thematic structure) may be construed to intersect with, to be crossed by, 'outer' and 'inner' forms of characterisation, or character-indication.<sup>14</sup>

Where once the principal character (as played by the star) was the dominant internal 'subject' constructed at the point where 'outer' and 'inner' form meet, the honour may now often belong also or

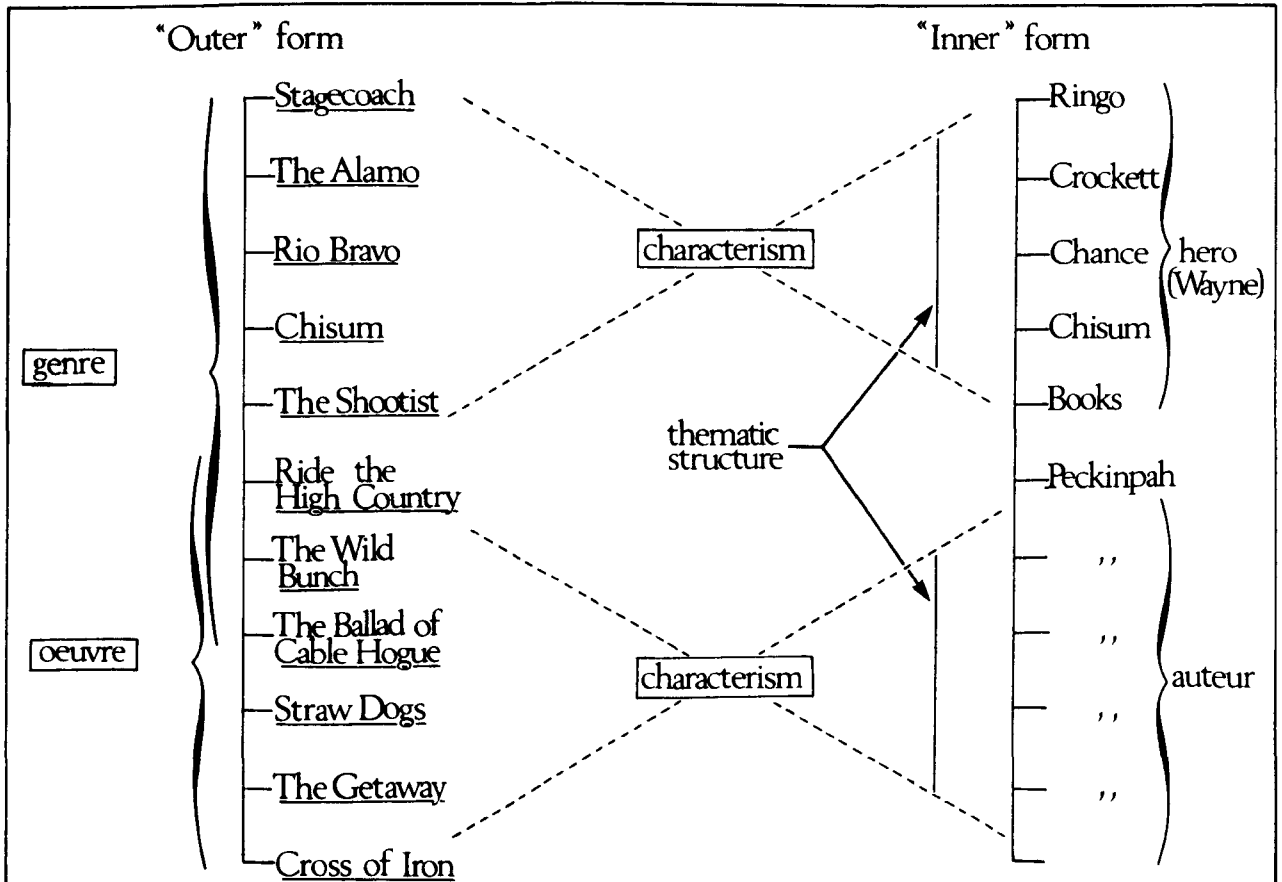
instead to the director, as an external 'subject', even as theoretical work abandons such a position. While performers such as Eastwood and Allen can still strongly characterise groups of films in this way, it is worth bearing in mind that they are also directors. Other successful performers such as Warren Beatty or Alan Alda (from television) have aspirations or have been drawn by market forces in this direction.<sup>15</sup> (The distinction between external and internal 'subjects' in this sense bears a resemblance to Girard's notion of external and internal mediation.<sup>16</sup>)

If the concept of genre is to be anything other than a replaceable relay in a circuit of characterism, merely channelling the strong current of an authorising personality, it needs to be more carefully defined. The place to start is with the paradox exposed here: if below the surface differences between, for example, a 'Peckinpah' War film and a 'Peckinpah' Western there is detectable a hard core of expressive thematic and/or stylistic structure, how can it be the case that generic 'outer' form determines 'inner' form? The two proposals are mutually exclusive. If the former is correct then the determining relationship in the latter must be reversed. If the latter is correct then the

'Peckinpah' who characterises a particular Western cannot be precisely the same 'Peckinpah' as characterises a War film. The surreptitious presence of this paradox goes some way towards explaining why it seems to be the case that genre and authorship appear to take turns or to suppress one another in critical work on specific films.

If we define characterism as the tendency to read 'outer' form (what is visible and audible on screen, organised around patterns of decor, dress, objects--in short, by iconographic features) not merely in terms of an 'inner' form of thematic structure but in terms of an organising presence reconstructed from the text, then the following model will summarise the outcome of such a tendency.

Fig. 1.





We have here the model (doubled) of a pinhole camera (a form we will find useful again, re-invested, in the next chapter): characterism as a kind of trope of reading mediates between 'outer' and 'inner' form in such a way as to constitute thematic structure as a precise relay of 'character' or presence. And there is nothing accidental about such a trope: it arises from the very specificity of the cinematic within the register of histoire; from the impersonal mode of address 'which has relentlessly erased its supporting discourse'<sup>17</sup> and, therefore, makes any hypostasis of 'inner' form inevitably and completely determined by the 'outer' form unfolded on the screen.

That not only the mediatory crossings but also the inverted images which they produce are similar here (whether rooted in the genre or the oeuvre) is particularly clear if we think of the constitution of the auteur as resembling Sulloway's richly suggestive account of the 'decontextualization' in the psychoanalytical movement which led to the myth of Freud as hero.<sup>18</sup> In other words, psychoanalysis can serve as an exemplary genre (it has all the repetitions, the troubled narratives, the

family romances...) and Freud's writings as an exemplary oeuvre: from the former emerges the analyst as hero, as the point from where everything makes sense; from the latter emerges 'Freud' as the absolute origin of the ideas expressed in his writings. Sulloway quotes Joseph Campbell on the hero's journey-- "fundamentally it is inward--into the depths where obscure resistances are overcome, and long lost, forgotten powers are revived, to be made available for the transformation of the world".<sup>19</sup> The 'outer' form, whether psychoanalytical session or written case-history, discloses finally this 'inner' form. Taken to an extreme, in this kind of reading the genre merely clothes the hero's self-analysis. Sulloway quotes Erikson: "we students [of Freud] knew little of his beginnings, nothing of that mysterious self-analysis which he alluded to in his writings. We knew people whom Freud had introduced into psychoanalysis, but psychoanalysis itself had, to all appearances, sprung from his head like Athena from the head of Zeus".<sup>20</sup> Sulloway refers to this overall process of myth-making as an 'epistemological politics':

Finally, for Freud, who likened the myths of nations to the inevitable distortions that individuals create about their early childhood, man's insatiable need for historical falsifications was a fundamental tenet of his science... . Is it not understandable, then, that he and his disciples should have availed themselves of such a splendid mythology of their own collective making?<sup>21</sup>

Embedded in the notion of the auteur is a similar myth of heroic isolation, of rites of passage and intellectual journeys, of self-analysis and the overcoming of or coming to terms with testing constraints and resistances. McArthur's study of the 'disciplines' imposed by the Hollywood Gangster film and the film noir on nine directors, hinges on thumbnail sketches of potential 'heroes' in this sense; auteurs for whom the terrain of a genre is the setting for journeys 'into the depths', as Campbell puts it, 'where obscure resistances are overcome': thus Nicholas Ray's 'turbulence', Fritz Lang's 'despair', Sam Fuller's 'cinema fist' and so on, are points where 'outer' ('turbulent' mise-en-scene, 'despairing' lighting...) and 'inner' form are mediated by an insistent characterism.<sup>22</sup> The distinctive iconography of the genre produces an 'inverted image' in which the landscape is now

internal, behind an imagined retina, and movement across it a journey of the auteur's mind; often a virtually Freudian self-analysis. There is finally the sense of something undifferentiated about the Langs, Rays and Fullers in such an account; their mazy landscapes and journeys so similar, their images (both 'outer' and 'inner') so primitive (a term to which McArthur gives a positive valorisation).

Similarly, for Kitses, writing about the Western, 'at a deeper level, Mann's landscape provides a correlative for the drive and conflict of his characters',<sup>23</sup> and Mann himself is the ultimate 'driven' character: 'His neurotic characters and their extraordinary violence were a strange personal gift to the Western... [which] allowed the welding of these elements and the expression of Mann's own troubled dialectic... . Like his heroes, Mann can be seen to have tested himself all his artistic life.'<sup>24</sup> This is the double displacement, the double-crossing in a sense, at work within genre; from 'outer' form to an 'inner' characterised form, constitutive of either a hero in the fiction or the ultimate hero of the fiction, the auteur for whom the generic

elements are a test, an institutionalised discipline, an 'external' world to be 'inverted' and represented as a world-view (but it is in fact only in a reading that this is fully achieved). And there is a class division here: the underclass goes to see a 'John Wayne' movie while the film-cultured audience goes to see a 'John Ford' film. Andrew Sarris unerringly puts his finger on a crucial and levelling lack of difference between such supervisory categories when he points out that Wayne was 'the star of the director's Personality Period'.<sup>25</sup> (One of the least evasive questions for a criticism of Personality, which is not in any rigorous sense a criticism of film, is how directors such as Nicholas Ray and Rainer Fassbinder embodied the contradictions inherent in this double-crossing of 'outer' form.)

Connected to this class division (which we will re-consider in terms of its formal conditioning in Part III), there would appear to be two polarising critical postures in relation to genre: the first, and most common, views generic elements as too easily producing and conditioning an audience which, therefore, needs

to be rescued from its own unsophisticated pleasures even if only indirectly by a critical pooh-poohing of such 'formulaic' elements (and this also leads to a critical celebration of parodic forms); the second allows that the audience playfully and ritually celebrates the pleasures of a text which it knows to be heavily coded ('Who shot J.R?' asked around the world in anticipation of a particular season of Dallas). Dorothy Hobson, for example, adopts the second position in relation to a genre, TV soap-opera, which has almost universally elicited the first:

They [viewers] work with the text and add their own experiences and opinions to the stories in the programme... . It seems that they expect to contribute to the production which they are watching and bring their own knowledge to augment the text. Stories which seem almost too fantastic for an everyday serial are transformed through a sympathetic audience reading whereby they strip the storyline to the idea behind it and construct an understanding on the skeleton that is left... . There is no overall intrinsic message or meaning in the work (Crossroads), but it comes alive and communicates when the viewers add their own interpretation and understanding to the programme... . The critical attacks on it suggest that its viewers do not have any critical faculties precisely because they like the programme. This is clearly élitist and nonsensical.<sup>26</sup>

Dorothy Hobson's implicit suggestion here is that high production values which might attract critical approbation would tend to erect a barrier between text and audience, leaving the audience somehow with less to do. While such a perspective, given the strength of the opposing position, is to be valued for its corrective insight, it is possible to view them both as oversimplifications because of their markedly undialectical natures. However, even the critical activity which is interested in genre 'for the exploration of the psychological and sociological interplay between film-maker, film and audience',<sup>27</sup> has tended not to allow the audience the share of the interplay which Hobson's work suggests that it may actually have. So what is necessary is an understanding of genre that shuttles productively (dialectically) between at most the hypothetically restored Intentional states of the film-makers and of the spectators; this on the basis of the text between them. Intention remains, however, a problematic category rather than a commonsense antecedent of the viewed film: such an understanding has to avoid positing a priori that authors/spectators simply 'use' something given called a genre for their own anterior purposes (self-expression, escapism, etc.):

[Genre] is a term which can be usefully employed in relation to a body of knowledge and theory about the social and psychological context of film. Any assertion we might make about the use a director makes of genre conventions--Peckinpah uses the contrast between our expectations and actual images to reinforce the 'end of an era' element in Ride the High Country and The Wild Bunch--assumes, wrongly, the existence of this body of knowledge. To labour the point, it assumes (1) we know what Peckinpah thinks; (2) we know what the audience thinks (a) about the films in question, and (b) about 'Westerns'; (3) Peckinpah knows the answer to (2)(b) and it is the same as our answer, etc. Most uses of genre effectively invent answers to such questions by implicitly claiming to tap some archetypal characteristic of the genre, some universal human response.<sup>28</sup>

The merit, in one sense, of Hobson's work is that it goes to the other extreme: through her well documented research with actual viewers 'what the Crossroads audience has revealed is that there can be as many interpretations of a programme as the individual viewers bring to it', or more epigrammatically that 'there are as many different Crossroads as there are viewers'.<sup>29</sup>

It is no accident that so much critical work on genre has concentrated on the Western: it appears, of all the popular genres, in many ways most diametrically opposed to such anarchy and in its place seemingly offers clear 'archetypal characteristics' and invites a uniformity of interpretation. This difference reflects a much more



general distinction; one which Vico's categories of 'divine' origin and 'gentile' history enable us to think. What we have called 'characterism' is a persistent attempt to re-form an historical practice of collective invention, repetition and trope into (the sovereign trope) a fixed order of meaning, 'divinely' authorised. It is clearly possible to draw in, if a little vertiginously (as, after all, this is also the domain where the question of interpretation inserts itself between the one of Catholicism and the many of Protestantism) from this broad speculative framework to the shamelessly bathetic distinction between, say, Robert Warshaw's confident assertion that the 'point' of the Western is 'a certain image of man, a style, which expresses itself most clearly in violence'<sup>30</sup> and on the other hand Dorothy Hobson's notion that there are as many such 'points' as there are spectators. (And somewhere in the background too are the analogists of Alexandria and the anomalists of Pergamon; we seem perpetually caught, even with the products of a mass culture's mechanical reproduction, in what Bloom so aptly calls 'mimic wars of criticism'.<sup>31</sup>) A variety of conflictive critical and theoretical positions, from the orthodox theory of expressive realism to a Vichian

structuralism, are tropes of interpretation derived from the fundamental distinction between the one 'point' and the many. Warshow's 'point' refers to the Western hero but could equally apply to (and finds distinct echoes in critical perspectives on) the Western director (the Son in the text and the Father beyond it): this is the intervention of characterism between 'outer' and 'inner' form (whether focussed on John Wayne or John Ford).

The problem with generalising on Hobson's position is that the Waynes and Fords will not simply go away and leave the audience to their de-centred freeplay. Just as the Western suits a state of mind concerned with origin (the 'divine' or theological model) so Hobson's choice (precisely) of the soap-opera as the field in which to turn the spectator loose is fitting because of the relative insignificance there of notions of the supervisory hero or author. But if the idea of genre is to be of any use it must be able to embrace both the 'strong' genres like the Western which everyone recognises and the 'weak' ones like the soap-opera which always already exhibit a tendency to de-centre themselves, to sprawl impudently.

Questioning the manifestation of characterism in the orthodox theory of authorship is, therefore, insufficient if it does not stem from a radical critique of the underlying fascination of 'divine' history: it may simply find another 'true religion' in its own theoretical, privileged 'point'. (We will return to this risk in Parts II and III.) The suggestion here is that the idea of genre is indispensable to such a critique.

The importance of genre is that, in terms of a distinction (derived from Vico by Edward Said) between originalities and beginnings, it marks one of those areas of meaning in which most clearly 'repetition signifies the absence of an assignable origin: what is repeated, therefore, is not the One but the many, not the same but the different, not the necessary but the aleatory'.<sup>32</sup> The genre film always begins where others have already had their beginnings. Typically the very first image of a genre film opts explicitly for this re-beginning (the familiar Western landscape, the film noir ambience...) rather than for an insistent originality. Its impulse is then towards the revitalisation by which repetition becomes difference rather than sameness (while originality aims, ultimately, for the underlying sameness of the oeuvre, of the auteur as the One).

In this way the genre film begins consciously, so to speak, in a constitutive belatedness: there is in its very existence the idea of a history of popular film, the knowledge of previous beginnings in the same space, a narrative knowledge which somehow exists prior to the initiation of individual narratives and is openly acknowledged. But this is manifestly not an untroubled narrative: it bears the marks of the tension between the 'gentile' and the 'divine', between the historical development of a centreless generic practice ('all the histories of the gentiles have their beginnings in fables', according to Vico<sup>33</sup>) and the constant drive to discover an authorising presence, whether in the hero (the star) or the director, as the point from where everything makes (the one, same, centripetally-located) sense. Where, within genre, this latter tends to construct successfully its hegemonic Personalities, say its Jerry Lewis and Woody Allen (for dominant cinema's large underclass), its Frank Tashlin and (different) Woody Allen (for dominant film culture's 'educated' class), it does so only against the prior acknowledgement of a space with no centre, no origin, but a potentially endless series of re-beginnings, substitutions.

Each beginning, therefore, marks both the potential point of entry, into the specific textual space, of this paradigm of authorising character, and the point of exit by which the particular textual space opens onto the de-centred space of an historically constituted genre. The vividness of this tension puts the genre film firmly within a category described by Comolli and Narboni in a formulation which has had an incalculable influence on subsequent critical practice with its characteristically 'oblique' readings of dominant cinema:

The films we are talking about throw up obstacles in the way of ideology, causing it to swerve and get off course. The cinematic framework lets us see it, but also shows it up and denounces it. Looking at the framework one can see two moments in it: one holding it back within certain limits, one transgressing them. An internal criticism is taking place which cracks the film apart at the seams. If one reads the film obliquely, looking for symptoms; if one looks beyond its apparent formal coherence, one can see that it is riddled with cracks: it is splitting under an internal tension which is simply not there in an ideologically innocuous film. The ideology thus becomes subordinate to the text. It no longer has an independent existence: it is presented by the film. This is the case in many Hollywood films for example, which while being completely integrated in the system and the ideology end up by partially dismantling the system from within.<sup>34</sup>

Fargier, writing at the same time (1969), summarizes the then burgeoning conception of the ideological function of cinema to which Comolli and Narboni are addressing themselves:

If one understands that ideology always presents itself in the form of a body of ideas and pictures of reality which people spontaneously accept as true, as realistic, it is easy to see why the cinema, by its specific nature, plays such a privileged role in the general ideological process. It REINFORCES the impression that what looks realistic must be real, and thus reinforces the ideology it reflects. It presents it as true, by virtue of its self-evident existence on the screen.<sup>35</sup>

We will suggest here (referring to the two moments identified by Comolli and Narboni) that what holds back the genre film is characterism as a trope of reading, while what enables it to be transgressive is precisely the genre as a space where beginnings supplant origin.

That the Western has been the terrain of the most energetic critical work on genre is itself no innocent fact: the Western is in its historical roots marked most heavily by the idea of origin. The seminal role granted to the 'Turner' hypothesis, on the side of a critical practice rather than as a component of the object of that practice, is itself symptomatic of this feature of the genre.

(Turner was teaching and writing from the 1890s: his 'idea' was therefore available to the developing genre long before its appropriation by explanatory critical schemas.)

Before focussing on particular texts (and on Turner's hypothesis), it will be useful to have the contemporary context of the distinction between origin and beginning as it is skilfully outlined by Said, beginning with Vico's analysis of the frontispiece of The New Science and in particular with his comment on the cinerary urn which appears there ('humanitas in Latin comes first and properly from humando, burying'<sup>36</sup>):

As Vico's New Science demonstrates, the activity of beginning follows a sort of historical dialectic that changes its character and meaning during the processes of writing and intellectual production. Thus beginning has influences upon what follows from it: in the paradoxical manner, then, according to which beginnings as events are not necessarily confined to the beginning, we realise that a major shift in perspective and knowledge has taken place. The state of mind that is concerned with origins is ... theological. By contrast, and this is the shift, beginnings are eminently secular, or gentile, continuing activities. ...Whereas an origin centrally dominates what derives from it, the beginning (especially the modern beginning), encourages nonlinear development, a logic giving rise to the sort of multilevelled coherence of dispersion we find in Freud's text, in the texts of modern writers, or in Foucault's archaeological investigations.

To lay this difference at Vico's feet is, if not an exaggeration, then a way of recognising how The New Science prophetically suggests terms for comprehending a very modern polemic. When Vico said that human comes from the root to bury, he might not have realised that his humanistic philosophy contained in it the elements of its own negation. To bury, in Vico's sense, is to engender difference; and to engender difference, as Derrida has argued, is to defer presence, to temporise, to introduce absence... Vico connects human history with language, the former having been made possible by the latter. What Vico only hints at, however, is that language effectively displaces human presence, just as history is engendered only by the burial (removal, displacement) of immediacy. This act of deferring can be understood as part of Vico's continuing attack upon Descartes, upon the centrality of the cogito, and upon geometric method. When Vico speaks of a mental language common to all nations, he is, therefore, asserting the verbal community binding men [sic] together at the expense of their immediate existential presence to one another. Such common language--which in modern writing has appeared as Freud's unconscious, as Orwell's newspeak, as Lévi-Strauss's savage mind, as Foucault's episteme, as Fanon's doctrine of imperialism--defers the human centre or cogito in the (sometimes tyrannical) interest of universal, systematic relationships.<sup>37</sup>

Genre becomes, in relation to this context, a potentially exemplary practice; displaying a 'multilevelled coherence of dispersion' which undermines any attempt to say authoritatively what a particular genre means, where its point resides; each re-beginning within the genre deferring the presence of any such privileged (characterised, authorised) centre. But Said's sensitive



conclusion points also to a danger in assimilating genre too easily to an ambitious Formalist-structuralist notion of a Symbolic order or 'common language' of which the subject is only an effect. There is there the risk of a tyrannical thrust of theory, of a theoretical 'imperialism', towards its own authoritative truth; of another centripetalism which passes nostalgically through the space of beginnings to re-discover origins in another place. We will, in this study, persistently encounter the traces and effects of such a movement. Against it, for the moment, it will suffice to add one more element to the context outlined by Said; the 'act of deferring' as it is also picked up in Sartre's conception of the practico-inert:

The constituent dialectic (as it grasps itself in its abstract translucidity in individual praxis) finds its limit within its own work and is transformed into an anti-dialectic. This anti-dialectic, or dialectic against the dialectic (dialectic of passivity), must reveal series to us as a type of human gathering and alienation as a mediated relation to the other and to the objects of labour in the element of seriality and as a serial mode of co-existence. At this level we will discover an equivalence between alienated praxis and worked inertia, and we shall call the domain of this equivalence the practico-inert.<sup>38</sup>

To paraphrase: the intelligibility of individual action in organising conditions towards some meaningful end (the constituent dialectic) inevitably finds worked-over matter (including language and culture) turning back aggressively against it as an alien force (anti-dialectic): matter absorbs action and meaning, reverses its intelligibility, steals it from its abstract points of origin, constantly displaces or defers those points, surrounds and (through the mode of production) conditions people--maintaining seriality as a relation of separation, of social atomisation. 'De-alienation' is not, as Chiodi contends, theorised by Sartre as 'a "return" to original subjectivity'<sup>39</sup> (which is in fact for Sartre only ever an abstraction), but as what may be termed 'deserialisation' through group praxis (although the practico-inert has ways of reabsorbing this too, of maintaining labour as its infrastructure, and it is therefore the responsibility of labour, broadly defined, to recognise, seize and attempt to maintain the possibility of genuine group praxis when the moment arises).

Thus the practico-inert superscribes itself on the 'historical dialectic' of beginnings discovered in Vico by Said, burying action and

meaning in the 'anti-dialectic' of passivised praxis. Genre can now be seen as a special case of the practico-inert; as exemplary or emblematic to precisely the degree that we recognise it as a sub-domain of the equivalence between deferred presence and inert structures. Buscombe's question--'if we want to know what a Western is we must look at certain kinds of films, but how do we know which films to look at until we know what a Western is?'<sup>40</sup>--is a manifestation of genre's exemplary status in this context. Is there an origin which authorises the genre's very existence (an origin tropologically characterised as the hero or auteur) or only a potentially endless round of substitutions constituting an inert structure? Sartre's conception of the practico-inert draws these positions together and recomposes them to form a space of beginnings where origin and presence always already defer to matter in which past beginnings are embodied. (Praxis is, for Sartre, always a beginning rather than a moment of original subjectivity.)

If genre has a useful exemplariness in relation to the practico-inert then the Western has a similarly useful exemplariness in relation to genre (although the questions raised will also

be followed into the seventies' distinctive elaboration of the police film within the Detective genre). We will trace the effects of humando, of the deferment of origin as putting into question there (specifically in The Wild Bunch) the genre's tradition of linear development from the immediate historical 'fact' of a 'Western spirit' or frontier principle.



The historiography of imaginative treatments of the American West is criss-crossed by what is now a fairly dense network of established interpretations. Beyond the fact that Henry Nash Smith's holistic Virgin Land is in many ways the most firmly and influentially established (his interdisciplinary approach embracing the West as an American state of mind and as an element of popular--in this instance specifically 'dime novel'--culture) lies an institutionally rather marginal area of critical practice where the Western's supposed integration of historical perception and largely sub-literary imagination is less celebrated than viewed with suspicion. In his useful survey of the historical development of commentary on the literary and sub-literary West, Etulain dismisses this aspect of Richard Slotkin's work, for example, as 'the point of view of a young man discontented with what he has seen and felt in the late 1960s and drawn to other popular ideas thought to be corrective: more sympathetic views of the Indian, increased

interest in back-to-the-land movements, and the search for the purported causes of violence in Judeo-Christian avarice'.<sup>41</sup> This upbraiding both does an injustice to the way in which Regeneration Through Violence ultimately indicates its resolve to take on the overarching field of discursive practices as forms of power, and, if somewhat accidentally, makes the useful point that critical work on the Western in the seventies has in general tended to be an over-coded debate about contemporary discontent and corrective ideas related to the values of the political system. Indeed films like Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here participate quite explicitly in this debate: as Georgakas puts it, Native Americans become 'stand-ins for Vietnamese, Blacks, or youth culture'.<sup>42</sup> French makes the same point; 'Indicative of their closeness to contemporary concerns is the fact that both Soldier Blue and Little Big Man offer direct parallels with the Vietnam situation, and perhaps even with My Lai, in their presentation of cavalry massacres and the deliberate policy of exterminating Indians. Both are unsparing in their fashionable attacks on white "civilization".<sup>43</sup> (French also makes the interesting point that in 1965 Cheyenne Autumn

anticipates such coded 'messages' in Karl Malden's performance as the Germanic commandant of the prison where the Indians suffer--the descendants perhaps, as the early Mormons believed, of the lost Hebrew tribes?) Possibly the most brazen, and successful, attempt to exploit this tendency of the genre to insinuate itself into a 'fashionable' context of debate about American power in the world is A Fistful of Dollars which (having been successful in Italy where Rio Bravo had done well a few years before under the title Un Dollaro d'Onore) opened in the United States in 1967; its picture of a quiet but lethal American (fresh from family TV) surrounded by greasy foreigners (even if, like the South Vietnamese, they did their best to pretend to be Americans) could not fail to take advantage of the xenophobic side of that debate while implying, for American audiences, that an all-American boy like Rowdy Yates could have some fun adding to the body count in foreign parts.<sup>44</sup> (Leone's 'Mexican-American' borderland, like South Vietnam, was readable as 'ours' while being held at a comfortable distance.) How Eastwood skilfully effected his 'coming home' and mellowed the shell-shocked look of The Man With No Name (sometimes

called Joe as are all American soldiers overseas) goes some way towards explaining his popularity in the subsequent decade.

We need to register now this extraversion of the Western, particularly in its latest stages (and concomitantly the invasion of the genre's formalist purity by those seeking a domain in which to encode their 'messages' of relevance, whether conservative or progressive) if subsequently we are to grasp the formal mechanisms of such an interpenetration. In this instance a crucial aspect of the Western's appropriateness to such a context lies in its tendency to advertise itself as the carrier of a first great principle. Whether Frederick Jackson Turner's hypothesis about such a principle is 'accurate' is, in some respects, rather less important than the fact that the Western should tend to be always already received as if such a principle existed; as if the Western embodied something essentially American. This essentialism pervades both the genre itself and its undoubtedly expansive field of influence: it was the sole selling point of Marlboro cigarettes throughout the seventies (notably in Time magazine) and, more seriously, it underpins Robert Warshow's reflection on the genre's long (if now



waning) hegemony over boyhood play: 'Watch a child with his toy guns and you will see: what most interests him is not (as we so much fear) the fantasy of hurting others, but to work out how a man might look when he shoots or is shot. A hero is one who looks like a hero.'<sup>45</sup> The 'outer' form, the appearance, is insistently drawn into this essentialism: America must look like a hero even if the obverse of the heroic pioneer spirit is what Takaki calls 'the masculine thrust towards Asia' and its culmination in Vietnam.<sup>46</sup>

Deleuze's putting into question of all such first great principles serves excellently as an epigram for an ethically concerned critical practice focussed on genre: 'Actually the first principle is always a mask, a simple image, it doesn't even exist, things only start to stir and animate themselves at the level of the second, third or fourth principles--which are no longer even principles. Things only begin to live at the middle.'<sup>47</sup>

Turner's achievement in crystallizing a first principle of the frontier at precisely the moment when history was turning into popular

memory is so significant that he is worth quoting at length. (The effects of his influential teaching are vividly described in the thirties by Hacker: 'his personal followers...scattered over the land to indoctrinate other vast numbers... thereby increasing the Turner host by geometric proportions... . So intensively have all these persons laboured, so closely have they covered the field of American history with the fine web of their researches, that one scarcely exaggerates in saying that the patient and obscure toiling of another long generation of American historical scholars will be required to destroy this influence'<sup>48</sup> --and this on the eve of Stagecoach.) Although 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History' (1893) is cited most often in this context, a later address to the university students whom Turner hoped would be the sustenance of the 'Western spirit', is more revealing because of its insistent plea for the continued relevance of the principle which he had earlier celebrated as a 'frontier individualism' perched triumphantly at 'the meeting point between savagery and civilization'.<sup>49</sup> (Significantly the tradition of such inspirational addresses is picked up at the beginning of Heaven's Gate.)

American democracy was born of no theorist's dream; it was not carried in the Susan Constant to Virginia, nor in the Mayflower to Plymouth. It came out of the American forest, and it gained new strength each time it touched a new frontier... . To-day we are looking with a shock upon a changed world... . Here, where prospectors made new trails, and lived the wild free life of mountain men, here where the human spirit seemed likely to attain the largest measure of individual freedom, and where fortune beckoned to the common man, have come revolutions wrought by the demand for organized industry and capital. In the regions where the popular tribunal and the free competitive life flourished, we have seen law and order break down in the unmitigated collision of great aggregations of capital, with each other and with organized socialistic labour... . [The hall in Harvard's museum of social ethics] is covered with an exhibit of the work in Pittsburgh steel mills, and of the congested tenements. Its charts and diagrams tell of the long hours of work, the death rate, the relation of typhoid to the slums, the gathering of the poor of all Southeastern Europe to make a civilization at that centre of American industrial energy and vast capital that is a social tragedy... . But if there is disillusion and shock and apprehension as we come to realize these changes, to strong men and women there is challenge and inspiration in them too... . With the passing of the frontier, Western social and political ideals took new form. Capital began to consolidate in even greater masses, and increasingly attempted to reduce to system and control the processes of industrial development. Labour with equal step organized its forces to destroy the old competitive system... . In a word, capital, labour, and the Western pioneer, all deserted the ideal of competitive individualism in order to organize their interests in more effective combinations. The disappearance of the frontier, the closing of the era which was marked by the influence of the West as a form of society, brings with it new problems of social adjustment, new demands for considering our past ideals and our present needs... . If we take to heart this warning, we shall do well also to recount our historic ideals, to take stock of those purposes, and fundamental assumptions that have gone to make the American spirit and the meaning of America in world history... .

We cannot lay too much stress upon this point, for it was at the very heart of the whole American movement. The world was to be made a better world by the example of a democracy in which there was freedom of the individual, in which there was the vitality and mobility productive of originality and variety.

Bearing in mind the far-reaching influence of the disappearance of unlimited resources open to all men for the taking, and considering the recoil of the common man when he saw the outcome of the competitive struggle for these resources as the supply came to its end over most of the nation, we can understand the reaction against individualism and in favour of drastic assertion of the powers of government. Legislation is taking the place of the free lands as the means of preserving the ideal of democracy. But at the same time it is endangering the other pioneer ideal of creative and competitive individualism.<sup>50</sup>

The missionary zeal with which Turner advocates renewed faith in the lost Edenic principle of uninhibited individualism (and it is not just competitive individualism--Turner makes it carry a mythic weight) works a complex operation on the social reality which he purports to analyse. The frontier principle enters as both the repository of certain historically present purposes and assumptions, and as a kind of reactionary telos which is imagined as holding in balance an encroaching regulatory institutionalisation and the freedom of the individual, in the romanticising of which (as 'the wild free life') Turner mystifies a real social atomization. Turner's ideal formula--slough

off the old constraining civilization, embrace savagery on its own terms, and reconstruct a civilized life on the new basis of individual freedom--is not only reified to the point where it becomes the lost principle of true American life, but, wherever he applies it, distorts both history and contemporary social reality: it draws history into a single individualised narrative and recomposes whatever social reality is then contemporary (Turner forcefully reiterated his hypothesis for some thirty years) as essentially lacking insofar as the original 'pioneer ideal' goes unrealised.

What Turner has little time for is the genuinely collective narrative of the westward-moving population who 'nearly all were determined to transfer the cultural institutions of their homelands to their new communities'.<sup>51</sup> That people faced by a wilderness, far from abandoning themselves to its testing rigours, should cling tenaciously to whatever vestiges of institutionalised and regulated life they could maintain, is inconceivable within Turner's hypothesis which is precisely in this sense 'a mask, a simple image'. One observer of the westward-flow in the 1850s writes: 'They drive schools along with them as shepherds drive flocks. They have herds of churches, academies, lyceums; and

their religious and educational institutions following along the western plains as Jacob's herds lowed along the Syrian hills.'<sup>52</sup> A Kansas homesteader even more pertinently records: 'I have read in books that the people of the frontier kept moving ever westward to escape civilization. But if my experience counts for anything, such people were the exceptions. So eager were we to keep in touch with civilization that even when we could not afford a shot gun and ammunition to kill rabbits, we subscribed to newspapers and periodicals and bought books.'<sup>53</sup> Billington finds sturdier evidence in the fact that 'publishers during the pre-Civil War era freely admitted that sales in the West made the difference between profits and bankruptcy'.<sup>54</sup> Billington's version of the newness of frontier life is not one of individualism regenerated through contact with savagery but that those who were determined to take a civilized culture westwards tended to find it inevitably stripped to 'mercantile activity' in an environment 'where material tasks absorbed the population's energy'.<sup>55</sup> The West was distinctive, not for any particular antipathy towards institutionalised life but for an anti-intellectualism (which intellectuals like Turner

would naturally interpret as a 'wildness') and an unfussy mercantilist 'realism', which were the foundations of a distinctive popular culture inherited and then dominated by the cinema (even as it celebrated the image of the 'wild' and 'free' pioneer). Turner's address and his earlier 'seminal' announcement of his hypothesis neatly bracket The Great Train Robbery from where the genre would develop to its 'classical' form in the thirties (Cimarron, Dodge City, Stagecoach...) when Hacker voices his impatience with the 'Turner host' and their influential thirty-year fabrication of a 'fictitious' tradition.

As it developed from beginnings like Porter's (and itself moved West) the 'high' realism of the dominant cinema (authorial effacement, unified point of view, coherent narrative space and temporal flow) is in part only the anchorage, the setting in place, of a 'real' in which there is finally very little interest: instead there are the melodramas and adventure genres, the controlled anti-realism of the Horror film, eventually the 'anticipatory' realism of high-technology Science-fiction; but it is also the common packaging shared by these and other generic forms and modes

within the overarching commodification of the text--the consolidation and extension of an impenitent mercantilist 'realism' which wanted its culture easily digestible; a facile balance, typically, of the true-to-life and the 'tall' story (archetypally Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett).<sup>56</sup> This brand-name institutionalisation of generic lines finds perhaps its earliest concrete American anticipation in the emblematic cowboy scene described by Billington:

Some were so starved for literary fare that they read and re-read the labels on tins in the cook's shack until they could recite every one from memory, syllable by syllable. Tenderfeet who did not 'know their cans' were made social outcasts when a cowboy would shout a key phrase and the whole group would chant in unison the words on every label in the ranch. When mail order catalogues appeared, they were memorized just as completely.<sup>57</sup>

Even if in the retrospective imagination 'it strips off the garments of civilization',<sup>58</sup> the actual frontier nonetheless resounded with the rhythm of tin can and catalogue as the wagons carried the untidy trappings of institutionalised social life, class society and a burgeoning popular culture across the desert.





Generalisations and sweeping assessments abound in the case of The Wild Bunch, emblematic as it came to be of a supposed change in the Western (if anticipated by The Professionals in 1966), of a new explicitness in scenes of violence, and of a kind of pervasive dog-eat-dog cynicism which seemed to characterise the early seventies on much of the American cinema screen.<sup>59</sup> Peckinpah and Pike, as twinned auteur and hero, appear to emerge from a genre which had largely failed to reinvigorate itself since the fifties (decade of Mann, Boetticher and Ford, of James Stewart, Randolph Scott and John Wayne, of High Noon, Shane and Rio Bravo) and to reassert the right of the genre to re-discover and re-think its own premises. At a time, approximately, when Hawks was putting his signature on two films which basically recall Rio Bravo (itself in many ways a homage to earlier Westerns in response to High Noon's delicate transitional modifications), The Wild Bunch was and is something other than an up-

dating of an 'original' Western: it is a Western in a way that allows the genre to be something more than a self-conscious memory of earlier films. So strong had the grip of nostalgia become on the genre by the late sixties that The Wild Bunch momentarily looked like it might not actually be a Western after all, so far was it from resembling the misty-eyed quality of Cat Ballou, Cheyenne Autumn and El Dorado (the immediate precursors of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid which so lucratively combined humour, male partnership and a vague sense of the mythical) or the institutionalised late-'Wayne' characterism of the genre in The Comancheros, Sons of Katie Elder, The War Wagon and True Grit (the precursors of Chisum, the corporation Western which finally made explicit the strategic superimposition of 'Wayne' on a reactionary image of American power in the world).<sup>60</sup> But set against the crucial 'Boetticher-Scott' or 'Mann-Stewart' domains of the Western The Wild Bunch emerges as a genuine re-beginning in that tradition, as distinct from the then fashionable nostalgia for some imagined origin. Pike Bishop is firmly in a discursive strand which runs, via Ethan in The Searchers (and

the hero in Assault on Precinct 13 is called Ethan Bishop in acknowledgement of the connection) through such troubled heroes as Bart Allison in Decision at Sundown or Lin McAdam in Winchester '73.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile a beginning was being made on the establishment of a 'Peckinpah' suited to the growing body of his films.

Vincent Canby's review in The New York Times (the day after The Wild Bunch opened) identifies the quality of 'choreographed brutality' which would be emphasised repeatedly in assessments of Peckinpah, but also comes very close to suggesting that the director has encoded something of his own circumstances in William Holden's performance as Pike:

Peckinpah also has a way of employing Hollywood life to dramatize his legend. ...Holden comes back gallantly in The Wild Bunch. He looks older and tired, but he has style, both as a man and as a movie character who persists in doing what he's always done...because there's simply nothing else to do. Ryan, Ernest Borgnine and Edmond O'Brien add a similar kind of resonance to the film.<sup>62</sup>

What begins to suggest itself here is an image of the Hollywood professional beset by institutional pressures and constraints but boldly persisting at what he does best; an image which would also comfortably embrace Hawks and a (rediscovered)

Fuller, would imbue Nicholas Ray's last years with a sense of indigenous tragedy, had been cunningly if none too subtly used by Wayne in The Green Berets, and would be recalled by television's Washington: Behind Closed Doors to make Jason Robard's 'Monckton'/Nixon a variation on hard-shelled Fred C. Dobbs or Cable Hogue (the kind of characters about whom Pauline Kael remarked, 'the man who stands alone goes from depravity through paranoia to total disintegration'<sup>63</sup>)--what is important is the attempt to stand alone, celebrated if successful, maligned if it leads to 'disintegration'. In either case the 'system' remains intact.

Canby is drawn back to The Wild Bunch, in a review of another film a few days later, to emphasise a third major characteristic:

In good movies, there is an interrelation between characters and terrain that is so strong that it's impossible to imagine their separation. The characters simply wouldn't be the same people in some other landscape. This is most easily apparent in the best Western films, such as The Wild Bunch... . I don't mean that environment is all; only that... characters and landscape depend on and reflect each other in a way that is as mystical as it is sociological or psychological.<sup>64</sup>

This concept of the interrelationship of character and 'environment' broadens the notion of the place of 'character' (in the positively valorised sense) in

relation to 'Hollywood life' and the institutionalised constraints on, or tests of, professional integrity and stamina which 'Hollywood' tends to encode. Beyond Canby's gloss on the 'mystical' quality of such interaction lies the dualism or agon of imagination and perception. Canby is hypothesising a rhetoric of spatiality in which landscape 'reflects' character and vice versa in an essentially stable way: this, if seldom quite explicitly formulated, is a commonplace in reading both the Western and the film noir. More specifically, Rimmon-Kenan distinguishes 'spatial metonymies' (we might think of Sternwood's orchid-house in The Big Sleep; its 'rotten sweetness') and 'analogous landscapes':<sup>65</sup> the former are character-indicators (we know virtually nothing about Sternwood before meeting him in the orchid-house) while the latter are character-reinforcers (the mean streets enhance the noir protagonist's supposedly established character). These ways of interbedding the natural and inert object-worlds with character (the impression of subjectivity) imply the possibility of a movement from the 'weak' interbedding of analogous landscape to the 'strong' effect of spatial metonymies, beneath which is

detectable the choice of granting determinative priority to either 'inner' or 'outer' form. To belabour the point; when the Westerner and the private-eye find themselves in, respectively, a chaparral-dotted desert or a rainy night-time street is the 'outer' form a projection of the 'inner' (analogous landscape and prior character) or vice versa (character determined by a density of spatial metonymies)? (The mediation of performance between these possibilities will be considered later.) Irrespective of the tendency for both spatial metonymies and analogous landscapes to occur at particular junctures of a film (the orchid-house is a spatial metonymy for Sternwood and perhaps simultaneously an inverse analogous environment for Marlowe, reinforcing his character by making him out of place) it is necessary to establish at the level of the spatial image of the whole film (the 'look' of it which serves as context for its narrative image<sup>66</sup>) whether on balance the film admits or resists the inescapable determination of 'inner' by 'outer' form. Resistance can only be a matter of contracting character to within a hard boundary established by performance of a particular kind, the area of 'outer' form which is superimposed on the points in the text

where the impression of subjectivity is installed. Admission allows the supposedly impermeable borders of the body there to shade off into, to melt with, the totality of 'outer' form, making character an effect of the interpenetration of space and character-indication through the techniques of performance themselves. Resistance tends to make spatial metonymies surreptitious; to pass them off as reinforcements by analogy, of anterior character. This is, concomitantly, how a 'body' of films may be read in terms of a directorial personality.

If we think, however, of the text being read rather than of its ultimate overall image (spatial and narrative) it is clear that the sense of character as always already fixed can only be produced progressively. The unyieldingly hard terrain as a spatial metonymy for the collective character of the Wild Bunch progressively becomes an analogous landscape as that character is split among the individuals and comes to be read as anterior. There is, in short, a progressive exchange between potentially mutable agency (as far as the audience knows) and the fixity of a spatialized condition where identity is never in

question; an exchange which character (via the actualising person, the performer) mediates. The result of such an exchange is an image ('the person, the body, in its conversion into the luminous sense of its film presence, its cinema'<sup>67</sup>) informed by the whole 'outer' environment, the perception of which gets sucked into the centripetal conversion of 'outer' to an 'inner' which then takes priority.

What makes The Wild Bunch particularly intriguing is that this inward pressure pulverises the characters on whom it focusses. The imagination cannot, finally, do without the perception where it begins, and as what is perceived is a changing land with a new kind of unstable savagery and antagonistic collective 'characters' (unlike Ford's essentially unchanging land) the yearning for a stable consonance of 'inner' and 'outer' finds itself betrayed as surely as Angel's throat is cut. What is betrayed is a transposition of character with its inherent, 'internal' quality of temporality, of ageing and loss or gain, into 'external' categories of landscape, of fixed environment, of spatiality and stability, of essence preceding existence. The landscape refuses to support such a transposition: the sand gives way beneath the Wild Bunch and they fall--except Angel, at first...



'Angel dreams of love while Mapache eats the mango': the ripe fruit picked by Mapache (the right-wing, German-backed leader of forces opposed to Villa's revolutionaries) is Teresa whom Angel, the youthful Mexican member of the Bunch (and a supporter of Villa), idealizes and, we might say, introjects as a first good object: this is the fundamental position of woman as the 'natural' object of desire in the cinematic ('from genre to genre, film to film, the same economy: the woman in image, the totalizing of the body, her, into unity, the sum of gaze, the imaginary of her then as that perfect match, perfect image'<sup>68</sup>). And when Angel sees her faking pleasure on Mapache's lap he kills her in an absolutely shattering reversal of Bernini's statue of Saint Teresa and the angel. As if to consolidate the implications of this, Pike is discovered in flashback (immediately before the assault on the arms train) being wounded by a man who catches his wife and Pike together and kills the woman. Pike carries this leg-wound heavily throughout the film; a trace of the traumatic interdiction, the intervention of the lawful claimant, entailing, so to speak, 'a certain lag or limp of the subject in

relation to structures of meaning'.<sup>69</sup> The woman as an introjected image (in Kleinian terms, suppressing for the moment a crucial ambivalence) of fullness, unity, filling the gaze ('introjection means that the outer world, its impact...are not only experienced as external but are taken into the self...the mother is the first good object that the infant makes part of his inner world'<sup>70</sup>) is only this before the intervention of the Oedipal structure which marks her as lacking (occasioning a double-bind for her image, which will be encountered in Part III). Dutch asks Pike if he ever caught up with the man who wounded him--'No, but there's not a day or an hour goes by that I don't think about it'--and finally it is Mapache who fills that role. (During the one open encounter between Mapachistas and Villistas he struts before an admiring boy; the boy who in turn will kill Pike.) The figure completes itself: the characters circulate through the inevitable positions (what we will pin down in Part II as an actantial structure) opened up by the renunciation of Angel's simple image. This structural gap, this delay between the final bloodily realised figure and Angel's imaginary grasp of something more,

something full of the milk of immanent meaning or 'truth' (the gap across which Pike limps and then turns round to ask for Angel, knowing that it is too late) is tightly bound by the film to landscape and to an actual distance.

A physical distance separates the garden-idyll of Angel's village, where Pike's rapacious companions become children to be mothered for a while, and Mapache's desert camp where a bandolier of bullets drapes the nursing breast. At the final walk when the Bunch go looking belatedly for Angel the farewell song of his village uncertainly counterpoints the military side-drum which accompanies their first appearance in the film, remaking the distance allegorically (the movement from the simple image to the absence that underlies it)-- only now has their time come, when their faces register the fact that there is nothing more to be done or said and nothing to be lost. Pike walks the distance once more; from the woman (resembling the one in his memory) whom he watches bathe herself with precious drops of water, to the Mapachistas: from the image of the woman he desired but could not have (and having the lovely Mexican whore only combines the bare

fact of having with the sense of loss) to the brutal perception of a place marked by an actual conflict, by the demands of a brutally repressive authority (in place of the man who wounded Pike)--a conflict and a force which are specifically and historically situated (their first, motorised, appearance prompting Pike to mention the war in Europe). He breaks the stunned silence after Mapache's death by singling out and killing the German officer, less out of any new commitment, any sense of taking a stand, than as a gesture in acknowledgement of a reality which has hitherto gone unrecognised. Angel's 'Méjico Lindo' is finally recomposed as a genuine Utopian longing; something still to be won by the Villistas from the power represented diegetically by the German officer, and not something which the Wild Bunch ever had or lost.

It is when they are about to cross the river into Mexico that Angel exclaims, 'Méjico Lindo!' Eliciting only scepticism from the others he tells them, 'You have no eyes'. Later, when Mapache is torturing Angel, Pike couches his revulsion in specular terms; 'God, I hate to see that'. The film progressively strips itself down

to a structure of meaning bound to the look. Before Pike leaves the whore for the final confrontation, he dresses in an extended shot-reverse shot sequence while she bathes herself. Their searching glances at each other evince no connection; rather their exchange turns back accusingly against Pike. It is always he who looks uneasily away only to be drawn back to meet her gaze. Then after he has killed Mapache there is an audaciously prolonged sequence of intercut shots and reverse shots between the Bunch and the Mapachistas (for more than thirty seconds in fact) before the German officer catches Pike's eye. In a pivotal sequence in the middle of the ensuing battle Pike exchanges looks with another Mexican woman (another Teresa, Mapache's 'mango'--beautiful whore, memory, image) and blows apart her mirror-reflection with a shotgun blast only to receive from her a bullet in the back for which he kills her--the aggression latent in the exchange of looks brutally realised. Behind the image of the good object is, ambivalently, the bad object; historicised, 'Méjico Lindo' as an imaginary landscape intervenes in the perception of

a terrain across which it still has to be won. In laying the image to rest Pike frees his alter ego Thornton (to whom he is bound by another memory of the law breaking into the bedroom and wounding) to join the Villistas. Imagined garden and perceived desert are re-positioned to make the former symbolic and anticipatory of the outcome of an historically situated struggle on a landscape now analogous to a degraded and atomised existence. Which brings us to the beginning.

The notorious scene of a massacre in a small South Texas town which opens The Wild Bunch invites a variety of responses as much by its own studied ambiguity as by the (for 1969) shockingly concentrated depiction of physical violence. Do the Bunch, escaping from a railroad-office raid (their last: 'Those days are closing fast') deliberately and callously use the townspeople as shields against the gunfire from the rooftop bounty hunters? Do the ambushers, heavily backed by railroad money and power, cause the massacre by shamefully disregarding the safety of the people for whom they claim to represent law and order? The sequence is sufficiently rich in detail for a balance sheet to be drawn up in order to blame one

side or the other, depending on which details are granted the greatest significance. For instance, the Bunch have decided to mix with the parading townspeople before they know that an ambush is impending and Harrigan, the influential and unscrupulous railroad official, has deliberately kept the town ignorant of the imminent violence with the result that the street below his bounty hunters' guns is crowded with women and children. But equally the Bunch appear only too relieved to find such soft targets distracting their opponents' fire.

A pivotal group of rapidly intercut shots in the middle of the battle juxtaposes panicked townspeople, the menacing bulk of the Bunch's frightened horses and one of their more manic members (left behind in the railroad-office) insinuating his tongue into an unwilling woman's ear at gunpoint, as in trance-like slow-motion another member of the Bunch rolls with his horse into a dress-shop window filled with tailor's dummies in women's clothes, momentarily filling the frame with what is both a splintered microcosm of the world gone crazy out on the street and an anticipation of Pike finally shattering the

woman's image (while Lyle's observation of Teresa--  
'Just look at her lickin' inside of that General's  
ear'--is also foreseen). As the survivors of the  
Bunch make their escape a zoom-in isolates two  
young children embracing each other as they watch  
spellbound. Shots of townspeople crumpling  
bloodily under the bounty hunters' blindly unstop-  
pable gunfire are finally intercut with the fixed  
stares of these and other children.

Cutting across the ambiguous scene with  
its possibilities of blame and counter-blame and  
its anticipation of work to be done on the woman's  
image, is another, entirely unambiguous pattern  
bound to the collective look of these children; a  
pattern which is not concerned with the allocation  
of guilt (or 'truth') but rather with an inexorable  
and impersonal structural aspect of the event on  
screen. A pitched battle such as this (a rare  
occurrence in a Western town, Trail Street of  
twenty years earlier being one of the few instances  
and there again the woman is pivotal) with two  
clearly opposing factions, dramatises what is  
perhaps the most characteristic and basic mechanism  
of the classic Hollywood film: the shot-reverse shot  
structure. The frenzied proliferation of images and



sounds is sensibly tied to this fundamental alternation: indeed at the height of the battle the pattern produces, as it typically does, an eye-line match when Pike and Thornton (companions of old and now, like the later Billy and Garrett, the deadliest of friends) see each other at a distance. What the insistent intervention of the children's look effects is a stripping away of narrative detail from this aggressive exchange. Beneath the reasons for the ambush (the Bunch's threat to the 'law and order' of the railroad, business and military interests--we never see them steal from anyone else) the shot-reverse shot structure is here made, or acknowledged as, aggressive in itself.

When the Bunch first ride slowly into town out of a dustily bleached landscape, they exchange curious looks with a group of children in tracking subjective shots. The Bunch, in low-angle shots (child's eye-level) are a temporary distraction for the children from their game of pitting ants against scorpions. The camera catches their spell-bound eyes in striking close-ups, the 'game' an inherently meaningless repository for the latent aggression which the shot-reverse shot structure

somehow entails. When the surviving Bunch ride out of town (Pike impatiently tearing a woman's tangled shawl from his stirrup) these children are still there and the exchange of looks is repeated, framing the whole event. There is a sense in which the events in town become an extension of the children's 'game', equally unsavoury and violent but also in a way drained of inherent significance and reduced to an impersonal structure of aggressivity 'carried' by the inescapable shot-reverse shot mechanism. In the aftermath of the battle the children gather round the bodies, scrambling and jumping as they shout 'bang!' in an unnerving echo of the preceding aural assault on the spectator whose point of view is now momentarily identified with the corpses and the field of vision is filled by children looking down excitedly. Their crescendo of 'bangs!' overlaps a cut to the desert where one of the Bunch now pitches off his horse clutching a face wound. 'I can't see', he pleads: seen but unable to see he is stripped of his own aggressive capacity and asks Pike to 'finish it'.



What we have identified, bearing in mind that this chapter is concerned with enigma rather than closure, is a constitutive tension within the Western between the mutability of beginnings and the fixity of origins. Genre has been taken as exemplary to the degree that it causes the idea of origin to get off course, to be deflected by a repetition which pursues difference where originality pursues sameness. Over and against the hero/auteur as the locus of a consonance between 'outer' and 'inner' form, genre erects in the density of its textual processes and structures its own domain of the practico-inert. The ways in which genre is conceptualised are, therefore, revealing of certain tendencies within the practices of reading in general; that is within the systems of exchange between text and readers which are a fundamental concern of this study and which open inevitably onto other kinds of exchange, other concrete and historical relationships. Reading is after all a mode of consumption. There are still readers (the audiences) in addition to the typically singular position constructed for the reader in any 'popular' text . This is where

Sartre's emphasis on the series revealed by the practico-inert will be found to prevent the questions of the making available of the text for consumption and of its insertion into actual social relations from surrendering importance to the question of its production. These are all contested questions locked together in the context of a larger struggle. If at the beginning of Part III we briefly consider production theoretically it is only after, in the intervening Part, sufficient groundwork will have been laid to enable 'production' to be immediately taken up into the question of reading and turned back against itself (re-tracing there the movement of the 'dialectic against the dialectic' which an imperious theory thinks it has avoided). This 'turning back' will be developed in the form of a spatial model with distinct layers or levels-- becoming what Stephen Pepper calls a root metaphor. 'Its fruitfulness consists solely in its capacity to generate a set of categories which with careful refinement may prove relatively adequate for an unrestricted hypothesis.'<sup>71</sup> That this hypothesis, the point of return for the present study to the concrete and historical ground, develops slowly

and emerges very late is symptomatic of the difficulty of properly politicising reading in this way against the ideological effects of common sense on one side and the legacy of a tyrannical theoreticism on the other.

Thus woven into Paul Seydor's reading (perhaps the most fully worked out to date) of The Wild Bunch is a theme of entrapment which he finds in the film but also connects with Peckinpah's entrapment by studios and financiers which begins with television, then Major Dundee and which makes the 'bringing in' of The Wild Bunch (in Peckinpah's vernacular) something unmistakably heroic.<sup>72</sup>

Insisting on what makes the film a Western rather than a 'Peckinpah film' enables a reading of 'outer' form as giving access to an 'inner' form that, rather than being tropologically characterised as the mind of the hero/auteur, is an area of tension within the text caused by the partial mystification of past beginnings as origins (including Turner's hypothesis with its 'seminal' untouchability).

This is the tension which accumulates to the point where it 'buries' the Wild Bunch. The metalanguage of origin which has insinuated itself into the Western (and Turner is only the most convenient sign

of this) occasions contradictions within the genre (rather than within the mind of the hero/auteur).

The beginning which is a genre film is always a fall into the contradictions of the practico-inert. There is always too the counter-thrust, the nostalgia for an Edenic purity of origin. The challenge is to make this domain or sector of the practico-inert intelligible rather than to construct, against its deferring, dispersing alterity and plurality, an understanding of a comprehensibly individuated centre, whether hero (star) or auteur as the characterisation of a first principle, from where everything else makes sense. (Raymond Aron: 'If we consider the ensemble of the practico-inert world, it remains intelligible: it is not answerable generally or in each sector to an individual intentionality, but remains wholly articulated in each of its aspects by means of the dialectical structure, or in other words, by the synthesizing nature of the links among its elements... .',<sup>73</sup>)

How to know what a genre is without looking at individual films and how to know what films to look at without knowing what the genre is?--the missing term here is the 'inertia' of the practico-inert, what it is that makes this infernal circularity. This inertia cannot be put into the question: it is the question itself. The very

posing of the paradox is the only way of speaking such inertia (because we speak from the place that is already displaced, buried). But it remains, in a certain sense, the 'expression' of past praxeis: the practico-inert is not inert structure alone but a milieu of materiality and directedness (even if within this directedness individual intention is always getting off course). Comprehension grasps this directedness immediately within the practico-inert, while intellection (to anticipate a distinction that will be developed<sup>74</sup>) concerns itself with reading the collective characters and forces of an overarching 'narrative'. What one individual consciously intends is buried in this milieu of materiality and directedness. Comprehension, nevertheless, grasps a directedness immediately in its own movement as thought: watching a film is inseparable from the immediate 'recognition' of a directedness in the explicit narrative (consigning the overarching 'narrative' or context to, in fact, the position of subtext--a kind of unconscious within reading). Refusing to exhume the one 'intentionality', whatever its guise (usually expressive realism), does not entail, however, concentrating on materiality to the exclusion of

directedness. There is a fundamental question here on the terrain of a philosophy of mind and we will rely on Searle for a crucial proposition to carry over into the area of reading and interpretation:

Intending and intentions are just one form of Intentionality among others, they have no special status. The obvious pun of 'Intentionality' and 'intention' suggests that intentions in the ordinary sense have some special role in the theory of Intentionality; but on my account intending to do something is just one form of Intentionality along with belief, hope, fear, desire, and lots of others; and I do not mean to suggest that because, for example, beliefs are Intentional they somehow contain the notion of intention or they intend something or someone who has a belief must thereby intend to do something about it. ...Intentionality is directedness; intending to do something is just one kind of Intentionality among others.<sup>75</sup>

It is necessary to re-disperse the elements of a centripetal construction of an individuated 'intentionality' into its context (which is ultimately a subtext) where at most it identifies only one kind of directedness. Over and against the 'spatiality' of a fixed body of films as the 'outer' form, the shell containing the privileged 'inner' form or personality of the auteur, there is the temporal predicament which confounds such an identification of non-self with self.



The period in which Peckinpah's commitment to the Western transferred its base of operation from television to cinema is precisely the period during which the police film and series began to establish itself at the expense of the genres then popular.<sup>76</sup> The trend throughout the sixties towards the purchase of advertising 'spots' rather than sponsorship of complete programmes, meant that longer films could be produced for TV (by the seventies often reaching three hours).<sup>77</sup> Universal and the NBC network worked out a package deal to co-finance films (all two hours long, the original deal being called 'Project 120') which were essentially cinematic but would be shown on television. Although a number were diverted to theatrical release, among those which did appear first on television was Ironside<sup>78</sup> and it heralded a boom in television police films through the following decade. (Film is taken here to include episodes of filmed series: a sixty-minute episode of the Ironside series is essentially a short feature with the classic disruption-resolution structure.)

It is perhaps difficult after the seventies to conceive of the American screen without a seemingly endless flow of 'cops' but the Nielsen list of 1965-66 prime-time leaders illustrates the context against which Ironside's success in 1967 should be seen:<sup>79</sup>

<u>Bonanza</u>	(NBC)
<u>Get Smart</u>	(NBC)
<u>The FBI</u>	(ABC)
<u>The Man From UNCLE</u>	(NBC)
<u>Wackiest Ship in the Army</u>	(NBC)
<u>Run For Your Life</u>	(NBC)
<u>Smothers Brothers</u>	(CBS)
<u>F Troop</u>	(ABC)
<u>I Dream of Jennie</u>	(NBC)
<u>Gomer Pyle, USMC</u>	(CBS)

Military and espionage subjects are clearly dominant (and this was also the period of Hogan's Heroes, Combat, Jericho, Rat Patrol).<sup>80</sup> Barnouw comments, 'It was not the conscious intention of producers to buttress administration arguments linking Vietnam with World War II. But the rash of heroic and amusing World War II series, in conjunction with the flood of enemy-conspiracy drama,

probably did just that.'<sup>81</sup> If Ironside has anything in common with the commercial successes which it was to join, it is in the similarity of Ben Cartwright, the patriarch of Bonanza (the first of several family-and-property Western series) and Robert Ironside whose 'family' consists of three admiring young assistants. But while Cartwright is whole in mind and body as befits a Western hero with the 'Turner' brand of individualism, Ironside is consigned to a wheelchair by a sniper's bullet. (Raymond Burr who played Ironside had a television success contemporaneous with the first half of Bonanza's run from the late fifties, in the eponymous role of Perry Mason, a criminal attorney with his own patriarchal style.<sup>82</sup>)

Ironside's disability naturalises the subservience of his 'family' (one of them black) at a time of growing youthful rebellion and racial tension, whereas in Bonanza the Western context locates Ben's authority nostalgically in a space of supposedly simpler relationships--he does not have to be a cripple in order to 'justify' the deference he obtains. When, after a period in which authority had been increasingly called into question, The Shootist (1976)<sup>83</sup> attempts to redeem patriarchal

heroism in a Western setting, John Wayne (as at this late stage in his screen persona a kind of amalgam of Cartwright and Ironside<sup>84</sup>) is also disabled; but the sniper's bullet (which had in fact struck him down too, in El Dorado a year before Ironside) has now been superseded by cancer. The 'son' through whose eyes the shootist played by Wayne maintains his heroic stature, is played by Ron Howard, familiar to audiences as Richie Cunningham, the teenage lead in the TV family comedy Happy Days<sup>85</sup> (set in the late fifties when Bonanza and Perry Mason were in the ascendancy) which had then been running for two successful years. Wayne viewed his role in The Shootist in terms of 'our guidance and example for this kid',<sup>86</sup> an emphasis on 'patrocentric' relationships which was clearly present in Bonanza and Ironside (with the black assistant, an ex-convict, even deciding emulously to become a lawyer). That between Ironside's confident authority and The Shootist's strenuous efforts to recover such confidence a great deal had changed, is indicated forcefully by the conclusion of the novel on which The Shootist is based, a conclusion which the film alters entirely. In the film the

boy kills one of the shootist's adversaries and then throws the gun away. In the novel he comes upon the dying shootist:

The mouth opened. Nothing audible issued from it, but the lips formed two words: 'kill' and 'me'.

'Kill you?'

Gillom chewed his lips.

'Sure thing', he said, then stood, moved behind the man, straddled him, and put the muzzle of the revolver he had picked up to the back of the head. He turned his own head away; shut his eyes tight; gritted his teeth; pulled the trigger.<sup>87</sup>

Moments later he is out on the street with 'the sweet clean feel of being born'. This ending is in keeping with the Oedipal confusions of Targets,<sup>88</sup> a 1968 film centred on a young sniper who, after performing the orgiastic slaying of his family, is finally stopped by an ageing horror film actor who emerges from behind his image on a drive-in screen to confront the young gunman: 'The horror of 1968 rests in the mystery and incomprehensibility of Bobby Thomson, who, as he is being taken away says only: "I hardly ever missed, did I?".'<sup>89</sup> Clearly in Gillom, the novel of The Shootist finds a nascent Bobby Thomson. A year before Targets, Ironside is the victim of a sniper (and the opening

credits for each episode of the subsequent series repeat the shooting). The beginnings of a complex interlacing of terms (sniper/victim, youth/authority, patricide/Oedipal resolution) are establishing themselves here.

In an article, 'Sniping--A New Pattern of Violence?', in an American sociological journal in 1969, Terry Ann Knopf collates the reporting of incidents of racial violence in the summer of 1968:

Throughout, one finds such phrases as these: 'snipers hidden behind bushes...', 'isolated sniper fire...', 'scattered sniping directed at the police...', 'exchange of gunfire between snipers and police...', 'snipers atop buildings in the area...'. It is small wonder that the rewrite men at Time and other national magazines discerned a new and sinister pattern in the events of that summer.<sup>90</sup>

The essential factor in 'sniping' is that it appears random and senseless. Indeed the New York Times' reviewer complains that the sniper in Targets is as incomprehensible as real snipers appear to be: 'Why? This invariable question of today's headlines about the random sniper-murder of innocent people is never answered in Targets. This is the only flaw, and a serious one...'.<sup>91</sup> To compensate for this apparent randomness, to give it sense, conspiracy theories

proliferated in the late sixties, blame tending to fall on the Black Panthers, Black Nationalists, etc. and/or on Communists. (Sniping blamed by police in Cleveland on the Black Nationalists was reported in American Opinion as 'the opening shots of the Communists' long planned terror offensive against our local police'.<sup>92</sup>) After sifting the evidence Knopf concludes, 'Unfortunately, inaccurate and sensational headlines created an impression of widespread sniping, with the police singled out as the principal targets. A few individual acts of violence were so enlarged as to convey to the reader a series of "bloodbaths". ...Unwittingly or not, the press has been constructing a scenario on armed uprisings.'<sup>93</sup>

It proved to be a scenario offering elements which would be taken up voraciously by cinema and television. If 'Dirty' Harry Callahan is perhaps the key police figure in the cinema of the seventies, it is notable that his first opponent is a young sniper. Indeed Scorpio in Dirty Harry (1971) was based on the so-called 'Zodiac killer' of San Francisco, while Bobby Thomson's exploit in Targets was based on the Charles Whitman killings in Texas.<sup>94</sup> Ironside and his screen descendants work assiduously to contain this supposed threat,

superficially senseless but perhaps concealing an underlying conspiracy (so it is constructed-- shifting the 'enemy' of that 1965-66 television season closer to home), a work which entails finally re-writing the ending of The Shootist to counter the 'crisis in authority' which came to a head after Nixon's resignation in August 1974.<sup>95</sup> (Swarthout's novel, with its gloatingly anti-authoritarian and Oedipal transgression, was published in January 1975 and the film, with its attempted reversal and resolution, released in 1976.)

We have here an indication, at the most 'innocent' level of the ideological complexes of the social formation, of the way in which the social phenomenon of a widespread sense of progressively worsening overall conditions leads to an imagined convergence of disparate elements of disaffiliation (youth, black, revolutionary left, anti-war, etc.) and their reconstruction into 'deviance' of specific, isolable kinds as a focus for reaction. The specious construction of an insulated, deviant threat which 'sniping' powerfully spatialises (essentially urban, the single disconnected bullet from an unseen source)



precludes any consideration of the social nature of unrest and crime. And within the consonance of 'outer' and 'inner' form it locates a force 'out there' which can be countered by its reflection in the central character: 'Dirty' Harry counters a sniper by taking to the rooftops with a rifle, or a group of 'fascist' policemen by mirroring their style in defence of 'the system'. (Anthony Chase identifies the character as 'fascist' by connecting Fiedler's notion of the 'flight of the dreamer' and Reich's argument that sexual repression supports the authoritarian order;<sup>96</sup> we will return to this in Part III.) On taking the role of Ironside, who is both victim of and reaction to the 'new pattern of violence', Raymond Burr identified the change in emphasis (after Perry Mason in the fifties): 'I've shifted from the defence to the prosecution.'<sup>97</sup>

'Prosecution', as the dominant theme, embodied the essentialist drive to isolate and counteract which, though it tended to become more contradictory as the decade progressed, remained closely tied to conventional narrative impulses. Thus when in Cagney and Lacey,<sup>98</sup> the pilot film for a television series, a strong if occasionally

maudlin feminist emphasis develops around prostitutes who want their work 'de-criminalised' ('a lot of these women are too scared even to talk about organising'--'you think it was ever easy for working women to organise?') one of the women is found to be wearing stolen diamonds which lead to an ex-Nazi diamond thief and murderer, ludicrously over-emphasising the narrative drive to uncover the isolated criminal 'essence' which enables it to bypass the broader questions. Perhaps not surprisingly in the light of this emphasis an attempt to revive Raymond Burr's 'Perry Mason' persona (with its connotation of 'consensual' rather than 'coercive' management of problems) in The Jordan Chance (1978) did not lead to the expected series and one of its initiators re-worked the situation into The A-Team in the eighties.<sup>99</sup> Its protagonists may be called 'fascists' justifiably according to this definition of the term: 'they are in favour of violence not only as a reluctant final resort, but as an integral part of their struggles; they are strongly authoritarian in leadership and élitist in decision-making.'<sup>100</sup> Peckinpah has been accused of 'fascism' because of a similar emphasis appearing

to emerge in some of the films which carry his name. But this is also a definition of totalitarian extremists of the left. Clearly the material needs to be questioned in a different way if the relationship of text and subtext is to be properly grasped.

What we have done here, for the moment, is to set up three 'emblematic' (and enigmatically interrelated) sets of elements: those that converge in a construction of 'Peckinpah' as auteur, those that constitute The Wild Bunch as a rich example of a genre, and those that indicate a 'subtext' graspable in terms of urban unrest and a policed front-line. An initial theoretical unpacking of genre as an idea has suggested that, rather than allowing authorship an ultimately determinative role, the 'author' is only one investment of a supervisory first term. Instead of colluding in the sovereignty, hegemony, imperialism or even 'fascism' of that term it is necessary to re-contextualise it as one element of a multilevelled 'structure'; a strategy of disintegration (actually rehearsed by The Wild Bunch) opposed to the 'integration' sought through the controlling relationship of the first term (held in place by a 'first great principle' or signifier)

to other structural elements. The police film (properly a sub-genre) will mediate this exercise in 'epistemological politics'. The term structure, however, requires careful handling.

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# PART TWO

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## CHAPTER 2

### DIALOGUE

#### 2.1 Two structuralisms

There is a certain irony in Roland Barthes' remark in 1964 that the word 'structure' was then quite overworked and that 'the word's use can distinguish no one':<sup>1\*</sup> its proliferation through the succeeding decade went far beyond the mere 'overworked' as the term came to be used, shorthand, to indicate allegiance both to an apparent research programme with an increasingly hard core, to use Lakatos' terms,<sup>2</sup> and, often more flirtingly, to a fashion which cluttered the 'protective belt' around the core with a collection of faddish 'structuralist' accoutrements. Nevertheless, the hand downs from this collection are still clearly recognisable and the present study is itself fairly liberally decked with the word 'structure'. The question is whether the term is

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\* notes and references begin on p.262

still pertinent to the core of a research programme which has made genuine progress.

Following Barthes, it may be held that structuralism (bearing in mind that 'structure' was around before structuralism and is certainly still here after it) is an activity which is interested in making intelligible something previously unintelligible about its object (usually a cultural artefact) as it actually appears, and to this end structuralist structure is an 'interested simulacrum' of an object.<sup>3</sup> So strictly the structure is not itself a part of the object but rather a part of the composition of a second 'object' which is the construction of a simulacrum of the first--'not in order to copy it but to render it intelligible'.<sup>4</sup> The resemblance is based on the analogy of functions rather than of appearances. It is the inaccessibility of the functions in the appearance of the object in the first place that necessitates the decomposition and recomposition, the structuralist activity.

A dissection and an articulation are, according to Barthes, the two fundamental operations of this activity. A piece taken out of the object has its place in relation both to

other actual pieces and to virtual pieces; to the other pieces of the object and to the group of like pieces forming the available stock from which it was taken in the original incorporation of the object. So the coat has its place in relation to the rest of the outfit, the set of actual pieces of clothing, and also in relation to other coats: the resemblance identifies them all as coats but, crucially, the differences explain the selection of this particular coat. So the decomposition posits the units, separates coat from shirt and so on. The recomposition or articulation aims to establish the ways in which units are associated and combined, that is to identify for each unit a place in relation to the set of virtual units, the paradigm, in addition to the place that it has in the contiguity of interdependent units in the composition (the outfit, etc). That it is recognised as a composition, a production, rather than a random accretion of pieces, is due to the recurrence of certain forms in what Barthes aptly calls 'a kind of battle against chance'.<sup>5</sup> (And so there occur the dictates of a fashion and the lineaments of a style.)



What emerges fundamentally from this simple idea of the structuralist activity is that structure, in this sense, is not a kind of diagram or skeletal representation of the actual innards of an object, though certain kinds of broadly 'structural' analysis probe resolutely (and sometimes necessarily) at such entrails. Focussing only on the actual units certainly enables a fur coat over a shirt to be understood as an extra epidermal layer. But structuralist structure is primarily dispersed: it allows for the intelligibility of the fur coat in relation to other coats which would also keep out the cold but none of which would have the particular significance of a fur coat. If the simulacrum is, then, a transparent one, what is accessible or 'visible' through it is not some essential viscera or skeleton, previously invisible, but the dispersed structure by which meanings are given to things.

One important consequence of this 'visibility' of a structure understood to be other than the entrails of an object (an association, though, which lingered on and tainted structuralism with its intimations of necrophilia) is that it draws attention to the effects of institutions. The institution actively structures

'by imposing its own modes of division and classification...in exactly the same way that a language, with its "compulsory headings" (and not only its exclusions), obliges us to think in a certain way'.<sup>6</sup> There are, therefore, the issues of status and authority (the fur coat again, and the body in it) which at the institutional level have such far-reaching effects. It is here that the structuralist activity becomes structuralism, caught up in the institutionalised processes of education and publishing; classified as an attempted 'scientific' approach to cultural artefacts; included as such in certain sites and excluded as such in others (university departments, journals, etc). This ascribed status goes some way towards explaining why structuralism is so difficult to pin down (and why over-confident attempts, usually dismissive, to do so, seem to have missed something), why also it is so frustrating trying to point at an actual 'structuralist'-- either they move so fast that one is left pointing at thin air or there is something misconceived about the gesture from the very beginning. In fact the structuralist activity as Barthes presents it is perfectly able to explain its own fate. Institutionalisation has

constituted an object 'structuralism', on the basis of the very structuralist activity of decomposing and recomposing objects. A structuralist examination of the object 'structuralism' would find embedded in it elements drawn from a number of paradigms, having to do with content (e.g. the set of acceptable topics for essay assignments on an undergraduate course, for postgraduate research, or for articles in a journal, the 'structuralist' approach to these becoming one among many), with method (e.g. certain identifiable, if not always compatibly, 'scientific' procedures), with ethics ('it may be odd but as long as it's rigorous...'), with modes of communication (theses following the MHRA style book, books that take the conventional book forms) and so on.

Such then, broadly, is the dispersed structure through and around the object 'structuralism' which has itself become a kind of thrombosis, threatening to check the structuralist activity once and for all, to make it into an object like those it intends to examine, which is to say to net it in the structure of divisions and classifications which it intends to unravel. The hardening core of 'structuralism' is, therefore, not the kind of vital centre envisaged by Lakatos as the basis of a progressive research

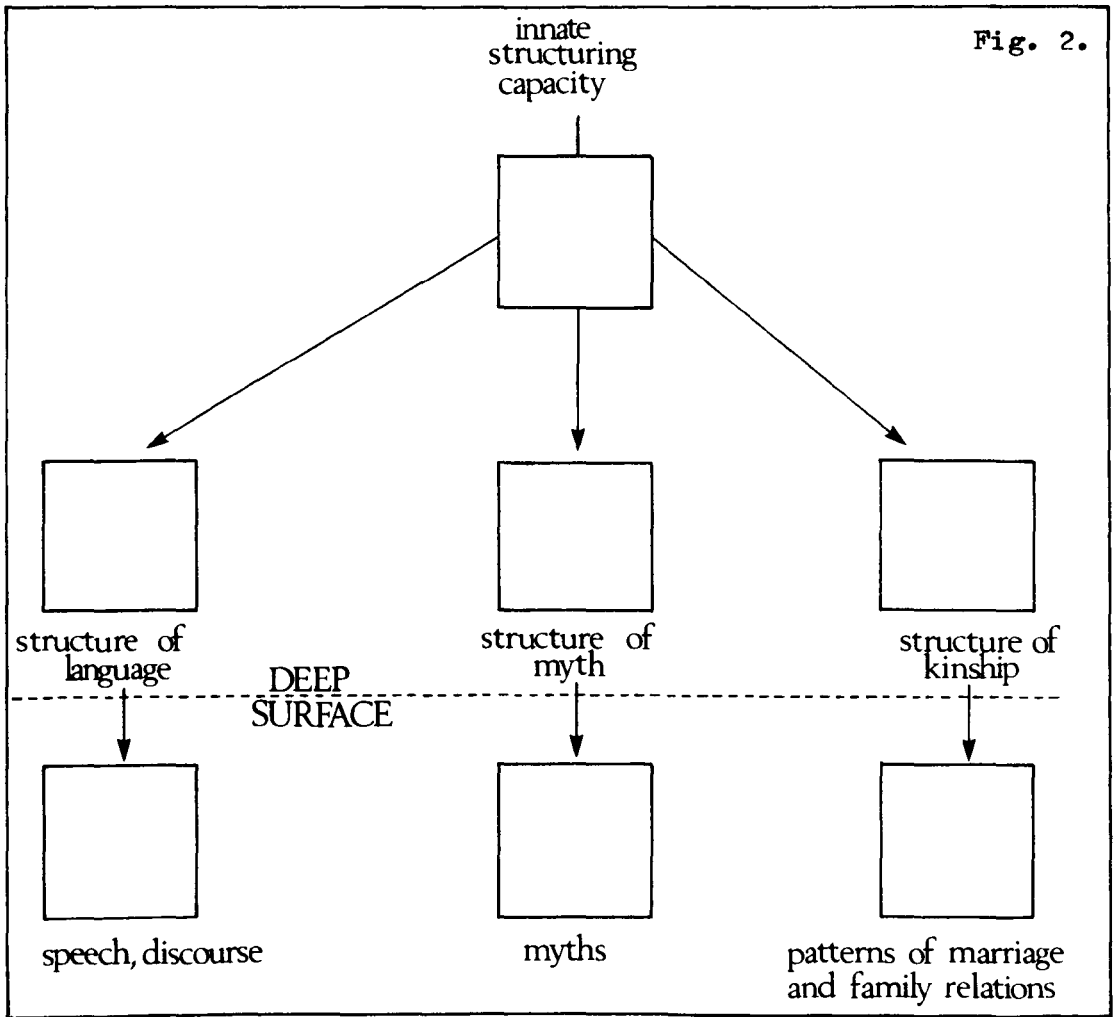
programme but rather the collapse of various surrounding accretions into the empty centre vacated by the genuine progress of the structuralist activity on the fringes of this degenerate institutionalisation. The peculiar quality of the structuralist activity is, therefore, that it tends not to be where one looks for it: a necessary strategy to cope with the pressures of institutionalisation. Is there a genuine, if strategically decentred, core to the research programme of the structuralist activity envisaged by Barthes? How may this core be distinguished from the spurious core of 'scientific', chauvinistic and Socratic, which is to say largely institutionalised and domesticated, 'structuralism'?

In an early attempt to work out what the very question 'what is structuralism?' actually means (entailing largely a catalogue of what structuralism is not) Runciman, though not at all convinced by the supposed novelty of structuralism, identifies a central emphasis: 'what is required is not the tracing of a pedigree but the deciphering of a code'.<sup>7</sup> The problem, for Runciman, with the notion of a code, appears to be the problem of origin: 'The notion

of a code presupposes the notion of an original of which the coded version is a translation.' Runciman then dismisses this cornerstone of 'structuralism' by questioning how a cultural artefact can be a translation of anything, except perhaps 'repressed impulses and fantasies' and how can that be demonstrated?<sup>8</sup> 'Structuralism' is left balanced precariously, its foundation seemingly weakened. The notion of the code is the cornerstone, but it cannot be so easily withdrawn.

It is possible (and this is part of the difficulty) to construct some very broad frameworks within which the idea of a code may be understood to be operative. Lane offers the following diagram to explain the distinctive features of structuralism.<sup>9</sup>

(The difference between 'surface' and 'deep' structure is here intended to be basically the difference between what the users of a code are and are not conscious of.) —



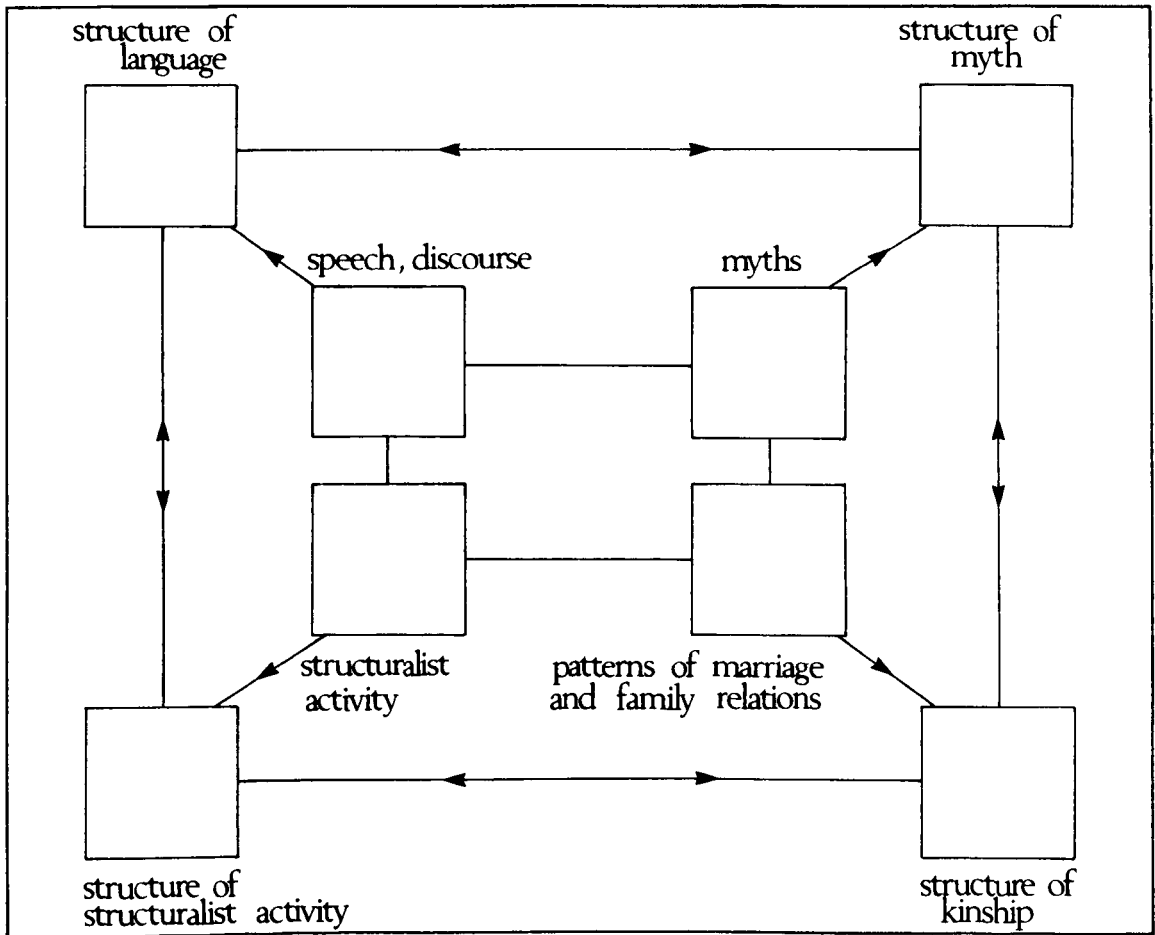
Clearly what would be going on here would be the decoding of surface patterns derived at root from some original structure or source. The 'scientific' programme (as exemplified for example by kinship studies in structural anthropology) would be to refine the translations from surface to depth so that the observable variety and surface richness of socially employed communication systems could become transparent when viewed in the right way, and everything would reveal the essential underlying structure, the hidden generator so to speak.

This is, however, more of a 'scientific' theory than the structuralist activity outlined by Barthes could ever be; even in 1967 Barthes is insisting that the structuralist activity is writing rather than science:

The notion of 'writing' implies indeed that language is a vast system, none of whose codes is privileged or, if one prefers, central, and whose various departments are related in a 'fluctuating hierarchy'. Scientific discourse believes itself to be a superior code; writing aims at being a total code, including its own forces of destruction. It follows that writing alone can smash the theological idol...10

What is implied here is a different arrangement, working 'out' rather than 'in' towards structure, for the diagram<sup>m</sup>atic representation of systems of social codes and their relationships, adding to Lane's examples the structuralist activity itself, no longer external, superior:

Fig. 3.



As Edmund Leach puts it, 'each of these codes is potentially a transformation of any of the others'.<sup>11</sup> This is the possibility missed by Runciman; that instead of translating social codes back to an essential origin, much can be learned by exploring the interrelationships and transcodings. This is the fundamental emphasis behind the notion of a dispersed structure as distinct from an essential, inner structure; the fur coat can be read in relation to the basic patterns of clothing and also, for example, in relation to structural features of class society or of relationships with nature.



This, finally, is what makes the more semiologically-oriented strands of the structuralist activity so difficult to pin down; it is not a theory of origins, intending to trace everything consistently and methodically back to some essential centre, such as a genetically determined capacity, sexual repression or an economic structure. There is, however, much 'structuralism' of this kind about. The situation is further confused by the fact that many of the same methods may be used within a 'scientific' structuralist programme as are employed within the structuralist activity as a programme of 'writing'.

An aspiring outline of these common methodological appointments might begin, as Robey suggests,<sup>12</sup> with the Thèses presented to the First International Congress of Slavic Philologists in Prague in 1928. The Prague Linguistic Circle's programme, embodied by the Thèses and indebted particularly to Saussure's teaching, emphasised a specific inflection of the concept of structure:

The authors of the Thèses proposed language as a functional system, to be understood in the light of its aim (that of communication). Structure, in the Thèses, is the structure of the system, the manner in which the individual elements of a particular language are arranged for this purpose in relations of mutual dependence.<sup>13</sup>

From this is derivable the structuralist rejection of atomistic tendencies, emphasising instead a relational mode of production of elements. The question then arises of the scope of the system; what else is structured like a language?

How one sees the development of this emphasis depends to a great extent on where it is being viewed from. Looking back from the position of so-called 'cine-structuralism', Lévi-Strauss looms extremely large because of the ways in which the systematic operations which he carried out on myths and kinship patterns (operations indebted to the idea that culture in general is structured like a language) could be so easily adapted to films. But concurrent with this strand is the semiological one which came increasingly to represent the core of the structuralist activity for Barthes (and was in fact closer to the development of the Prague School before its dismemberment in the shadow of war). Where Lévi-Strauss' procedures

were bold and imitable, however, semiological procedures tended to be tentative and difficult to appropriate. Moreover, because the reassuringly methodical and replicable nature of Lévi-Strauss' procedures stemmed from a resolutely centripetal conception of the 'scientific' programme which they constituted, there has been a constant slippage of 'cine-structuralism' towards this institutionally-recuperable position (which could, after all, be pinned down and taught on the basis of 'primers' like Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the Oedipus myth) and away from the perplexingly efferent activities of the more semiological procedures of the structuralist activity.

Thus the basic principle of the kind of 'structuralism' which came to characterise a great deal of critical work on film:

If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds--ancient and modern, primitive and civilized (as the study of the symbolic function, expressed in language, so strikingly indicates)--it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs, provided of course the analysis is carried far enough.<sup>14</sup>

There is enough here to foresee, for film studies, the exit of the author ('these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds') and the entry of psychoanalysis. In general, the result has been a distinctive impression of a drive to emaciate films in search of the central principle of interpretation (the true form with which, in critical practice, to challenge the true content sought by expressive realism). While remote myths could be treated in this way without arousing too much antagonism, the cinematic is a living domain within the same culture as 'structuralism' and the strength of emotional investment in it has offered an inherent resistance to such a tendency from the beginning, polarising attitudes.

Barthes playfully chastised this structuralist tendency for being rooted in the idea of sin--'where every value is attained through suffering':<sup>15</sup> for theoretical work to be essentially Spartan and antithetical to pleasure and emotion could be seen as a good thing and even pleasure itself could be subjected to the search for a principle of interpretation. Now clearly pleasure does need to be interrupted or made transparent in order to clear the way for a thorough attempt at making the cinematic fully

intelligible but this does not have to be simultaneously a destruction of pleasure in favour of some underlying 'truth', whether abstracted from the object or reified in theory.

Slightly adapted, this is Leach's rather neat summing-up of the gist of the Prague Linguistic Circle's emphasis on relations over isolable units as it came to be applied to ethnographic data:<sup>16</sup>

Fig. 4.

A For simple-minded Freudians

long object = penis  
round object = vagina

B For structuralists

$R = \frac{1}{0}$  or  $\frac{+}{-}$  or  $\frac{\triangle}{0}$  or  $\frac{\text{straight}}{\text{round}}$  or  $\frac{\text{male}}{\text{female}}$  or  $\frac{\text{penis}}{\text{vagina}}$

Leach insists, 'the crucial point is that the "element of structure" is not a unit thing but a relation'.<sup>17</sup> What happens, however, to the bar, the partition, when it disappears into R? How does R represent it? The question remains, that is, of whether with R, ostensibly a non-existent abstract-formal 'object', some basic and privileged signifier comes into the world; an

'element of structure' which is relational now in the sense that one term exists and the other is different. Does R represent some binding and essential 'common theme' of which all the rest are transformations? Does it, on the other hand, indicate a mode of production traceable only in the dispersed, the decrowned, the unmasterable opening out of the object? Does R tie down or let loose the series of transformations which string out from it? A centripetal movement towards some privileged signifier or a centrifugal movement into the 'galaxy of signifiers'?<sup>18</sup> Is there perhaps a sense, finally, in which it has to be both?

Neither Lévi-Strauss nor Barthes is entirely unequivocal on these questions, but there are aspects of the work of each which have led to less equivocal developments derived more or less directly from them; on the one hand a tendency to look for a basic, and probably recon-dite, structure (as one commentator puts it, 'in this respect structuralism allows, paradoxically, for too little by way of structure'<sup>19</sup>) and on the other a tendency to find less tidy structures and nothing basic: 'the structure can be followed, "run" (like the thread of a stocking)

at every point and at every level, but there is nothing beneath.'<sup>20</sup> It is at root a question of whether the evasiveness of the object studied is considered as a hindrance and a resistance to be overcome in order to get at something deeper or as itself indispensable to the scene of interpretation, the very stuff of it and a source of pleasure for the critic or theorist no less than for 'untamed' thought which does not employ critical/theoretical tools.

What tends to be abstruse here is the matter of the constitution of the object itself, which is where it becomes useful to bear in mind what Lévi-Strauss and Barthes mean respectively by myth, and where it might have a bearing on a film. For Lévi-Strauss myth is not in the last instance inextricably situated (although 'background' information about geographical and cultural contexts is used to read a specific version of a myth, even so he has tended to concentrate on the stories of tribal groups who experience themselves as fundamentally changeless, as without history). For Barthes myth is firmly situated (he concentrates almost exclusively on the mythical in social relations under advanced capitalism), but aims precisely to occlude its

own historical intentions, to de-situate or 'depoliticize' itself. Moreover the change from small-scale tribal to large-scale modern social relations has entailed a dispersion of the mythical, according to Barthes, so that where Lévi-Strauss focusses on strands of narrative (collected, transcribed, translated, abbreviated), Barthes finds his object in the dense fabric of particular circumstances from which it cannot be simply separated. At the core of this distinction, for the present purposes, is the fact that in general any member of the community from which a myth is collected to be analysed by structural anthropologists could be the teller of that myth. Nothing of the object actually exists outside this communal usage of certain forms. Dominant cinema, on the other hand, is not usable in this way but is rather 'grafted' on to its addressees, none of whom can simply become in turn the addresser. This has important consequences for any attempt to appropriate Lévi-Strauss' methods indiscriminately. 'There is no single "true" version of which all the others are but copies or distortions', insists Lévi-Strauss; 'Every version belongs to the myth.'<sup>21</sup> In other words there is no equivalent,



in this kind of anthropological data, of the actual film. A film cannot be analytically recomposed in such a way that it ceases to be an object itself and reveals the 'real' object, the structure of myth. It is precisely because everyone can be the teller of a myth in a tribal social setting that no particular version is of any importance in itself. By contrast dominant cinema is bound up in capitalist commodity production. Not least among the consequences of this for the film as a cultural artefact is the question of ownership. Barthes' insistence on the dispersion of the mythical emphasises the embedment of the object in this way, whereas it is part and parcel of Lévi-Strauss' definition of myth that the object is always already insubstantial, an effect of simulacra. Taking such an insubstantial object as the focus of attention, an object which cannot be owned, is for film studies a way of evading what it is that offers itself to be paid for and read in the first place, which is precisely the place in front of the screen.

So we find Barthes insisting that 'a choice must then be made': whether or not to approach texts by 'equalizing them under the

scrutiny of an in-different science, forcing them to rejoin, inductively, the Copy from which we will then make them derive'.<sup>22</sup> It is to this kind of end that Lévi-Strauss' methodology has tended to be appropriated and applied to films. Barthes proceeds, however, to reclaim aspects of this methodology and to use them instead as 'operating procedures' of the structuralist activity as he envisages it. What has changed is the object itself. To adopt the centripetalism with which Lévi-Strauss endows his own procedures, in order to draw a lean structure out of the productive fullness of film, is to repress the fact that Lévi-Strauss' object, myth as he defines it, is not anything like the object of capitalist commodity consumption. In film 'myth' is an aspect of a dispersed structure which runs through the object and embeds it in social relations: 'Contemporary myth is discontinuous. It is no longer expressed in long fixed narratives but only in "discourse"; at most, it is a phraseology, a corpus of phrases (of stereotypes); myth disappears, but leaving--so much the more insidious--the mythical.'<sup>23</sup>

Working outwards towards the mythical and towards the social relations in which it operates may well entail recovering the core of Lévi-Strauss'

method, not in order to identify the privileged and essential structure, but in order to structure the outward movement itself. To insist that the text produces the structure by which it is to be interpreted is not the same as believing that the structure is in the object in the first place (that in fact it is the object, like Lévi-Strauss' myth). We return, in short, to the idea of structure as an interested simulacrum but the interest now extends outwards towards the social relations in which the object, as an actually existing commodity, is embedded.

The fundamentals of a recognisably 'Lévi-Straussian' method are fairly easily summarised on the basis of Chapter XI of Structural Anthropology and of the first two hundred pages of the first volume of Mythologiques. (1) The object is cut up into contiguous segments which are not the smallest constituent units but belong to a more general level at which the discerning dissective operation is not so radical as to prevent the reconstruction of the object. In other words these units must contain terms whose relationships offer evidence of their place in the whole (rather like the jigsaw principle). 'How shall we proceed in order to identify and

isolate these gross constituent units or mythemes?... The only method we can suggest at this stage is to proceed tentatively, by trial and error, using as a check the principles which serve as a basis for any kind of structural analysis: economy of explanation; unity of solution; and ability to reconstruct the whole from a fragment, as well as later stages from previous ones.<sup>24</sup> (2) The segments are read in a tabular way, as distinct from the normal linear reading. That is to say, affinities which rhyme back and forth across the linear sequence are used to produce 'bundles' of segments. Lévi-Strauss' numerical model of this has been widely reproduced:<sup>25</sup>

Say, for instance, we were confronted with a sequence of the type: 1,2,4,7,8,2,3,4,6,8,1,4,5,7,8,1,2,5,7,3,4,5,6,8...., the assignment being to put all the 1's together, all the 2's, the 3's, etc.; the result is a chart:

1	2		4		7	8	
	2	3	4		6	8	
1			4	5		7	8
1	2			5		7	
		3	4	5	6		8

(3) Whereas numbers position themselves for us, a principle of positioning, of recomposition, is necessary in order to operate the procedure of

the numerical model with non-numerical data: Lévi-Strauss uses spatial, sensory, culinary, vestimentary, astronomical, and other associative fields in order to 'bundle' segments together (the columns above). These are the codes. It is not quite as simple as 'bundling' everything that falls into the field of a fixed code; the code may develop according to the 'bundles' which have been allocated to it. (4) The distinctive features of a code are reduced to constitutive binary oppositions (e.g. raw/cooked, roast/boiled, etc. in the culinary code) which may exhibit isomorphism with the constitutive oppositions of other codes (e.g. as between edible/inedible in a culinary code and inferior/superior in a racialist code--the eating of some animals, for example, becoming loaded with racist connotations for those whose culinary code consigns them to the inedible.) Myth uses the surreptitious slippage from one code to another in order to have unresolvable oppositions 'resolved' by the transformation of an opposition in a code where it is unresolvable into one where it can be mediated. The recognition of such polarised relations is an important aspect of the identification of gross constituent units; this is largely what allows the whole to be recomposed

on the basis of the part. Such a 'resolution' will be interminable, generating endless variations of a myth, because it is never an actual resolution of the first opposition. (Hence, it is tempting to say, arises a genre such as the Western with its seemingly compulsive repetitions.) (5) The oppositions and transformations are reduced to a pattern of basic functions (the Copy as Barthes calls it) which should be ultimately expressible in an algebra, an original logic of thought 'untamed' by learned systems.

This extremely rudimentary account of Lévi-Strauss' method conflates positions which are nowhere drawn together so insistently in his own writing, where in fact they are subject to a sometimes confusing degree of variation and elaboration.<sup>26</sup> But insofar as Lévi-Strauss has been influential outside anthropological circles, some such core is detectable within the provenance of this influence, whether or not Lévi-Strauss can be held entirely responsible for its oversimplifications.

The function is a key element in step (5). It is the function that binds the term to other terms and controls the substitution of terms. Etymologically 'function' has its origin in the

notion of performance, which is now, however, a largely obsolete meaning except in the sense of the routine exercise of a faculty, an endowment, an aptitude. Gone is the suggestion of exhibition, of feats and tricks which take advantage of that faculty. What is suppressed, more generally, is the dynamic provenance of that point where the synchronic and the diachronic intersect, the point precisely where function is to be found, where the synchronic endowment passes over into the feats and tricks, the somersaults of diachrony.

This is where troublesome distortions arise: 'Definition of a function will most often be given in the form of a noun expressing an action...' <sup>27</sup>--Propp has even here arrested the movement in a freeze-frame, making functions nothing other than 'stable, constant elements', stabilising action, tabulating. (Though his work can at least claim to be a diachronic structural method in the attention it gives to the sequencing of narrative episodes, however static the separate episodes.) The particular inner sequence, the subtle inflection such as renders sophisticated gymnastics always both the same and different, is here dissolved back into the

synchronic system; the forms of agility are privileged over the feats of agility, the system of relationships over the performance of relationships, structure over praxis, signification over communicative action. The concept of function should bridge these antinomies. We will find it able to begin to do so in 2.2. \*

The ultimate horizon of synchronic thinking is, as Lévi-Strauss describes it, 'a general theory of relationships'.<sup>28</sup> This is finally a matter of theorising the superstructure in formal terms, of systematising the forms which, because supposedly inherent in the mind, characterise the superstructure as a whole. Yet it has to be borne in mind that synchronic thinking carries in its own structuration a differential relationship to the very temporality from which it severs its objects; that diachrony is to synchrony as infrastructure is to superstructure: 'the precondition for its completeness as a thought'.<sup>29</sup> Synchronic thought is always 'after the fact' of temporality. Are its distortions nothing more than symptoms of this 'lateness' and quite simply the price that is paid for the luxury of stopping, of taking time out along the way?

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\* see particularly pp.196-208



Along which way? A surreptitious substitution has been made, of the timetable of a mental journey for the temporality inherent in the material ground across which such a journey has to take place (the institutional sites, the question of whether one is paid or otherwise rewarded for taking the journey, of what one is expected to produce and when, the actual organisation of learning). Indeed the Saussurean bracketting of the real renders the relationship of thought to matter and to the developing forms of institutional society less than clear. A timetable (timeless in itself, like Lévi-Strauss' bundles of numbers), though often complex, is always much less complex than the actual comings and goings in reality which it attempts to tabulate and which are always already bewildering, resistant, constantly appearing as nonmeaningful.

The dimension of flux, of change within hyllic substantiality and permanence, which characterises being in the world and which makes the aspirations of thought to these qualities seem so feeble, is nevertheless the precondition for the completeness of the synchronic thought and it is this completeness, or lack of it, that dogs the structuralist enterprise.

A theory of relationships, the anthropological project according to Lévi-Strauss, will only be complete in this sense if the synchronic thinking inherent in such a project holds on to the incommensurately temporal stuff on which are established the forms of institutional society and to the conditions of practices, that is to the preconditions (but not necessarily the prefigurations) of the completeness of the anthropological project.

This is surely where the drive of theory towards a 'Lévi-Strausseau' algebra of super-structural functions fails. It fails at the moment when it starts to reduce its object to constitutive oppositions which are formulised into something basic, central, essential (rather than structuring an outward movement of interpretation). This works for Lévi-Strauss because of the peculiarities of the myths which he studies, stemming as they do from comparatively indistinguishable infra- and super-structures, where for example boat-building or preparing food are each simultaneously a material and a religious activity--an inbuilt completeness of the thought which accompanies the act, which in institutional society has to be struggled for because there are

interests which would maintain the incompleteness for hegemonic ends (not least of which, the isolation of the intellectual).

That an 'anthropology' of relationships is, nevertheless, still feasible is suggested in Part III where it is the 'anthropology' of Sartre's late Marxism which offers one way of thinking adequate to institutional society.

It is necessary then to consider what is left to the structuralist activity. Consider first Barthes' proposal of operating procedures which begin with Lévi-Strauss' structuralist methodological principles but deviate from them at precisely the point where they begin to insulate and model the superstructure in isolation from the material situation. (1) The object is cut up into contiguous segments. These are units of reading which Barthes calls 'lexia': 'All in all the fragmenting of the narrative text into lexias is purely empirical, dictated by the concern of convenience: the lexia is an arbitrary product, it is simply a segment within which the distribution of meanings is observed; it is what surgeons would call an operating field.'<sup>30</sup> (2) The segments are read in a tabular way, as distinct from the normal

linear reading. That is to say, various points in the text are linked according to overlapping or shared connotations: 'Our lexias will be, if I can put it like this, the finest possible sieves, thanks to which we shall "cream off" meanings, connotations.'<sup>31</sup> (3) The associations and relations 'creamed off' the text are read within the overarching play of codes, the 'voices' which weave themselves into the text but which come from elsewhere. (4) There is no attempt to exhaust the text: 'we shan't get unduly worried if in our account we "forget" some meanings.'<sup>32</sup>

From Lévi-Strauss to Barthes, the pivot on which the structuralist enterprise swings between very different options, different objects in fact, is clearly the notion of code. It is at the code that Barthes and Lévi-Strauss pass each other going in different directions, the latter on the way, supposedly, to an increasingly formalisable structural origin, the former to the 'mirage of structures' which, on the contrary, 'de-originate' the text.<sup>33</sup> The object in the second instance is observed to be "plugged in" to other texts, other codes (this is the intertextual), and thereby articulated

with society and history in ways which are not determinist but citational....Research must little by little get used to the conjunction of two ideas which for a long time were thought incompatible: the idea of structure and the idea of combinational infinity.'<sup>34</sup> ('Citational' in the sense that the horizon of interpretation is expanding outwards rather than tracing determinist articulations inwards.)

The fourth point epitomizes the different emphasis; in place of the privileged structure on which everything depends there is the seemingly casual but in effect immensely significant denial of an imperative to account for everything (which is what Lévi-Strauss' most canonical formulae clearly intend).

We have approached here two extreme positions: either an essential and static structure is centripetally located, stripping back content (the structuralist bugbear to the point of tedium) to reveal the formulae of a basic relationism, or else structure turns into an endlessly mobile structuration in the centrifugal whirl of which content slides off into undecidability and nothing is privileged. On the

basis of a notion of the important place of the code in an anthropological or critical practice, Lévi-Strauss searches for the one code while Barthes plays with the many. Following the Formalist reversal of the priority of content over form, both, not unexpectedly, strike content again in the form itself, but what is troubling in both instances is the sense of a conflation of distinct but overlapping interpretive frameworks: that within Lévi-Strauss' intense focus on the individual utterance as a symbolic act the slippage from form to content is not recognised as the structural precondition for the final emergence of ideological messages from the form itself but rather is presumed to be the revelation of an ultimate content, of a privileged form-as-content, of a Structure as a permanent feature or content of the mind; that similarly within Barthes' playful proliferation of codes the slippage from form to content tends to lose sight of the ideology of form, despite Barthes' concern with the mythical, in favour of a voluminous (hedonistic) Structuration (which becomes finally a matter not of the mind but of the body as ultimate content). What is missed is the emergence of form as the ultimate content within the inter-

pretive framework of the situational reconstruction of the text, that is the return of work on the text to the concrete social and historical situation which is the horizon<sup>35</sup> enfolding Lévi-Strauss' more limited object (i.e. more narrowly formalizing interpretation) and the actually existing check to the potentially endless expansion of the Barthesian 'exploded' object. Only at this point does synchronic thought complete itself with the recognition of its historical and concrete ground. \*

Separating out the concentric frameworks or phases of interpretation reveals the local applicability of each of the various major tendencies of the structuralisms, allocating, as Barthes does, a place to Lévi-Strauss' fundamental procedures, especially within an initial phase, but limiting the hedonistic expansion which Barthes introduces around them by insisting on the inescapability of a final phase which recomposes the text in such a way as to apprehend the content of form in which is detectable the concrete social and historical situation (crucially, the social relations of capitalist commodity production and consumption). This avoids both the hypostasis of Structure as a

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\* for this completion in the present work see in particular pp.699-731 (Vol.2)

permanent synchronic code and the unravelling skein of Structuration in which the concrete situation is relegated to the status of only another code among many.

The notion is developed by Fredric Jameson of concentric interpretive horizons, each governing a reconstruction of its object according to 'a widening out of the sense of the social ground of a text'.<sup>36</sup> Within the first horizon the text coincides with the individual utterance or work, and Lévi-Strauss' analyses of face-painting or myths such as the Oedipus serve as models of the way in which, in this phase, the text is understood to be a symbolic act, an imaginary resolution of insurmountable difficulties which arise from fundamental contradictions in social life. Where certain ambitious conceptions of the structuralist enterprise simply shift from this level to an idea of structure as either deep or totally dispersed, Jameson proposes instead a further two horizons within which aspects of the structuralist activity will have a more modest contribution to make. The second horizon embraces the actual social order and here the text is understood to be an utterance within the



'dialogue' of collective discourses which, in a sense, form the text in this phase of interpretation. The character of the symbolic action identified in the first phase is now enlarged in terms of a wider frame of fundamentally antagonistic dialogue, entailing crucially the restoration as far as possible of (in addition to the dominant 'voice') the other 'voice' which tends to be reduced to silence or reappropriated in some way, as so often happens in unbalanced dialogic confrontations. Within the third and untranscendable horizon, history as the succession of modes of production, the text is reconstructed as precisely the content (or ideology) of form, which structuralism persistently encounters but misrecognises as either a permanent (and therefore ultimately formalisable) structure of the mind or the endlessly unravelling skeins (structure 'running' like a stocking in Barthes' erotics of reading) of polyphony, rather than as the symbolic messages transmitted by the forms of a definably situated dialogue expressing the social relations of a specific mode of production (and therefore also of consumption) and, importantly, exhibiting the survivals and anticipations of past and future modes. Here synchronic thought completes itself by a return to historical awareness.

Thence the simple model (the re-working of Lane's, above)\* can be enlarged to counteract the conflation, characteristic of structuralism, of the two outer horizons (for simplicity representing only one 'corner'):

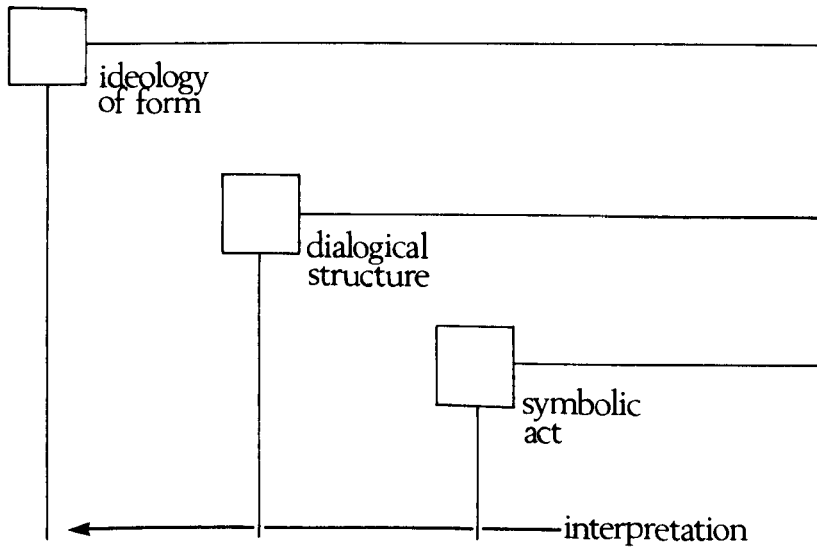


Fig. 5.

Some steps in the direction of a critical practice oriented towards the third horizon are taken in Part III. The intention here is to focus on the second horizon.

The foregoing outline of the two structuralisms (themselves constituting a kind of dialogue) has been necessary in order to clarify the position of structuralist elements within this framework, in order then to apply them with some degree of discrimination. Where

\* see p.90

the tendency represented by Barthes has helped to effect a transformation of structuralism's assumptions and methods into a 'post' phase which does not replace them so much as finds them always already in the process of dismantling and reconstructing themselves, this does not represent a strategy directly applicable within a specific horizon. Rather it offers a constantly self-interrogatory edge to interpretive work across the possible horizons. So within the second horizon, that of (primarily) class divisions within the social production of meaning, the adequate interpretive operation is not a transformation of the Lévi-Strausseau model into some 'post-structuralist' method but rather into a non-centripetal narrative semiotic.

In the case of the cinematic a good place to begin is with Eco's subtle and provocative proposal that 'the cinematic code is the only code carrying a triple articulation'.<sup>37</sup> Eco summarizes this condition succinctly:

Iconic signs when combined into semes to form photograms (along a continuous synchronic line) generate concurrently a sort of diachronic depth plane, consisting of a portion of the total movement within the frame. These individual movements, by diachronic combination, give rise to another plane, at right angles to the first, <sup>38</sup> consisting of the units of meaningful gesture.

He represents this diagrammatically;<sup>39</sup>

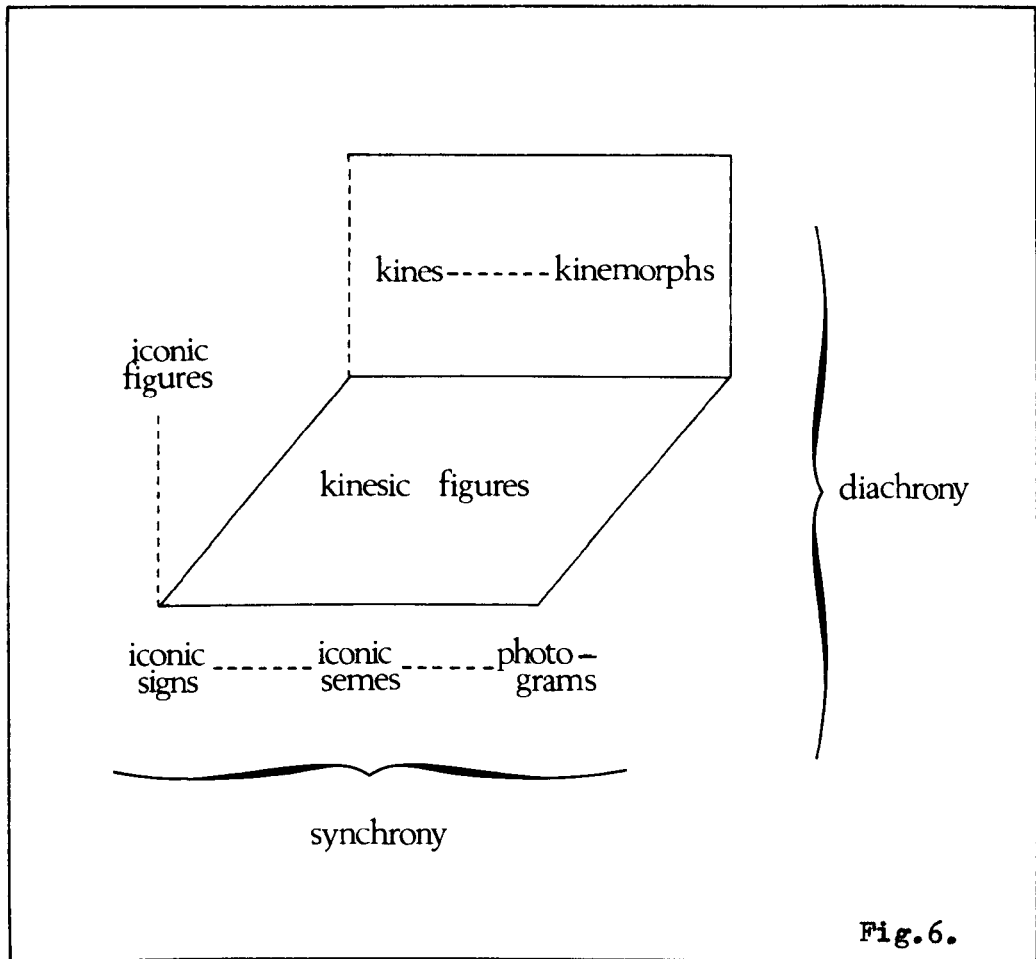


Fig.6.

Figures, signs and semes (in general 'kines' being kinesic signs and 'kinemorphs' being kinesic semes) are the fundamental articulations of the iconic code: the figures are the purely differential units, without significance in themselves (the constituents of light phenomena and of graphic mass and vectors, etc.); the signs are the minimal units necessary to engage recognition--'often difficult to analyse within a seme, since they show up as

nondiscrete, as part of a graphic continuum. They are recognizable only in the context of the seme,<sup>40</sup> (so recognition in the cinematic is always based on more than the minimal necessities); semes are the 'super-signs', the 'images' which in fact 'formulate a complex iconic phrase' because an image of a man is always already more than the word 'man'--the man is standing or sitting, a particular shape, a colour, etc., over and above the sign which is, so to speak, the omnipresent 'stick man', the necessary minimum for recognition. While an image of a hand is already an iconic phrase (perhaps black and recognisably female, etc.) it is, in cinema as distinct from still photography, simultaneously a kinesic figure for each twenty-fourth of a second in which it has no kinesic significance but which, taken together, constitute both a basic gesture (kine) and a kinesic phrase which provides the specific and distinctive elaborations of a particular wave or caress (kinemorph).

The very proposal of the triple articulation as a framework for the consideration of the cinematic carries the trace of an ironic circumstance; that the broadly 'logocentric' tradition of inquiry to which such a proposal must be

addressed if it is not to fall on stony ground (outside the institutions where such a consideration is economically feasible) will be a tradition ill-equipped to engage with, and indeed by definition virtually opposed to, the non-verbal. Such ironies are not, of course, unusual in the case of the film which so often finds its cinematographic properties subjected to verbalization which clearly intends to be as exhaustive as possible, to appear to leave nothing of the cinematic un-said.

Yet as Polhemus illustrates,<sup>41</sup> there is by the mid-seventies a vigorous intellectual tradition of inquiry into social aspects of the human body, the domain within which Eco's diachronic depth planes can be located. What emerges, though, is not so much an expanding area of study which could eventually provide the film theorist with a kind of handbook of methods in kinesic research, as rather an arena of struggle between the body as a medium of expression in itself and the enclosure of the body within a rationality with its own questionable, and certainly not objective, values.

Indeed, there may perhaps be something embarrassingly 'naked' about an audience untutored in the assumptions and theories of such a

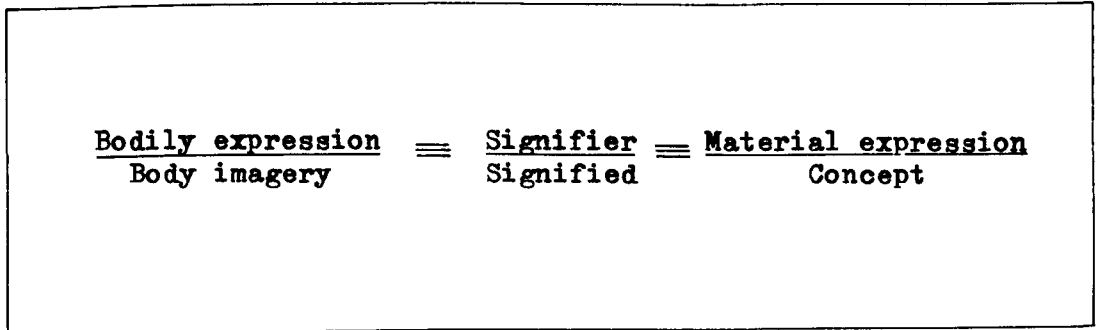
rationality. There is a noticeable difference (in terms of one's own sense of, and place in, an audience) between taking one's familiarity with the verbal schemas conventionally applicable to the cinematic experience (from notions of value and judgment through to authorship, genre, and so on) to, say, a crowded Glasgow cinema, and watching the same film in a university where one assumes a degree of like-mindedness throughout the audience. The trouble is that if an audience is not assumed to be enjoying a film in that intellectually alert manner then it is perhaps, in a sense, enjoying it bodily; its thought untamed by intellectualism, its pleasures unclothed by such dainty interests. One suspects, of course, that such 'naked' pleasure is, though to varying degrees, a universal response to dominant cinema (once its conventions have been absorbed) and the question becomes whether it is, at one extreme, simply experienced in a totally relaxed way or, at the other, constantly monitored with suspicion and displaced into other, more controllable and speakable satisfactions.

If a third way of approaching the cinematic is possible it will need to hold on to a sense of what Polhemus has aptly characterised as 'our own

corporal and social predicament',<sup>42</sup> in order to avoid clothing the 'naked' pleasure out of hypocritical distaste and taming the disturbingly 'savage' thought in order to make it the Same, to get an expanding 'we' under way on the basis of this embarrassed rationality (which means denying an aspect--the untamed aspect if it has survived--of our own response).

The sense of one's own place in an audience is in part a problem of body imagery. Polhemus, with some very specific reservations, offers this sketch of the applicability of Saussure's model to body studies:<sup>43</sup>

Fig. 7.



The major reservation is that the relationship of expression and imagery is emphasised here to the point where the relationship of both to the matrix of conditions--social, historical, physiological, etc.--at a given time and place will tend to recede in importance. This matrix is, however, a



basic context from which attention may be permitted to shift to the supposedly arbitrary structures of expression with the proviso, as suggested, that the thought which enters the synchronic dimension in this way can only complete itself by returning at some point to the suppressed diachronic dimension where, given the set of conditions at any point in time, an expression may have a meaning different than it would have at some other time. Only such a return will enable proper consideration of the question of the arbitrariness or otherwise of bodily expression as a channel, in relation to other aspects (including other channels such as the verbal-oral) of the conditions under which it occurs.

The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other.<sup>44</sup>

Mary Douglas trenchantly re-casts the question of arbitrariness in order to make of bodily expression neither an original reality in itself nor totally reducible to an 'external' reality, but

rather a moment in a dialectical process or exchange. Although she does not explore this matter in detail, it is feasible to suppose that within such a framework the absolutely arbitrary unit will always already be taken up into a system of relative arbitrariness, so that although there is no direct one-to-one relationship between 'external' facts and the minimal units of expression, the body as a whole system of meaning is deeply implicated in the 'external' set of conditions and vice versa.\* For Douglas what maintains the relationship of expression, imagery and context, and what for our purposes insists on the completion of the synchronic thought by a return to the concrete situation, is the fact that 'there are pressures to create consonance between the perception of social and physiological levels of experience'.<sup>45</sup> The notion of consonance is much more suggestive in the context of bodily expression than the insistence that such expression be seen as either entirely arbitrary or as in some sense directly reflective.

Body imagery, the 'picture' or concept one has of the body, is always constitutive of a social body insofar as the degree of consonance

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\* see Chapter 8 (Vol.2)

between the material body and body imagery expresses the degree of consonance between the physical and social levels of experience generally. Returning to the question of the sense one has of one's place in an audience, it is a little perplexing to note that in circumstances which seem to suppress the body, confining it for some two hours at a time, dominant cinema in fact then stimulates and excites physically, binding the visual and aural into an emotional event which, at peak efficiency, clearly aims to bypass (or postpone) ratiocination. This is not, though, a 'real' resolution of a lack of consonance. In fact the body is worked upon--positioned in a specific way in relation to others and aroused within carefully prescribed limits--in order to create an imaginary consonance, the conditions of which will be considered in Part III.\*

If critical practice is to intervene in this situation the risks become clear of substituting a detached or incidental body image for the centrally involved or 'absorbed' image signified by the surrender of the physical body to the cinematic experience in the untamed response of the (anthropologically) 'savage' audience in

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\* see particularly pp.285-306

the Glasgow cinema. A disembodied rationality will not have (or will not recognise) the sensory apparatus, so to speak, which is necessary to detect the areas in which the cinematic is most effective. Both the surreptitiously enforced (and nonetheless pleasurable) imaginary consonance, which will be examined later, and the distancing of the critical thought from the physical body, are symptomatic of what Polhemus dubs 'the anomic disintegration of form in the West'.<sup>46</sup> Hence the matter of the ideology of form as the third horizon of interpretation. A genuinely dialectical criticism must be aware of the body in which criticism takes place and must think the cinematic in this way.

This perspective brings with it a number of imperatives. Firstly that the impressive methodological apparatus available for the study of non-verbal behaviour should be drawn on only in such a way as to leave open the possibility that beyond the strictly formalizable is a level of body expressivity which is not merely an adjunct of the verbal-oral channel which re-absorbs it by doing the formalizing. Concomitantly, it needs to be

recognised that the fragmentation inherent in such formalization, the concentration on facial expression, gesture, body posture, or whatever, as isolable (and as each offering up its set of discrete basic units), is deeply implicated in a lack of genuine consonance which it should be the work of criticism to suspect and interrogate.\* More generally, the greater the accumulation of formalized descriptions and measurements, the greater the risk that the context of the measured occurrences will be viewed as merely behavioural, that is as a set of behavioural possibilities within which the particular item occurs, whereas as Poole insists, 'Meaning in a full sense can only emerge in a context which is an existent temporal reality, and not merely a formal cultural convention'.<sup>47</sup> Such a context is unavoidably ethical and political, the concrete ground of the occurrence. The object must be, in the last instance therefore, the whole body, and inquiry less 'logocentric' than 'somacentric' if body activity within the triple-articulation of the cinematic (and also the positioning of the body in the viewing situation) is to be accessible to a political criticism; a criticism attentive to the ways social life is organised in a specific ethical and historical context.

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\* on such 'fragmentation' of the female body see pp.542-43

A body's acts are not just continuous but are highly organised; at least this is the assumption that we bring to our dealings with others in order to find the sensible patterning which makes everyday life relatively comfortable: 'Our success as social beings in fact depends on our acuity in predicting and thus anticipating the behaviour of our fellow creatures'.<sup>48</sup> The tighter, more apparent patterning characteristic of dominant cinema's acting, the degree of hyper-organisation which establishes that it is acting rather than 'mere' acts, offers therefore a setting for a certain extra sharpening of this acuity. It is a predictive and anticipatory skill pandered to by a cinema of few genuine surprises.

There are two broad approaches to understanding this kind of organisation. The first looks at what Van Hooff refers to as 'sequential dependencies in the behavioural stream',<sup>49</sup> while the second looks at hierarchical sets of functions 'in which acts tend to occur in hierarchically nested series of specific clusters and subclusters'.<sup>50</sup> Each subroutine could be examined in terms of its internal dependencies but a notion of the multilevel hierarchy is

necessary to explain why and how some sequences may be interrupted and why there may occur adjustments inexplicable within the frame of a basic routine. This distinction may appear to mark two broad options for the cinematic appropriation of acts within conventional acting. Indeed it is characteristic of such acting that it appears to reduce the potential multilevel hierarchy to a much narrower range than that within which we recognise the textures of everyday life, and at moments of particular narrative momentum to a typically basic routine such as the chase. If an apparent interruption or inexplicable adjustment does occur it tends to be recovered by the stream of sequential dependencies through some subsequent development, so that everything counts narratively. A rare exception would be the opening scene of The Long Goodbye,<sup>51</sup> where the protagonist stumbles into a multilevel hierarchy via the basic routine of feeding his cat.

A moment's reflection, however, suggests that the habitual appearance of a restricted hierarchy is derived less from a strict adherence to a narrow behavioural sequence than from the special nature of the causal interrelations which

tend to be worked into such a hierarchy, making every level more dependent on the basic routines (such as the behaviours appropriate, and even specific, to the love affair, putting on a show, the cattle-drive, solving the crime) and less contingent in their accumulation than we are accustomed to in everyday life. This is all obvious enough but it is important to bear in mind that what is reduced in dominant cinema is not necessarily the extent of the hierarchy but the seeming arbitrariness with which the levels tend to accumulate. What is increased is the degree of organisation both within specific routines and subroutines and in the passage from one to another, although the deliberateness of such embedding movements may be assigned to an 'external' control, that of the author, rather than to the characters whom we imagine as experiencing the checks, the alarms, the unexpected turns as accidentally and with as much disorganisation and impulsiveness of behavioural response as do we in everyday life. That accident and response tend eventually to mesh neatly is one of the peculiarly novelistic satisfactions of the cinematic, with the difference that the kinesic planes open the



whole of visible behaviour to the encroachment of organisation into the seemingly arbitrary.

Holloway aptly describes this overall aspect of the text as the 'immersion of the crucial incidents in an ocean of causality (not for verisimilitude, necessarily: perhaps for more structuring, simply)'.<sup>52</sup> Analysis of narrative structure, an important part of structuralist work on texts, has tended, however, to identify and describe a variety of isolated structures without relating these either to the text structure in which they are embedded or to the 'immersion' of the audience. A categorisation or logic of narrative is, on its own, not only insufficient to a specification of the cinematic but, more importantly, is misleading in the way in which it privileges certain aspects of the text; particularly static character functions over visible behaviour, and location as an inert site for events over space as an instrument of organisation. Behaviour (as performance) and space are crucial aspects of the 'ocean' in which events and actions, and the narrative structures which they constitute, may be understood to be immersed, and of the 'oceanic' quality of watching a film.

Filmic narrative can be considered as a depiction of the action (rather than a description of the thoughts or emotions) of a limited number of characters involved in the linear manifestation of finite and dependent sequences of action which are localized in space and time and which may be summarised to identify a fabula. Just where levels come into this apparently 'flat' surface is difficult to decide. Faced with the expression plane of a text, Eco suggests of the notion of textual level that 'it belongs to semiotic metalanguage'.<sup>53</sup> That is to say, the levels are areas of abstraction (which Eco also calls 'boxes' in a rather awkwardly visualised form of 'metatextual' postulation) established on the linear manifestation or plane of expression of the text. So, for instance, discursive, narrative, actantial (see below)\* and ideological structures are spaces, in a metaphorical sense, within the actualization of the textual surface as content, but the interpretive movement by which the reader performs such an actualization is something 'which is far and away more continuous and whose timing is rather unpredictable'.<sup>54</sup> This latter (affected by the degree of overlap between the knowledge that addressee and sender supposedly share and the knowledge that

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\* p.142

the addressee actually has, and also by the deviations which can arise from ambiguities of expression or from private biases) is irrevocably bound to what the spectator actually sees and hears, in short to the surface of the text. Any specification of levels must, therefore, gain some purchase on the points where these levels articulate with the surface.

A classification of a course of events must, therefore, be formulated in such a manner as to reveal the ways in which the interpretive activity of the spectator works within such a structure on the basis of the given surface. This entails, for example, recognising the ways in which the visible behaviour of characters determines aspects of other (abstracted) levels and, similarly, how the spaces in which events take place have their own determining effects. The question of the spatial text is something which will be broached once again in Part IV. In the meantime it is the visible behavioural stream in the third articulation of the expression plane which will offer some scope for interrupting the hermeticism allowed to other levels if the matter of cinematic specificity is not insisted on.

We will take as our starting point the notion of the fabula which has been such a preoccupation of structuralist approaches to filmic narrative. Eco suggests that 'the fabula is not produced once the text has been definitely read: the fabula is the result of a continuous series of abductions made during the course of the reading'.<sup>55</sup> Not only does the reader wonder about what is going to happen next but, given the 'ocean' of dense and controlled causality which differentiates the 'possible' world on the screen from the actual everyday world in which the viewing is situated, there will be enough material of an expected kind for the reader to make forecasts. These forecasts are realised by rapid trains of thought which draw on analogous circumstances from other fictions, generic conventions, knowledge of technical limitations, themes and motives emergent in what has gone before in the particular text, and so on; all in a virtually instantaneous 'sense' of what is likely to occur. Eco calls these trains of thought 'inferential walks' and suggests that 'they are not mere whimsical initiatives on the part of the reader, but are elicited by discursive structures and foreseen by the whole textual strategy as indispensable components of

the construction of the fabula'.<sup>56</sup> These forecasts and inferential movements stimulated by the textual surface provide, therefore, one set of avenues interconnecting the various structural spaces. They will be considered again later under the heading of 'supposition'.\* Here it is necessary to approach instead one other possible set of avenues which bind narrative structures into the text structure. This, as already proposed, is the question of the body. It will be broached in 2.2 in relation to Washington: Behind Closed Doors, a six-part 'miniseries' from 1977. In order to do so some fundamental aspects of the structural analysis of narrative require brief consideration.

Beyond Culler's entirely valid point that many apparently self-contained descriptive systems may be used to describe any one narrative,<sup>57</sup> there is the possibility that what is happening is not so much a conflictive accumulation of mutually exclusive systems as rather the isolation of various sub-levels or sub-spaces. In this case Culler's appeal, in the last instance, to an intuitive assessment of the aptness of a particular kind of description is unfortunately no less evasive than it is appealing. Dundes argues, for example, that where Propp is analysing

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\* see in particular pp.267-71

the functions of dramatis personae as the components of a narrative, their relationships to each other and to the whole, Lévi-Strauss is doing something rather different; he is analysing 'the structure of the image of reality' indicated by a narrative.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, following Eco, these can be read as thorough attempts to explore various sub-spaces within the actualization of the textual surface as content. Their juxtaposition reveals very fine distinctions between such (metaphorical) sub-spaces. Indeed this is the positive value of the several apparently self-contained systems of structural analysis. They allow, each by their obsessive internal consistency, a juxtaposition which, where they refuse to merge invisibly one into the other, reveals a remarkable degree of discrimination among sub-levels of narrative structure. This is not to say that such juxtapositions and realignments will not, if carried out, entail considerable work of adjustment and alteration.

Eco's notion of levels (which arise on the foundation of the expression plane of the text as theoretical interventions within the continuous process of reading) effects a crucial

reorientation of such work; rather than viewing the fabula as a substratum to be dug out of the discourse (syuzhet) which carries it (and which it precedes, so to speak, as a real abstraction),\* it is necessary to think of the fabula as something that happens while the text is being read and within that reading. So where most structuralist work on narrative presupposes that in some sense the narrative structure underlies the text as discourse, Eco questions this perspective and the kinds of excavation to which it gives rise, in favour of analysing (by slowing and interrupting) the progressive abstractive processes of reading without which there would only ever be the expression plane, rather like the tree falling silently in the forest because there is no one there to hear it. The cooperation of the reader (as the site of a structuring vision/audition) is essential.

The reader will not at every moment of the film maintain a separateness in thought of visual and aural tracks, fabula, actorial roles, inferential movements, and so on. This is obvious enough; the film as experienced has a density and pace which demands a relaxation of such distinctions, and a critical alertness is

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\* for Althusser on the 'real abstraction' see pp.366-67

only achieved over and against this tendency of textual levels to run together. As Eco insists, 'all the levels and sublevels...are interconnected in a continuous coming and going'.<sup>59</sup> It follows that if various approaches to the structural study of narrative may be understood to work on specific sublevels of the narrative structure there will be the opportunity for a similar coming and going among them. One way to order the field of structural approaches to narrative will be to ask ourselves where elements of such approaches may be found to mark the transitions between the interpretive horizons already proposed.

The point where Lévi-Strauss' work on the cultural mediation of irreducible opposites opens onto the specific structurations of narratives, is marked by his rather cryptic formula:

$$fx(a) : fy(b) :: fx(b) : fa^{-1}(y)$$

As 'the figuration of a mediating process'<sup>60</sup> expressing dynamic functions, and backed up by the whole weight of Lévi-Strauss' anthropological studies, this may be taken as one 'edge' of the second interpretive horizon. We will return to it below. Locating the other 'edge' necessitates a move (from this reduction of the pertinent



actions in a narrative) to a much wider perspective; allowing, that is, an exploration of the logical gaps in a narrative, the hypotheses it throws up to bridge these, the dialogical tensions thus given imaginative being.

Greimas' semiotic square of logical possibilities offers this broader view, transcending binary oppositions to erect a spatial structure through which, shifting across the final horizon, the ideology of form will eventually come into view.<sup>61</sup>

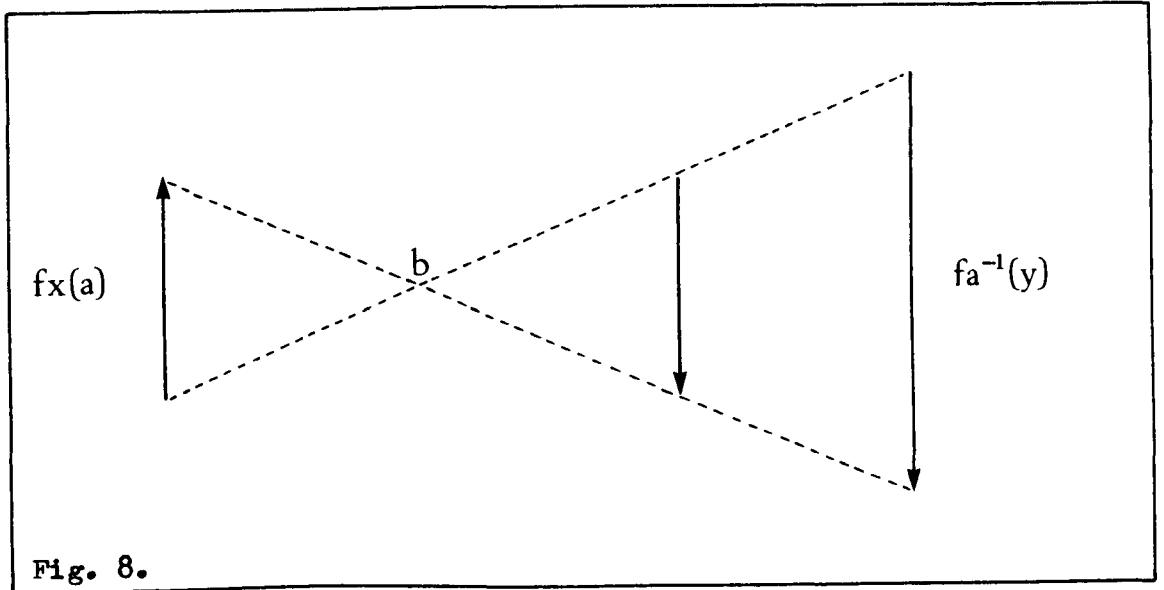
There will, inevitably, be many ways of getting from Lévi-Strauss' formula to Greimas' square. It is not the intention here to propose a best way, but rather to move across the second horizon in a way that suits the particular object, in this instance the television miniseries Washington: Behind Closed Doors. It needs to be remembered that where these models tend, within a centripetal structuralism, to offer closure, to reduce towards some inner structure, they will here be deployed within a centrifugal structuralist activity as marking levels or spaces which open within the reader's actualization of a given textual surface. The ways of crossing this second interpretive field are, therefore, abstracted from the dense complexity of actual reading.

Maranda and Maranda provide a concise explication of Lévi-Strauss' formula, based on this example:

If a given actor (a) is specified by a negative function  $f_x$  (and thus becomes a villain), and another one (b) by a positive function  $f_y$  (and thus becomes a hero), (b) is capable of assuming in turn also the negative function, which process leads to a 'victory' so much more complete that it proceeds from the ruin of the term (a) and thus definitely establishes the positive value (y) of the final outcome. This time as a term, (y) is specified by a function which is the inverse of the first term.... It might be useful to point out that the two first members of the formula refer to the setting up of the conflict, the third to the turning point of the plot, while the last member refers to the final situation.<sup>62</sup>

This disruption-resolution structure is characterised by an addition to such situations as lack/lack removed, or task/task accomplished, of the extra emphasis that the final situation is not just a return to the stasis preceding the opening disruption but rather a return which is also a gain. So where  $f_x(a)$  is the disruption (say, crudely, the presence of some villainy) the resolution inverts this state, but in such a way that something extra is achieved. The final state (y) is specified by a function which inverts the first, giving  $f_a^{-1}(y)$ , but the whole point of the process is, as Maranda and Maranda put it, to

achieve 'an inversion whose influence does not cease once it has been achieved'.<sup>63</sup> They offer a useful visualization of this process as a kind of pin-hole camera:



The first arrow on the right represents the achieved inversion but the second demonstrates the gain over and above this condition. The mediation by (b) is an assumption of a negative function in the sense of negative action against the negative force of (a), producing therefore the positive effect of cancelling out the first term's action. The nature of the gain over and above this cancellation is one of the most intriguing aspects of narrative. It is what makes the structure not so much cyclical as helicoidal.

Even at this stage we can anticipate certain developments which will lead from such a model towards the kind of narrative semiotic developed by Greimas. The terms (a) and (b), on which Maranda and Maranda superimpose 'actors' in a narrative process, may be thought of as actants in the sense in which Kritzman defines the term, derived from Greimas: 'An actant can be a character...or group of characters, a thematic unit, or an anthropomorphic entity that has been transformed from an abstract structure to a more complex series of relationships on the surface level of text. Actants are not beings nor are they psychological essences; characters and themes are simply defined by their actantial role based on what they "do" within the framework of a story.'<sup>64</sup> So a single character may 'cover' more than one actant, or several characters may in fact result from the splitting of a single actant. Simple narrative structures such as characterise, for example, a routine Western, tend to arrange themselves in one-to-one actant-character patterns, whereas a sense of additional depth and psychological complexity may derive from an equally simple actantial structure, but one which has been split into, or rotated through,

a variety of superficially different characters. This is a useful perspective to bring to bear on something like Washington: Behind Closed Doors where it is difficult to pinpoint any characters who might themselves alone fulfil the requirements of (b) for instance.

There is also the associated question of whether popular film, as distinct from simpler myths and folktales, always inevitably interests and pleases on the basis of the kind of gain which typifies resolutions in the material studied by Lévi-Strauss. May it not be the difference or gap, in structural terms, whether that difference is a gain or a loss, that is pleasurable in complex narratives? We might usefully modify the Marandas' diagram in this way:

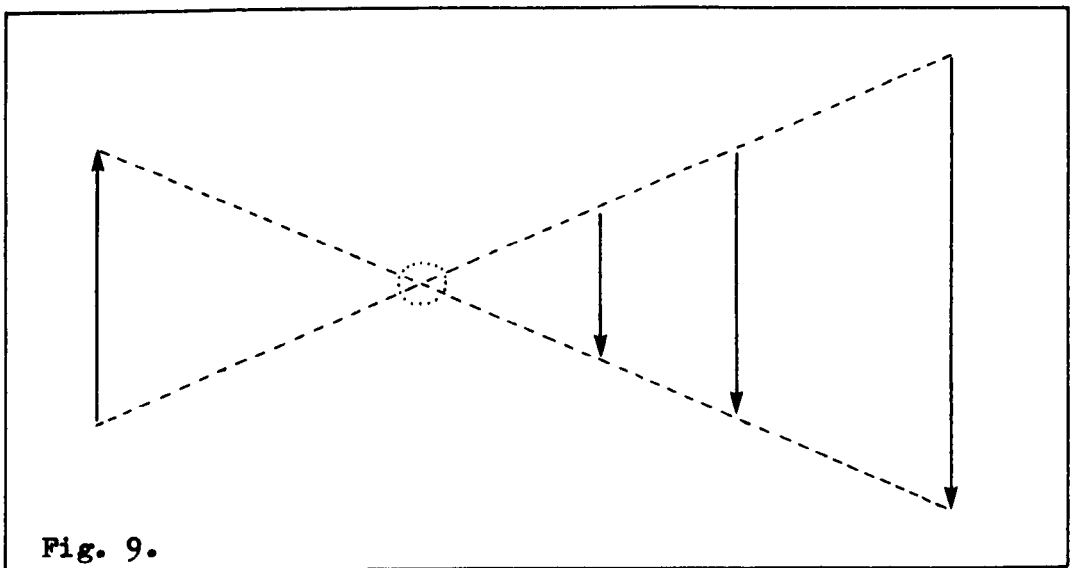


Fig. 9.

This gives us three possible types of 'inversion'; either the resolution falls short of a complete inversion, or it returns the situation to the way it was at the beginning, or it has effects over and above the simple nullification of the initial disruption. Clearly, from our own experience of popular film, most such narratives have a 'happy' ending and our sense of some kind of development achieved through such a resolution suggests that indeed the gain is the key to a great deal of what goes on in this area. The other outcomes, nevertheless, should be allowed for, and raise two questions: firstly, what kind of narratives in popular film are resolutely cyclical, and secondly, if many are not then what is the precise nature of the structural gap (whether of gain or loss in the inversion) which gives these narratives their helicoidal form?

A cyclical or straightforwardly nullifying structure will tend to encounter the problem of being considered pointless by the reader but narratives of the most banal kind, such as the James Bond films, aim nevertheless to put the hero in the role of a mediator who nullifies some initial disruption without causing any other change, development or growth.

The interest becomes virtually technical; how will Bond get from the disruption to its inversion, what tricks and devices will he use this time? This kind of thing, common since the early days of cinema, is probably why E.M.Forster includes the film audience in his scathing comment; 'A plot cannot be told to a gaping audience of cave men or to a tyrannical sultan or to their modern descendant the movie public'.<sup>65</sup> What Forster means is that the movement from disruption to perfect resolution via a sequence of breathless 'and thens' collapses what he calls intelligence and memory into the baser faculty of mere curiosity. 'Intelligence' is here a matter of asking not 'and then?' but 'so what?' (particularly if things are looking too neatly cyclical). It is the requirement of an element of uncertainty, of pockets in time, in Forster's splendid phrase, whose depths can be plumbed---'the detective element as it is sometimes rather emptily called'.<sup>66</sup>

Memory ('that dull glow of the mind of which intelligence is the bright advancing edge'<sup>67</sup>) is constantly rearranging what it is given, to fill Holloway's ocean of causality, to connect everything until that final space, the distance

separating the way things begin from the way they end, whether a loss or a gain, is formed as 'something which might have been shown...straight away', but then 'it would never have become beautiful'.<sup>68</sup> Whatever one might care to mean by 'beautiful' it seems likely that some such achievement always contributes to the kinds of pleasure in narratives which go beyond the technical pandering to a mechanical inquisitiveness and that Forster was entirely wrong in supposing that such pleasure is foreign to the movie-public. Memory and the 'emptily' named detective element will have a central place in the present study.

What begins to emerge from the several strands followed in the foregoing discussion is the necessary interrelationship of two fields of inquiry. There is Holloway's ocean of causality, and there is the 'spatial' text of several levels erected by the reader in the very act of reading, on the basis of the given surface or expression plane (although it takes a critical intervention to identify the levels). Superimpose these two fields and some interesting questions emerge. What causal relationships operate among the various levels or structures? What is the connection, for example, between the gesturality



of the third articulation and the fabula? How does the actantial structure fit these others? More concretely, narratology assumes that the fabula represents certain fundamental functions (villainy, 'mediation', interdiction, contractual obligation, the test, etc.) and that these may be classified according to logical constraints which operate entirely within that structural level of the text. Our developing perspective suggests that the narrative structure is, in fact, inevitably open to other levels and that there must be significant structuring forces which operate across all these levels, including the surface of gesturality which is part of the immediate contact between the film and the spectator.

So if Lévi-Strauss' formula represents the most elementary way of thinking about the logic of fabula, what makes it worth telling, then the movement across the second interpretive horizon through Greimas' structures of signification (see 2.2) must be open to these other levels. In this way aspects of Greimas' narrative semiotic may do more than offer an alternative narratological formula. They may instead offer some access to the structuring

forces which permeate a reading and which show little respect for theoretically erected boundaries and the supposed hierarchy of textual levels, where narratology runs the risk of giving priority to the fabula as being somehow the 'reality' of the text. It is necessary to move from ways of thinking the inner structure of the fabula to ways of thinking the convergence of structuring forces through other levels of the text to produce the fabula.

## 2.2 Dialogism and semiotic constraints

The 'film' for analysis is Washington: Behind Closed Doors. This has been chosen partly in order to emphasise the problematic nature of the given unity implied by the commonsense usage of the word 'film', partly because its length offers a challenge to structural patterns developed to account for much shorter material, and partly because of the inherent interest of its thinly veiled effort to put Nixon and the prelude to Watergate again before the judgment of the audience but this time as something between fiction and drama-documentary rather than news.

(a)  
A six part miniseries loosely based on John Ehrlichman's political novel, The Company. The complex story, which centers on the life and rise to power of Richard Monckton from senator to the President of the United States, exposes the public and intimate lives of the people who control our nation--lives filled with greed, lust and corruption.<sup>69</sup>

(b)  
A lavish fictionalized retelling of the Watergate story mixing political intrigue and personal drama and centering on the rise of a power-hungry U.S. President and the men with whom he surrounded himself in order to keep his grip on his office. Robert Vaughn received an Emmy Award for his performance as the President's Chief of Staff, with other nominations going to the show itself as

Outstanding Series, to Jason Robards for his portrayal of President Richard Monckton with its overt Nixonian images, director Gary Nelson, cinematographers Joseph Biroc and Jack Swain, art directors Jack De Shields and James Claytor and set decorator Barbara Kreiger.<sup>70</sup>

(c)

All along, Ehrlichman's novel had held that there were really two crimes committed in the pre-Watergate decade, and that only one of them had been Nixon/Monckton's small-scale burglary. The other crime, fully as great as Watergate, had been committed by former President William Curry, the handsome, popular, explicitly Kennedyesque figure who had secretly ordered numerous assassinations of politically troublesome foreign leaders, here and abroad. This novelistic assassination thesis was transferred intact to the docu-drama, where it became the series' principal story line. What secrets did Curry's protégé William Martin--now Monckton's CIA director--know about the dead President? What secrets did he carry with him about those assassinations?...Does it matter that, in an entertainment fiction that nonetheless lays deliberate claim to authenticity, unproved rumor about President Kennedy's involvement in CIA assassination schemes is casually paired with President Nixon's proved penchant for illegal activities and the abuse of power? Or are we supposed at that point to be watching 'just a story'?<sup>71</sup>

So: complexity, technical polish ('lavish'), prestige (Emmy award and nominations) and an inmixing of historical material with a fiction boasting 'greed, lust and corruption' in such a way as to bind supposed fact and conventional story-telling seamlessly together. What will be worth drawing out from this will be the logic of

the production of predictability and homogenisation, of containment in the strong sense, and of excess in the sense of what is, or at least threatens to be, outside that homogenisation and the limits of that lavishly polished and praised containment.

Credits:

Paramount. Broadcast 6-11 September 1977 by ABC. 12½ hours. Six parts. Executive producer: Stanley Kallis, Supervising producers: Eric Bercovici, David Rintels, Screenplay: David Rintels, Eric Bercovici, based on the novel The Company by John Ehrlichman, Producer: Norman Powell, Director: Gary Nelson,<sup>72</sup> Photography: Joseph Biroc, Jack Swain, Music: Dominic Frontiere (Richard Markowitz, part 4), Art Directors: Jack De Shields, James Claytor, Editors: Gerald Wilson, Harry Kaye, Arthur Hilton. Cast (with contextualising commentary): Jason Robards (Richard Monckton)--from senator to President, anti-intellectual, secretive, surrounds himself with ruthless men, dreams of visiting China, humourless. Cliff Robertson (William Martin)--CIA director, cold, unfeeling, ruthless, clever, suspicious of Monckton, gradually mellows. Lois Nettleton (Linda Martin)--William's wife, lonely, suspicious, ex-mistress of Pres. Anderson, wants to recover her husband's affection. Stephanie Powers (Sally Whalen)--Bill Martin's new mistress, widow, socialite, he uses her to influence Carl Tessler. Robert Vaughn (Frank Flaherty)--Monckton's Chief of Staff, unfeeling, brutally efficient, extremely powerful, controls access to Monckton. Andy Griffith (Esker Anderson)--retiring President, terminally ill, outspoken, pragmatic, contemptuous of Monckton. Barry Nelson (Bob Bailey)--Monckton's press secretary, nostalgic for the old days, objects to Flaherty's influence over Monckton. Harold Gould (Carl Tessler)--foreign affairs adviser, ambitious, highly capable, intellectual, influenced by Martin through Sally Whalen.

Tony Bill (Adam Gardiner)--idealist, White House aide, later assistant to the treasurer at the CRP (Committee for the Re-election of the President), increasingly troubled by the style of the administration and by deeper suspicions.

Frances Lee McCain (Paula Gardiner)--Adam's wife, TV producer, anti-establishment, encourages Adam's suspicions.

Meg Foster (Jennie Jameson)--secretary, hopes to marry Roger Castle.

David Selby (Roger Castle)--White House counsel, liases with CIA, FBI and National Security Agency, unscrupulous, ambitious, sees Jennie as only a mistress.

Nicholas Pryor (Hank Ferris)--White House aide, later chief of staff at CRP, easily led, ambitious, cynical.

John Houseman (Myron Dunn)--CRP chairman.

George Gaynes (Brewster Perry)--CRP finance chairman.

Diana Ewing (Kathy Ferris)--Hank's wife.

Peter Coffield (Eli McGinn)--official at Securities and Exchange Commission, investigating business affairs of Bennett Lowman, falling in love with Jennie.

John Randolph (Bennett Lowman)--hotel owner and businessman with underworld connections, gives financial support to CRP.

Joseph Sirola (Ozymandias)--shady businessman who gives financial support to CRP.

Barry Primus (Joe Wisnovsky)--investigative reporter suspicious of White House and CRP activities.

Frank Marth (Lawrence Allison)--Monckton's domestic affairs adviser.

Lara Parker (Wanda Elliott)--secretary at SEC and later CRP, has affair with Hank Ferris.

John Lehne (Tucker Tallford)--special counsel to Monckton.

Alan Oppenheimer (Simon Cappell)--Bill Martin's assistant.

Linden Chiles (Jack Atherton)--Senator investigating Lowman, and a close friend of Sally Whalen.

Thayer David (Elmer Morse)--FBI director.

Phillip Allen (Walter Tullock) and Skip Homeier (Lars Haglund)--chief 'plumbers', wiretapers, political saboteurs.

These are the most active characters in a very large cast, with at least another dozen making regular appearances in minor roles. Already from the brief commentary the binding of personal 'problems' (chiefly of a romantic/sexual nature) to familiar political material is evident. The following summary of scenes is intended to enable the location and contextualisation of specific events referred to in the later analysis. Referral back to the cast notes will clarify the roles of participants in each scene. Most scenes are introduced or bridged by conventional establishing shots (cars arriving, pans up buildings, etc.). The summary of scenes will also enable a tabulation of characters' involvement in the narrative, as a step to recomposing a structure. With the exception of the opening sequence, there is no intercutting of scenes. Rather scenes are played out in full in one sequence. (As is widely the case, for instance, in Japanese cinema.) This single-scene, foreground-action approach, partly a strategy for minimizing the effects of commercial breaks, imparts an impression of regularity and of clean narrative lines which may be intended also to maintain a

clarity and sense of steady progression over the six parts. This way of approaching an (extended) film is meant to facilitate an analytical movement from characters (foregrounded insistently by the material itself) as agents of narrative predicates through to the bodies of the actors (the visible impression of a densely peopled space) and to the 'sense' of these bodies as images.

**Table: Summary of Washington:Behind Closed Doors**

pp.155-68

WM - William Martin  
RM - Richard Monckton  
FF - Frank Flaherty  
SW - Sally Whalen

Double vertical lines indicate divisions  
between episodes.



White House: Oval Office	CIA office intercut	WM's house: Georgetown	WM's office
Pres. Anderson announces resignation on TV.	WM's reaction to broadcast.	WM and Linda quarrel.	CIA assessments of Anderson's possible successors.
1.1	1.2	2	3
Oval Office	CIA vaults	WM's office	Waldorf Astoria Towers Hotel, NY.
Anderson and WM discuss RM and 'Primula Report'.	WM checks contents of 'Primula' - on CIA political assassinations.	CIA plan to establish 'lines' to candidates.	RM campaigning.
4	5	6	7.1
		TV studio, NY.	Waldorf Astoria Towers
WM tries to see RM but is turned away by aides.	Adam Gardiner approached by Ozymandias with offer of deal for campaign funds.	Adam and Paula (TV prod.) discuss Adam's political ambitions.	Dunn receives large cash donation from Ozymandias.
7.2	7.3	8	9
CIA projection room	Washington garden-party	RM's suite	Art Gallery
WM watches film of covert CIA destruction of 'enemy' village in SE Asia.	WM meets Sally.	RM meets Morse, FBI.	WM meets Sally and 'recruits' her to get information from Tessler.
10	11	12	13

WM's house - a party		Martins' bedroom	Republican Convention
Sally and Tessler introduced.	WM ingratiates himself with Tessler.	Recriminations.	RM gaining support.
14.1	14.2	15	16
Oval Office	Art Gallery	RM's hotel suite	Law Offices where Castle works.
Anderson tells WM that RM will take revenge on past opponents when in office.	WM and Sally.	FF takes Roger Castle onto staff.	Castle secretly examines financial record of an RM opponent.
17	18	19	20
RM's chartered aircraft	RM's hotel suite, Chicago.	Sally's house	Ballroom filled with campaign workers, etc.
Tension in RM's staff under FF's dictatorial rule.	Plans to disrupt protestors gathering outside.	WM tells Sally about 'Primula Report'.	RM's victory speech and backstage pledge to weed out opponents.
21	22	23	24
WM's office	CIA office, Caribbean.		CIA jet
WM gets intelligence report that RM intends to hire Tessler.	WM is told where Tessler is holidaying.	WM 'phones Sally.	WM discusses RM with Tessler.
25	26.1	26.2	27

RM's hotel suite	Park in Washington	Paula Gardiner's/CIA office parents' home	
RM offers Tessler a job and FF tells him that his salary is all he needs to know. 28	Hank and Adam jogging, discuss their salaries. 29	Wedding party for Adam and Paula. 30	Agent reports that Tessler has convinced RM to retain WM as CIA director. 31
Chicago		Sally's house	Jennie's apartment, Greenwich Village
Tessler takes WM to meet RM. 32	RM dictates conditions for recruitment to his Administration. 33	WM discusses his impending divorce and plans with Sally. 34	Roger Castle tells Jennie he is going to the White House. 35
White House			Jennie's apartment.
Anderson hands over to RM. 36.1	Staff move into offices. 36.2	Bailey asks Press corps to give RM a chance. 36.3	Farewell party. 37
FF's office	SEC	Restaurant	
FF puts Hank into Bailey's office. 38	Jennie starts her new job. 39	Hank and wife with the Baileys discuss RM's 'image problem' and FF's influence. 40.1	Hank and Cathy discuss Hank's opportunities. 40.2

Oval Office	White House	Shop	Oval Office
Tessler and military chiefs with RM who authorises bombing of a neutral country 41	FF puts his men in key positions. 42	Linda and Sally meet accidentally. 43	RM discusses press relations with Bailey and Hank. 44.1
	WM's office	Ferris' bedroom	Oval Office
FF sets Hank spying on Bailey. 44.2	WM gets report on secret bombing and cover-up. 45	Hank talks excitedly about new responsibilities. 46	TV news reports on bombing anger RM. 47
Station hotel lounge	FF's office	SEC	Maine White House
'Plumbers' put to work by Tallford and Allison investigating reporters, etc. 48	FF calls staff together and calls for toughness. 49	Jennie's workmates, Eli and Wanda discuss Roger's double-dealing. 50	RM and Tallford enlist Castle's help with 'dirty tricks'. 51
Restaurant	White House		Baileys' home
Jennie on unsuccessful blind-date arranged by Wanda. 52	FF tells Bailey, 'We're the power' not the press and fires him. 53	'Plumbers' report to Tallford. 54	Dinner with Adam, Hank and wives. Paula argues with Hank. 55.1

	White House	Oval Office	College Campus
Afterwards Paula voices her dislike of Hank. 55.2	Party. 56	RM, FF, and Hank discuss manipulating media coverage of anti-war protest. 57	Student protest rally. Adam observes in crowd. 58
Oval Office	College Campus	White House	Lincoln Memorial
Adam reports to RM on student feelings. 59	As RM's representative Adam is interviewed by TV news. 60	Hank tells Adam his campus visits were a PR exercise. 61	RM and Adam visit protestors camp. 62
White House: press room	Oval Office	CIA	White House
Press puzzled by RM's tactics 63	RM and aides discuss 'rough stuff' against opponents as proposed by Castle. 64	WM alerted to Castle's involvement. 65	Castle briefs CIA, FBI, NSA on new surveillance of RM's opponents. 66
WM's new apartment	Andersons' home	Ferris' bedroom	White House
Sally moves in. 67	WM visits Anderson to report on RM's new tactics. 68	FF calls Hank in early hours with trivial instructions. Hank thinks it's a dream. 69	Phone monitoring operation tells Hank that FF did call him. 70

Night club	Oval Office	Remote area near airport	CIA
Roger and Jennie with Hank and Cathy.	RM and Tessler discuss leaks of information on SE Asian operations.	Tallford and Allison discuss plans with 'plumbers'.	WM realises that White House is looking for 'dirt' on CIA operations for previous admins.
71	72	73	74
Lawyer's office	WM's apartment	White House	Myron Dunn's office
Martins' divorce settlement.	WM and Sally.	'Plumbers' discuss tactics	Deal with Lowman for party convention at his hotel.
75	76	77	78
PRC	Restaurant	Maine White House	Jennie's apartment
Safe installed in Adam's office.	Dunn mediates in deal for convention costs in exchange for Ambassadorship for Mrs. Loman.	RM becomes increasingly petty as FF's grip tightens.	Jennie and Roger quarrel.
79	80	81	82
Street	Restaurant	FF's office	
Adam and Paula meet Wisnovsky; observed by White House agent.	Adam and Paula with Wisnovsky.	FF quizzes Adam about Wisnovsky.	FF orders obstruction of federal funds to Paula's TV show on the educational network.
83	84	85.1	85.2

TV studio	SEC	Sally's house	Deserted street
Paula produces another successful political chat-show. 86	Eli and Jennie.  87	Senator tells Sally about the Lowman deal and asks for her help in exposing it. 88	Sally asks WM to investigate Lowman.  89
CIA	Bahamian bank	Bar	Jennie's apartment
WM sends assistant to investigate Lowman's affairs in the Bahamas. 90	CIA man gets evidence on Lowman.  91	Eli and Jennie.  92	Eli and Jennie.  93
CIA car	WM's apartment	Air Force Base	Air Force One
WM told about the Lowman evidence.  94	WM hears that Anderson is dead.  95	WM boards Air Force One and meets Tessler.  96	RM sees WM and Tessler.  97
Anderson's funeral	Bar	Hotel room	Outside Senate Committee room
WM meets Linda 98.1	WM and Linda discuss Anderson's effect on their lives. 98.2	WM and Linda. 99	Lowman escorts wife to Committee. 100

Senate Committee	Oval Office	SEC	Oval Office
Lowman questioned by Senator Atherton.	Dunn and Perry answer to RM on the Lowman affair.	Eli angered by removal of Lowman's records.	RM ingratiates himself with two senators from Atherton's committee.
101	102	103	104
Justice Dept.	Oval Office		SEC
Morse (FBI) tells Castle about the Atherton/WM connection through Sally.	RM demands that Atherton be 'cut off at the knees'.	RM snubs WM.	Roger calls for Jennie. Eli confronts him with the Lowman records incident.
105	106.1	106.2	107
Restaurant	Oval Office	Allison's office	CIA office
Hank makes a feeble pass at a waitress.	Tallford and Allison report on surveillances.	Proposals to get information on 'unfriendly' journalists by illegal means.	Haglund ('plumber') collects equipment from CIA on White House authority.
108	109	110	111.1
	Theatre foyer	Sally's house	Courthouse, St. Louis
WM speculates on what RM's men are doing.	Tessler tells WM that RM is out to get him.	WM and Sally argue over her involvement with Atherton and WM's continued involvement with Linda.	'Plumbers' break and enter to get incriminating evidence on a journalist.
111.2	112	113	114



Martins' house	Airport	SEC	WM's apartment
WM and Linda reconcile.	Tallford receives the stolen information on the journalist.	Jennie takes a call from Roger and angers Eli.	Sally and WM quarrel about Linda.
115	116	117	118
Eli's apartment.	Maine White House		Bar
Jennie arrives.	Hank discusses public relations with RM and FF.	Press photograph RM with dog on beach.	Roger picks up a girl.
119	120.1	120.2	121
Airport	Air Force One	FF's office	Oval Office
Protestors lambast RM vocally.	Hank ebullient about framing students for damage to RM's car.	Hank outlines plan to feed false information to the press.	RM's TV speech on escalation of the war.
122	123	124	125
Gardiners' house	White House		Oval Office
Paula and Adam quarrel about the war. Paula is deeply distressed.	Hank organises fake mail in support of RM.	RM told about imminent large-scale protests and demands a 'hard line'.	RM rails about anti-war protest in Washington.
126	127.1	127.2	128

Jennie's apartment	street	Oval Office	Street
Roger gets call from White House.	Demonstration.	RM demands action.	FBI photographs protest leaders.
129.1	129.2	130	131
Police HQ	street	Oval Office	street
Castle presses for arrests despite Civil Liberty objections.	Demonstration.	RM demands FBI action against protest leaders.	Demonstration.
132.1	132.2	133.1	133.2
White House	street	White House	street
Tallford orders trouble-makers to infiltrate crowd.	Tallford's men start scuffles leading to arrests.	Allison orders more troops.	Troops deploy around demonstrators.
134.1	134.2	135.1	135.2
street	Police HQ	street	street
Jennie gets caught in crowd.	Castle orders use of tear gas.	Jennie is gassed in crowd.	Eli finds Jennie.
135.3	136.1	136.2	136.3

Oval Office	Jennie's apartment	Oval Office	Gardiners' bedroom
Tessler voices disapproval of Administration tactics.	Roger Castle and Eli quarrel.	RM - 'We showed them what law and order is all about'.	Paula and Adam argue about RM.
137	138	139	140.1
	Oval Office	SEC	Oval Office
Next morning Paula leaves.	RM meets delegation of 'hard hats' supporting the war.	Hank recruits Wanda.	RM privately voices ambitions for a third term.
140.2	141	142	143
PRC	SEC	PRC	
Hank gloats over his new appointment.	Roger and Jennie.	Hank recruits a 'political prankster' to infiltrate the opposition.	Hank lies to Wisnovsky about whether letters and telegrams supporting RM are genuine.
144	145	146.1	146.2
PRC	Golf-course	Woodland	Hotel
Tullock advises on disrupting opposition campaign.	Perry solicits campaign contributions.	Roger and Jennie at weekend cabin.	Hank's 'prankster' at work.
147	148	149	150

Oval Office	WM's office	Bar	PRC: Hank's office
RM confidentially repeats his ambition to serve a third term. 151	WM and Tessler discuss RM.  152	Eli and Jennie - Roger interrupts them and punches Eli.  153	Hank invites Wanda to Miami.  154
Miami hotel	Sally's house	FF's office	Bar
Hank is nervous about being seen with Wanda.  155	WM and Sally sever their ties.  156	FF pushes Hank into more 'dirty tricks'.  157	Wisnovsky gets information from Hank over a drink.  158
Ferris' home	White House		Jennie's apartment
Hank phones Wisnovsky to plead with him.  159	RM orders Hank to trace the leak.  160.1	Tallford suggests that being married would further Castle's career.  160.2	Roger Castle arrives to propose but finds Eli there.  161
Oval Office	Martins' house	WM's office	TV studio
Dunn presents plans for possible third term.  162	WM goes back to Linda.  163	CIA discover taps on reporters' phones.  164	Paula completes her last programme.  165.1

	WM's office	Restaurant	WM's office
Adam and Paula quarrel. 165.2	WM puts a senior agent onto uncovering White House 'dirty tricks'. 166	Tallford interrupts Martins' dinner to demand White House access to CIA files. 167	CIA concludes that RM is behind massive illegal surveillance. 168
Suburban street	WM's office	Oval Office	Camp David
CIA observes Haglund in illegal 'bugging' operation. 169	WM identifies Haglund and steps up counter-surveillance. 170	RM hears report from Haglund and passes judgment on 'sexual morality'. 171	WM meets RM and makes a deal: 'Primula' in exchange for CIA silence on White House activities. 172
Street outside PRC	Dunn's office	PRC	
Hank and Tullock meet Bailey. 173	Tullock presents Ferris, Castle and Dunn with expensive masterplan of surveillance and harassment of opponents 174	Adam meets Ozymandias by chance. 175.1	Ozymandias meets Perry to negotiate deal for a campaign contribution. 175.2
Jamaica	Washington Navy Yard	Dunn's office	PRC
WM arrives with Linda to take up new appointment. 176	Ozymandias meets RM on yacht. 177	Tullock presents new stream-lined plan to Ferris, Castle and Dunn. 178	Perry's aides sent out to cash cheques from Ozymandias totalling \$1m. 179.1

		Cafe	Oval Office
various banks	PRC		
Perry's aides cash cheques.	Adam told to put cash in safe.	Paula meets Wisnovsky.	RM looks for 'something big'.
179.2	179.3	180	181

	PRC	Wanda's house	Gardiners' house
Hank tells Adam to hand cash over to Tullock.	Adam asks Perry what is going on.	Wisnovsky asks Wanda about the PRC and Adam.	Paula begs Adam to tell Wisnovsky about his suspicions.
182.1	182.2	183	184

Oval Office	Los Angeles		Jamaica
Tessler tells RM that the China visit is on.	Tullock and Haglund prepare for a large-scale burglary of a Democratic candidate's HQ.	Gang spotted by a security guard in candidate's offices.	WM reads about the break-in in a newspaper.
185	186.1	186.2	187

Tabulation by scene of  
character incidence in  
Washington: Behind Closed Doors

pp.170-73

The sequence of columns is  
established pragmatically  
according to the most frequent  
association of characters in  
the scene-summary.

	Richard Monckton	Frank Flaherty	Esker Anderson	William Martin	Linda Martin	Sally Whalen	Carl Tessler	Adam Gardiner	Paula Gardiner	Roger Castle	Jennie Samson	Eli McGinn	Hank Ferris	Bob Bailey	Joe Wisnorsky	Ogy- mandias + Loungy	Plumbers'
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	Richard Monckton	Frank Flaherty	Esker Anderson	William Martin	Linda Martin	Sally Whalen	Carl Tessler	Adam Gardner	Paula Gardner	Roger Castle	Jennie Jameson	Eli McGinn	Hank Ferris	Bob Bailey	Joe Wisnowski	Oy- maddis Lounan	Plumbers'
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	Richard Monckton	Frank Flaherty	Esker Anderson	William Martin	Linda Martin	Sally Whalen	Carl Tessler	Adam Gardiner	Paula Gardiner	Roger Castle	Jennie Jameson	Eli McGinn	Hank Ferris	Bob Bailey	Joe Wisnowski	Oy- mandias Lowman	Plumbers'
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	Richard Monckton	Frank Flaherty	Esker Anderson	William Martin	Linda Martin	Sally Whalen	Carl Tessler	Adam Gardiner	Paula Gardiner	Roger Cable	Jennie Jameson	Eli McGinn	Hank Ferris	Bob Bailey	Joe Wisnowsky	Gay Landis Lowman	Plumbers'
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from 18 onwards, gradually become more and more  
 until their climax at 167-135 which provides a  
 reading of the series as a whole. The  
 familiar historical events that witness the final  
 extra-textual closure of a Providence.  
 The other major structural feature which emerges  
 clearly from the survey is the figure of  
 117-140, involving the personal responsibility of

From the scene summary and the tabulation of character incidence a number of important observations immediately emerge. Monckton's forty-five major appearances are distributed fairly evenly throughout, the only noticeable cluster occurring around 120-130 where he deals with the massive anti-war protest in Washington. His strong presence (defined simply in terms of screen-time) at this juncture adds to the impression of a confrontation and it is worth noting that Bill Martin is entirely absent throughout and immediately after this period (not reappearing, in fact, until 152). Martin, however, has a very substantial 'run' from 1-34, giving his function in the narrative an early momentum which can be kept going by periodic clusters of appearances (65-68, 94-99, 111-118) until its resolution at 163-172. The 'plumbers', from 48 onwards, gradually become more active until their cluster at 167-186 which projects a reading of the series as a whole into the familiar historical events that offer the final extra-textual closure of a President's fall. The other major structural feature which emerges clearly from the summary is the dense cluster, 117-140, involving the personal relationships of

Roger Castle, Jennie Jameson, Eli McGinn and the Gardiners. This stands out because it brackets Monckton's cluster at 120-130 which is the only other important sequence of events during this period.

It can be supposed that some significant processes are going on behind this evidence of prominent runs and clusters as they appear above. The coincidence of the elaborately staged (with the help of newsreel footage) demonstration by anti-war protestors, in stark opposition to Monckton, with a concentration on the personal dilemmas of these other characters, and the marked absence of William Martin throughout these sequences, can be taken to imply that something crucial is occurring here in relation to the structure of the text. The nature of the occurrence will be clarified by indicating the connections among the principal characters by which, as agents, their actions are interbedded.

Fig. 10

**Embedment of major characters in  
Washington: Behind Closed Doors**

s - suspects  
u - uses  
a - admires  
l - loves  
r - rejects  
i - informs  
e - exposes

NB these terms are not intended to exhaust the relationships involved but merely to indicate the foundations on which these relationships are elaborated for the audience.

**W** - Joe Wisnovsky, the investigative reporter who is probing the affairs of the Administration.

Monckton  
( & Flaherty )

Linda

Tessler

Paula

Jennie

Hank

Martin

Sally

Adam

Roger

Eli

who

who

who

who

who

who

who

who

who

who

who

s:4  
s:7

a:8

s:8?

~~u:13~~  
~~u:14~~

u:4

l:26

l:30

u

l:35

a:40

'Plumbers'

l

s:50

u:57

u:88

l:87

W

e

s

l:99

l

r:161

s

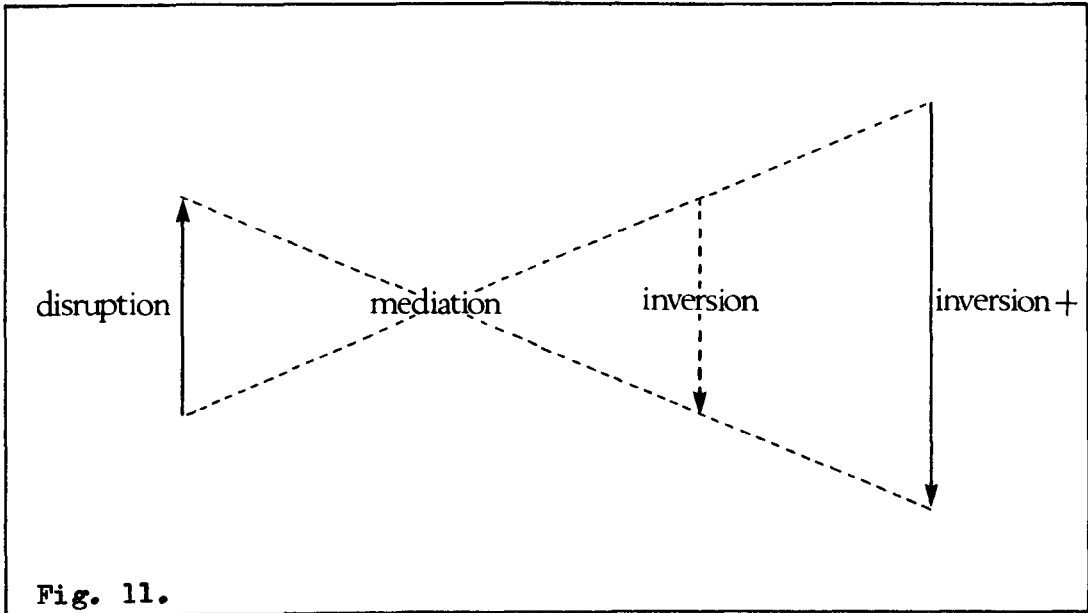
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The numbers on the embedding operations<sup>73</sup> identify the scenes in which each connection is first made particularly apparent. They are, therefore, a punctual guide to the kind of abductions developed by an audience in a more dynamic way, reading back and forth along the narrative runs to grasp characterisations and interactions both retrospectively and predictively on the basis of such specific indicators. The angled lines are intended to suggest this schematically; otherwise the connections between the character lines would be horizontal, indicating that character as a structuring element presents the reader with something like a series of switches to throw in order to activate successive steps in an overall reading system. It seems clear that a reader both runs ahead of any such isolable steps in order to predict and anticipate and also rearranges what is already known on the basis of the most recent developments. Moreover the very proximity of two or more characters in a narrative gives rise to certain conventional possibilities and suppositions regarding their relationships. If these are subsequently confirmed (and even perhaps if they are not)



then the 'intuitive' sense of connections may itself be considered to have been an important structural feature of the text. This happens with, for example, Adam and Paula whose closeness is not fully presented until the time of their (off-screen) wedding but is almost certainly taken for granted prior to that (30).

Three stages are apparent from this schematic interbedding of characters: the early interlacing of strands around Bill Martin's initial (and initiating) run, the complex interconnections which draw together the younger people on the edges of the political scheming and, more apparent here than in the summary of character incidence, the broad movements towards revelation and exposure which begin to operate towards the end. Such clear demarcation invites the application of Lévi-Strauss' formula. If Monckton is the most obvious occupant of the disruptive actantial role which is finally going to be inverted, both in compliance with the thinly veiled historical referent and in consequence of the narrative's own inexorable logic, the middle stage would appear to contain the mediating actantial role.



So we are able to pose several key questions. How is the mediating operation carried out; how does the network of relationships identified as a central area of the text function as the 'pinhole' through which a satisfying inversion is achieved? What is the nature of the gain over and above the inversion (assuming that there is a gain and given that a full inversion is achieved on the basis of the audience's knowledge of the inevitable outcome)? And how is the mediator-actant split or rotated among the various characters who cluster around this phase? Section 113-126 offers sufficient material to begin to answer these questions. It marks a crucial period in the development of Bill Martin's narrative run as it includes his

last appearances before the confrontation between Monckton and the protestors, and the simultaneous cluster of scenes involving the personal relationships of some of the key subsidiary characters. Scene 113 itself brings the relationship of Martin and Sally Whalen to a climax and so merits detailed consideration. It opens with an establishing shot of the street outside Sally's home and Martin's arrival at her door.

Analysis of Scene 113 with kinesic staffs.

Note on kinesic notational system

This system (see over) is not intended to be complete. The symbols are borrowed, and often simplified, from the schemes provided by Birdwhistell (1971) and Rosenfeld (1982). A few elements of Labanotation are also adapted and integrated. The basic segmentation keeps differentiation to a minimum and is intended to represent only the features most important in making a flow of movement distinctive. The present exercise should be understood as an experiment only and as open to refinement and development. Apologies are undoubtedly due to Ray Birdwhistell for the gross plagiarism and violence done to his subtle and elaborate schemes but the present purposes do not justify the use of such a particularly specialised apparatus.

Arrows are added to the symbols to emphasise inclination of the head, direction of movement, looks, etc. where necessary.

FS -figure shot (full figure). MS -medium shot (waist).  
MCU -medium close-up (chest). CU -close-up (head).

In the 'time' column the first in each pair of figures indicates the length of that shot while the second indicates the total time elapsed from the beginning of the scene.

Perspective position: N - neutral. WM - William Martin.  
SW - Sally Whalen.

**Face**

- stress
- soft
- H full nod
- h half nod
- # head sweep
- h half sweep
- blank faced
- ^^ brows raised
- ∩ medial brow contraction
- wide eyed
- ××× full squint
- ⊙⊙ side look
- ⊙⊙ focus on auditor
- ⊗⊗ stare
- ⊕⊕ slitted eyes
- ⊙⊙ eyes upward
- ⊗⊗ glare
- ×× eyes closed
- wink
- ∩ set jaw
- ∪ smile
- ∩ 'droopy' mouth
- ∩ clenched teeth
- ∩ toothy smile
- ∩ slow lick—lips
- ∩ quick " "
- ⊙ open mouth
- ∩ pursed lips
- ∩ lip biting
- ∩ retreating lips
- ∩ temples
- ∩ tightened
- ∩ swallowing
- ∩ flaring nostrils
- ∩ nose wrinkle

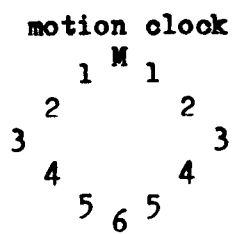
**Trunk & Shoulders**

- I spine upright
- I stiffly upright
- I spinal curvature (variations)
- I leaning back
- I leaning forward
- I shoulders straight
- " hunched
- " shrug
- " drooped (L or R variation)
- L seated

**Hand**

- (R),(L) right hd., left hd.
- 1,2,3,4,5 - thumb and fingers in sequence.
- (L) 14, (R) 14 - capped fist.
- (L) 5, (R) 5 - hand extended.
- (L) 5, (R) 5 - full hand grasp.
- stationary object } touched,
- ⊕ movable object } grasped, etc.

**Shoulder and/or arm**



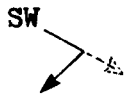
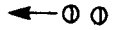

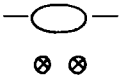

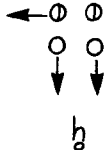




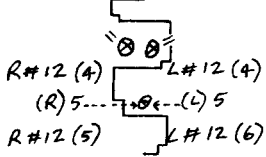

**Lower body**

- + hip
- # knee
- ≡ ankle
- ≡ foot

#0 chest and shoulder      #1 upper arm      #2 elbow to wrist  
 #3 wrist/hand  
 (eg. R#0123 - activity of right shoulder-arm-hand;  
 L#23 - activity of left lower arm-hand.)  
 The plane of the first arm-section given is used to assess the position of the others according to the motion clock.  
 (eg. R#12(M) - right lower arm drawn back almost parallel with upper.  
 L#12(3) - left lower arm at right angle to upper.)

scene/shot	time	scale	significant character look angle	character movement	character - William Martin	dialogue	character - Sally Whalen	camera mov.	perspective position	description
113.2	3.62 3.62 secs.	FS	WM ↘ watching SW	↖ SW towards WM			R#12 (3) (R)5 ⊕    L#12 (3) (L)5 ⊕ 	↑ dolly in behind SW	N/ SW	Interior. SW's house. Night. SW enters with two brandy glasses and sets one on the mantelpiece beside which WM is standing.
	10.88					WM: Were you sleeping with Jack Atherton? SW: What? WM: Were you?	R#0123 (2) ⊕    L#12 (3) ⊕ R#12 (3) (R)5 ⊕    (L)5 ⊕ 			
113.3	14.50	MCU	↖ SW			SW: Why, does Monckton know about that too? WM (off): Were you? SW: No.	○○		N	Sally looking at Bill Martin.
113.4	19.59	MCU	WM ↘			WM: Then why was it so damn important to help him?			N	Bill Martin looking at Sally.
	2.22									

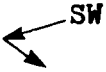
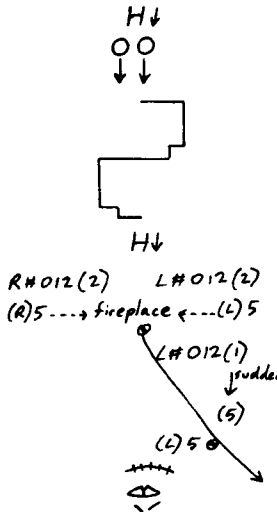

113.5	21.81	MCU	SW 			SW: It was important to Jack - it was important to all of us. You above all people know that Bennett Lowman was nothing but a very rich gangster.			N/ WM	
	8.42									
113.6	30.23	MCU	WM 			WM: That's not what we're talking [about] SW: [Well then what are we talking about?			N/ SW	
	3.36									
113.7	33.59	MS	SW 			SW: I do not sleep with Jack Atherton. I sleep with you			N/ WM	Over-the-shoulder shot towards SW.
	5.98									
113.8	39.57	MS	WM 		R#12 (M) (R)23 @-->:0:	(off) when you're in town.			N	WM draws on his cigarette (0)
	2.31									
113.9	41.88	FS	WM 	SW 	into f'ground	R#12(3) 	Besides, you don't have any right to ask me about that.  WM: I don't?  SW: No.		N	Sally turns away and moves into f'ground by chair-back (□) along which she runs her hand.
	9.01									

113.10	50.89	CU	SW 			SW: What do you do when you're out of town Bill? What did you do when you went to Esker Anderson's funeral? Linda was there wasn't she?			N	Sally glances at Bill Martin accusingly.
	8.34									
113.11	59.23	MCU	WM 			(off) She was, wasn't she? WM: Yes.			N	Bill Martin looks coldly at Sally.
	3.28									
113.12	1m. 2.51	CU	SW 			SW: And you changed your plan. You didn't come home. I waited. I called you ...			N	As 10
	7.48									
113.13	1m. 9.99	MCU	WM 			WM: That's got nothing to do with [this] SW: [It's] got something to do with us.			N	As 11
	3.43									
113.14	1m. 13.42	MS	SW 	SW Towards WM 		I pretended that everything was just the same, that nothing had changed, but you changed, you changed a lot ...			N/ WM	As 7
	7.73									

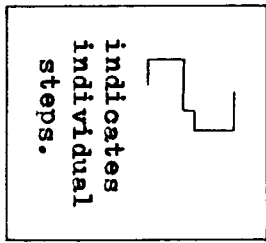
113.15	1m. 21.15	MCU	WM ↘		<p>h ⊗ ⊗</p>	<p>(SW:off) after that trip. WM: I haven't changed. SW: (off) You slept with her didn't you?</p>			N	As 13	
	3.20										
113.16	1m. 24.35	CU	SW ↘			<p>ϕ ϕ h</p>	<p>You slept with your wife. At the funeral? Oh boy, I've heard of dancing on someone's grave but that's ridiculous.</p>			N	Sally looking at Bill Martin.
	10.35										
113.17	1m. 34.70	CU	WM ↘		<p>—○— ⊗ ⊗</p>	<p>(off) Were you talking about the divorce or was this a reconciliation? WM: Has this been on your mind all along?</p>				N	Bill Martin looking at Sally.
	6.39										
113.18	1m. 41.09	CU	SW ↘			<p>(off) If it has why didn't you say something before? SW: Because I didn't want to</p>	<p>++++</p>			N	As 16
	4.61										



113.19	1m. 45.70	MLS	WM ↘		R#12 (3)→(4) ←	<p>WM: Well why didn't you [want to?]</p> <p>SW: [Because]</p> <p>WM: Why [didn't you...]</p> <p>SW: [Because I]</p> <p>WM: [Why?]</p> <p>SW: didn't want anything to oh...</p> <p>Look I'm sorry for Jack Atherton, I'm sorry for Linda, I'm sorry for everybody.</p>	<p>H↓</p> <p>R#12(4) L#12(4)</p> <p>(R)5---→(L)5</p>		N	Bill Martin looks at Sally in rt. f'ground with her back to camera. They shout at each other.
	15.90				-○-		<p>H↑</p> <p>L#23(4)→(5)</p> <p>←</p> <p>4 times</p> <p>(4)5 → 14</p> <p>←</p> <p>4 times</p>			
113.20	2m. 1.60	CU	← SW			Bill, maybe you better go home.	<p>H↓</p> <p>○ ○</p> <p>↓ ↑</p>		N	As 18
	9.85									
113.21	2m. 11.45	CU	WM ↘		⊗ ⊗ ←	(off) Maybe we'd better give it a rest for a while, huh? A couple of days.			N	As 17
	6.20									
113.22	2m. 17.65	MLS	← WM		R#23 (5) (R)5 ←			<p>↖ ↗</p> <p>pan with WM.</p>	N	Martin throws cigarette (o) in grate and walks out.
	5.80									

113.23	2m. 23.45	MS							 pan with SW.	N	<p>Sally leans on fireplace and then angrily smashes a glass (☉).</p>
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11.61  
2 min.  
35.06  
sec.



Martin's first question (113.2) establishes the interrogatory emphasis which he brings to this stage in their relationship, an emphasis which recalls his professional role and the preoccupation of so many other characters with finding 'dirt' to use in their dealings with each other. The perspective position remains fairly neutral in relation to the pattern of probe and counter-probe, accusation and counter-accusation as it develops from this point. But at 113.7 and 113.14 it moves closer to Martin's point of view in order to receive Sally's denial and the moment at which she begins to voice her true feelings about their relationship. The framing is conventionally unobtrusive and concentrated on the protagonists in the predictable shot/reverse shot pattern, but the second instance of a perspective position closer to Martin's point of view emphasizes an aspect of the scene which belies the 'balanced' quality of the framing and positioning. In 113.14 what is being contrasted with Martin's straight stare is the expressive variety of Sally's gestures. This contrast runs throughout the scene and organizes it in a distinctive way over and above the basically neutral presentation through camera placement. Where Martin repeats a number

of simple gestures, Sally builds a dense texture of gesturality around what she says, culminating in the angry smashing of the brandy glass which she has held throughout the scene. This contrast can be rendered more apparent by isolating the kinesic staffs in 115, 118, 119 and 126.

TIME  
min/secs

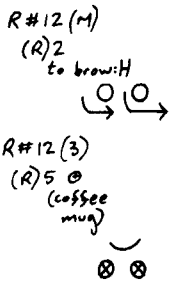
ANCHORING DIALOGUE

Scene 115  
1/35.85

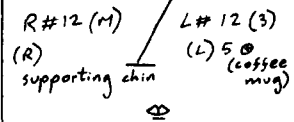
William Martin

Together in kitchen

Linda Martin

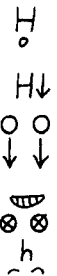


WM: 'Feels familiar sitting here like this again.'



WM describes how he has changed

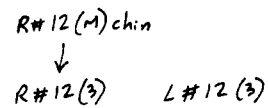
1/56.18



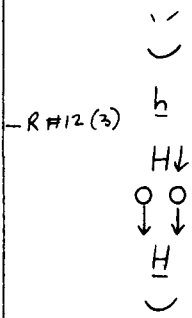
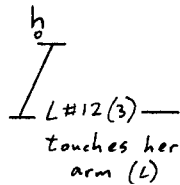
2/37.72



Linda: 'Sally did that?'



2/48.16



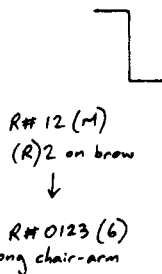
3/16.15

Scene 118  
6.92

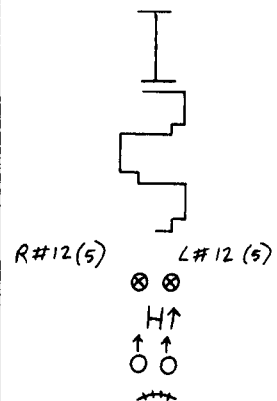
William Martin

Sally's apartment.

Sally Whalen



SW: 'I want to know. How many times have you seen her?'



They argue over WM's continued involvement with Linda.

18.14

1/14.3

R#12(M)  
(R) on brow  
(with cigarette)

^^

H

o

H

o

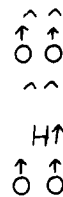


R#12(2)

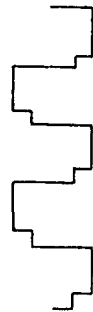
L#12(2)



SW: 'What happens now?'



WM takes SW by the shoulders



SW: 'I don't sleep with married men.'



1/59.45

Scene 119

Eli McGinn



L#12(3)  
looks at watch



Eli listening to music.  
Knock at the door.

Jennie Jameson

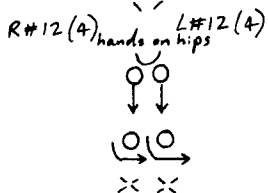
21.92

L#12(4)  
takes Jennie by elbow.

Jennie comes in



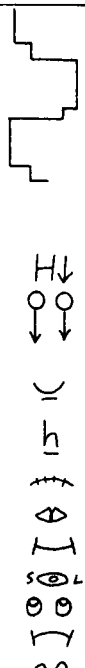
39.56



Eli: 'He stood you up?'  
(referring to Roger Castle)

Jennie holds back tears.

J: 'I couldn't stay alone.'



1/04.54

R#12(2) L#12(2)

They embrace.

-R#12(3) L#12(3)

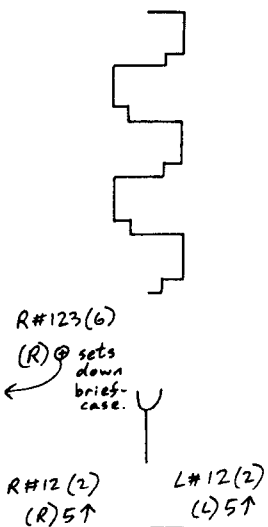
Scene 126

Adam Gardiner

Paula watching Monokton on TV announcing escalation of war  
P: 'Have you seen what that maniac you work for is doing?'

Paula Gardiner

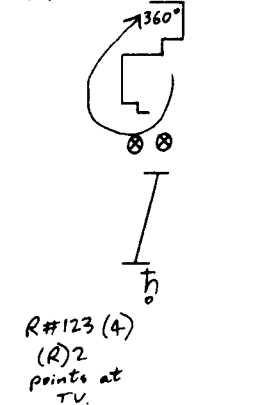
15.40



R#12(M) L#12(3)  
(R) 5 over mouth (L) 5 over knee

↓  
R#12(3)  
↓ ↑ twice  
R#12(6)

20.85

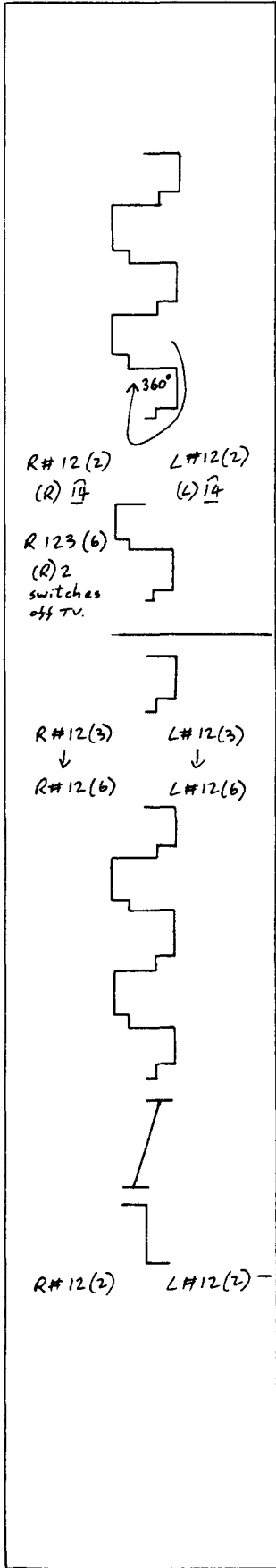


A: 'You don't have the slightest idea what you're talking about.'

R#12(M) (R) 5 on chest

R#12(5) L#12(5)  
(R) 5 ↓ hits seat (L) 5 ↓





Paula runs into bedroom.

Monckton on TV:  
'We will not back down.'

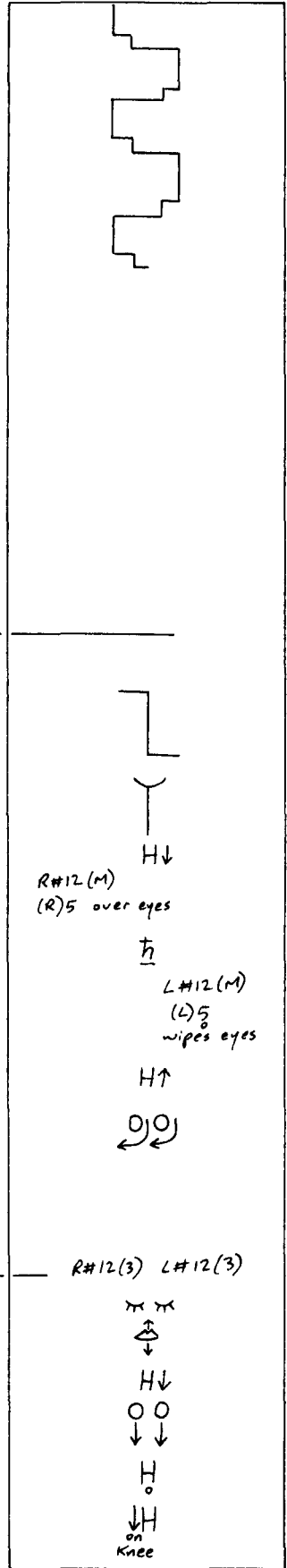
Cut to bedroom.

Adam apologises.

Paula says her TV show has been cancelled.

They embrace

P: 'Oh God, I hate it here.'



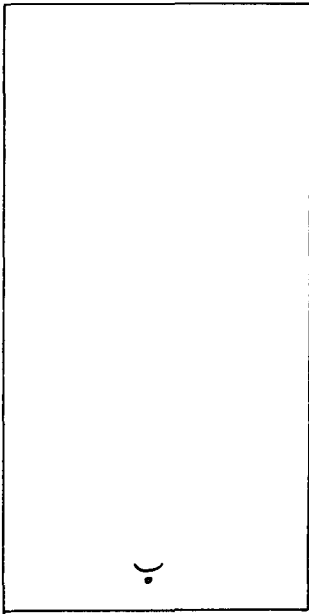
54.58

1/32.44



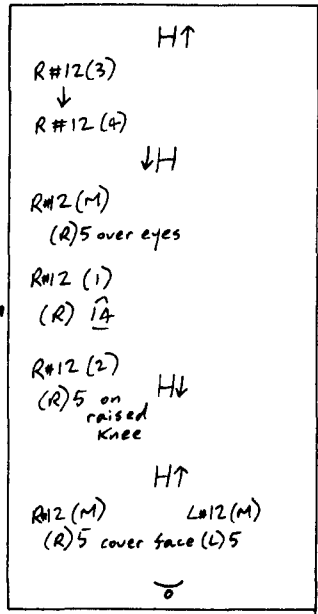
1/53.52

2/27.18



Paula: 'I hate  
it here. It's  
just so vicious.'

Adam: 'This  
weekend we'll go  
visit your  
parents.'



What makes itself felt quite insistently throughout these scenes is the confrontation between the man's repetitive ritualism of bodily expression and the woman's richly varied and subtle gesturality. There is perceptible here an internal dialogism, the implications of which go much further than those of the surface speech.

Bill Martin's probing look, expressionless face and rigid body, Eli McGinn's restrained embrace and general air of trustworthy stolidness, Adam's repetitive reach towards his recoiling wife: these three share a self-control and a tendency to subordinate interpersonal relations to their public roles. This finds expression in their strongly controlled signs of emotion and a certain physical tension which translates into an authoritative formality. Martin, throughout, is the company man, constantly preoccupied with his public role which brings a certain ambiguity to his personal involvements: is he always using people as pieces in some larger game? Eli is Jennie's boss at the SEC offices and Roger Castle is an obstruction to him there as well as in winning Jennie's affection, so Eli's paternalism and respectworthiness are difficult to disentangle from the public pattern of relations and

expectations against which he defines himself. Adam's loyalty to Monckton crystallises this problem of public/private self-definition and while at 126 he is still acting out one side of the 'dialogue', Paula will eventually break through to him at 184 and precipitate the conclusion of the final episode (which suggests obliquely that Adam becomes the so-called 'deep throat' who gives information to an investigative journalist: although the term is not used in the series, the audience's likely familiarity with it makes worth noting the connotation of the body's defences penetrated).

The term 'ritualism' is being borrowed here from Mary Douglas' usage to distinguish uniformity, formality, control and predictability in the social imagery carried by the body.<sup>74</sup> It entails a number of secondary features. A marked degree of articulateness accompanies overt ritualism and this distinguishes all of these men, involved as they are in public roles which demand a smoothness of verbal display, a smoothness of which the women are capable but reject when they need to say what they feel (e.g. Sally at 113.19, and Paula at 126). A tendency to offer a strong physical 'front' is also characteristic, involving the men literally appearing frontways

while the women tend often to adopt more varied postures and stances. Additionally ritualism tends to operate in larger, more public spaces, the large offices at the White House, the CIA and the SEC, while in 113-126 the women move in more confined spaces; a spatial reinforcement of the dialogism which they initiate.

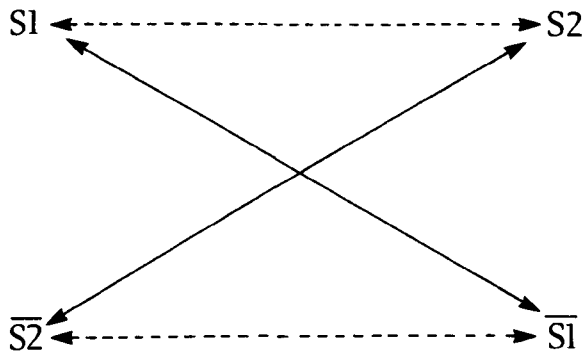
The most precise and well-defined disjunctions and conflicts are these: Martin and Sally become angrily opposed, Jennie finally sees Roger for the callous schemer that he is; and Paula wears down Adam's self-protective facade by her insistent questioning of the morality of Monckton's administration. Linda Martin is part of the same dialogism but passively so; she does not engage in open confrontation. (At 15, for example, she turns away from Martin and tells him to take Sally Whalen if he wants her.) It is necessary to articulate the term ritualism with the overall pattern established by these relationships.

The work of Greimas and Rastier on the interplay of semiotic constraints has an immediate heuristic appeal insofar as it insists on articulating any term into the contraries and contradictories which it presupposes.<sup>75</sup>

Taken together, as in the square of opposition found in medieval texts, the resulting relations delimit a meaning system within which questions of considerable subtlety can be addressed to the text from which the initial term has been taken. Not least of these is the nature of the fourth term which results from such an articulation: what might otherwise be taken to be a static concept, S, is not only articulated into non-S and the opposite of S but also into its non-opposite. This last, the negative transformation of the opposite, can be fairly easily specified in the case of simple propositions (as demonstrated by Cohen and Nagel<sup>76</sup>) but a moment's reflection suggests that given more complex terms a quality of enigma will begin to emerge in this position. Thus, for example, the living can be located in relation to both the non-living and the dead but what is the nature of the fourth term, the non-dead, if it is not to be let slide, as common sense tends to let it, back under the first term? The enigmatic quality of such a fourth term tends to outgrow any attempted logical closure, a situation brazenly exploited by Bram Stoker in this instance.

Although Greimas formulates his constitutional model in terms of constraints, the potential for such 'gaps' to open in a narrative is a crucial aspect of his own analyses, even to the extent of isolating an 'aspectual level' of the text which adds such developments and elaborations to the punctual constraints operating at the logical level.<sup>77</sup> So for the present purpose the semiotic square should be understood to have a dynamic potential which is belied by its static appearance in the diagram used by Greimas and Rastier.<sup>78</sup>

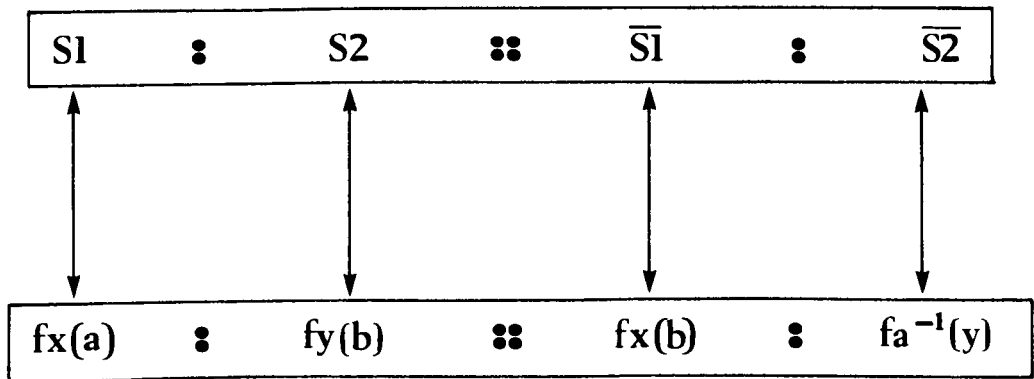
Fig. 12.



The undefined concepts are here related by the two fundamental types of disjunction; that of the opposites or contraries (dotted lines) and

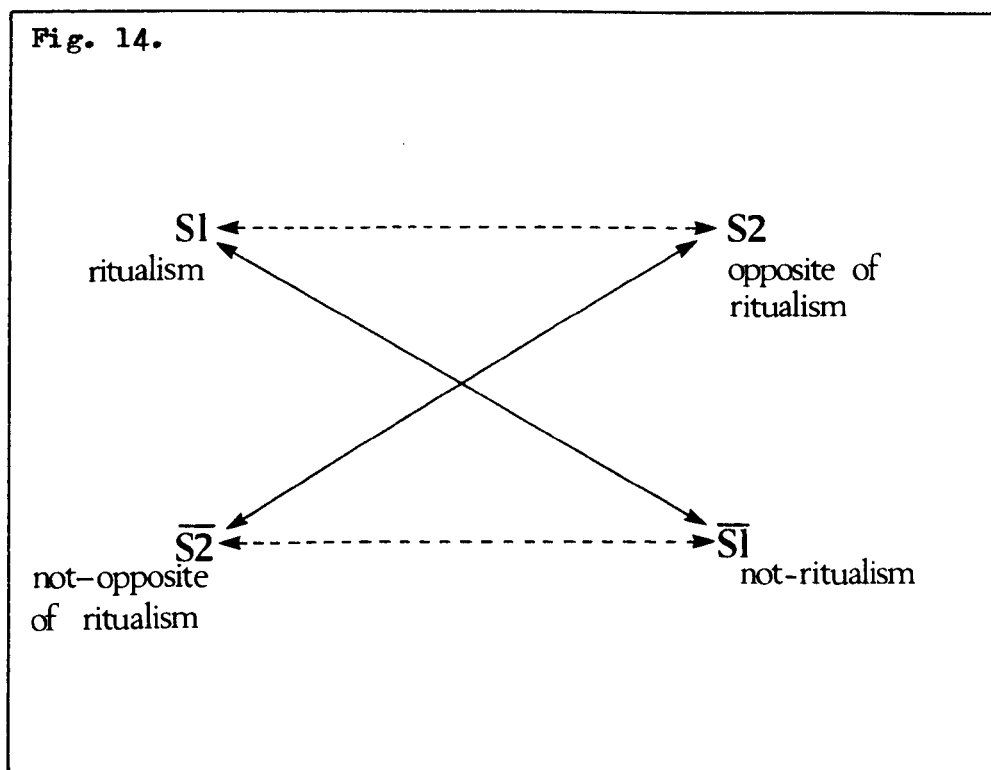
that of the contradictories (solid lines). These two categories of disjunction can be correlated in such a way as to reveal their implicit operation in Lévi- Strauss' formula, and conversely the implicit operation of that formula in Greimas' constitutional model:

Fig. 13.



In fact Greimas acknowledges this in passing when he makes the general point that 'what is first of all the structure permitting an account of the mode of existence of the meaning, finds its application, as a constitutional model of the invested contents, in very varied spheres: indeed, it is the model of myth propounded by Claude Lévi-Strauss...'<sup>79</sup>.

In the case of Washington: Behind Closed Doors, the following investment of the constitutional model begins to suggest itself:



The correlation of the semiotic square with Lévi-Strauss' formula suggests that Monckton is implicated in S1 and indeed (in Jason Robards' severe performance) he is the centre from which ritualism as a kind of absolute concept of social imagery issues to organise the production of individual images. It is Adam's implication in this to which Paula increasingly objects. (It is the loss of innocence of Adam Gardiner; the expulsion from natural feeling, the loss of an Edenic consonance.) And it is also the ultimate source of an almost classic paranoia with its internally consistent delusional system in which it is right and necessary to take any steps to maintain total



control. Thus Roger Castle (at 66) tells the security chiefs; 'This government will henceforth operate under a doctrine of surreptitious entry. That means of course burglary of private homes or wherever else is necessary.'

Frank Flaherty, who orchestrates this paranoia, is virtually nothing other than the signifier par excellence of ritualism. Without a visible personal-life and characterised by perhaps the most repetitive and mechanical repertoire of gestures in the text, he attaches himself firmly to Monckton (see the table of character incidence). He becomes, in effect, the copula which binds Monckton to everything else and which confronts anyone who tries to get to Monckton. This makes possible a note of ambiguity about the latter. Bob Bailey, who worked for Monckton 'in the old days', blames Flaherty for the hardening style of the administration, suggesting briefly (e.g. at 40.1) that there may have been another side to the President, a side which he hopes will be recovered. But Flaherty calls Bailey 'soft' and dismisses him. The hope for some kind of acceptable reorientation of the dominant ritualism is, however, picked up again and applied to William Martin as the enigmatic fourth term.

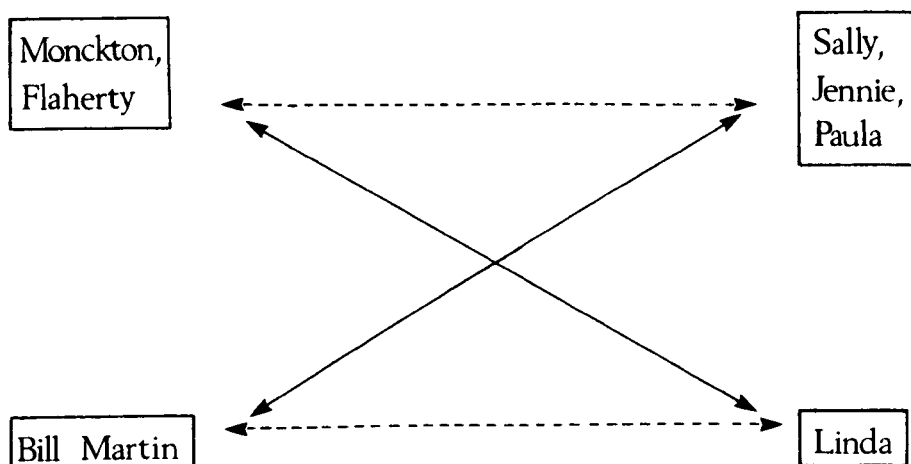


Fig. 15.

The women here function as the mediating 'voice' in a dialogized structure which finally prevents ritualism from being absolutely authoritative. This becomes particularly clear during a conversation between Martin and his wife Linda at 115.

- M: Seems as long as I can remember...I've kept everything to myself, within myself. That was the name of the game. I played the game by the rules, so I locked a lot of things inside. I locked a lot of me inside too. I never saw that before.
- L: And you can see it now?
- M: More than I ever did before.
- L: Sally did that?
- M: She was there when it happened.

Precisely what the nature of this positive value is (over and above Martin's suggestion that it is there) we are left to speculate about on the

evidence of two narrative developments, one public and one private. The private one is that, unlike the novel on which it is based, the miniseries closes with Martin and his wife back together again on a beach in Jamaica. (In the novel it is Sally who goes there with him.) So Bob Bailey's nostalgia for 'old' values is here remodeled in familial terms. The other development, if we can call it that, relates to the changing complexion of the Vietnam War. At 10, in a scene strangely disconnected from everything else at that point, Martin watches CIA film of a ravaged 'enemy' village as an agent relates coldly how the operation was carried out. Martin gazes at distraught women and children, impassively, distantly, with precisely the same look and gesture (finger to forehead) as he adopts again at 15 when Linda weeps over their then tattered relationship. His eventual return to Linda, claiming a sea-change, subtly connotes also a new attitude towards Vietnam.

This final positioning of Bill Martin offers a gain over and above the simple inversion. (While Adam's change of heart simply contributes to the inversion.) It also results from admitting into a dialogical text structure a competing

definition, consistently established on the kinesic depth planes, of desirable social imagery for the body to carry. However, while this 'voice' is permitted to function as a mediator-actant through a number of characters, it does not prevent the investment of the fourth term of the constitutive model with a character who brings to that position the authoritative 'voice' of established power even as the exercise of that power is being discredited elsewhere.

This structure takes on its full resonance when we recognise the appropriateness here of reading 'woman' as a social class, as suggested by Morgan in his study of the family.<sup>80</sup> That what is resolved is in large measure the tensions of a class dialogue, is clear from the fact that the women in S2 are all embodiments of aspects of the women's movement. Paula is a successful TV producer, Sally has an administrative job in an art gallery, and Jennie, though pushed into a position of subordination and exploitation by Roger Castle, eventually rebels and scores a small victory for her sexual class. Paula and Sally in their occupations and lifestyles clearly do not represent the working class

but nonetheless distinctly if quietly subvert the hegemony of the values of accumulation and virility which permeate the cluster of kinesic semes identified as ritualism (values inherent in the emphasis on financial rewards voiced by Flaherty to Tessler and by Hank to Adam--28,29-- in addition to the obsessive accumulation of 'campaign funds', and in the overarching pursuit of power).

These women constitute a paradigmatic selection. Their 'voice' in the dialogism which we have identified is potentially that of a progressive rationality detectable also in the anti-war protest but, although Paula supports the protestors and produces a TV forum for criticism of the administration, they do not themselves actively and directly participate in the movement. (Jennie does, however, have firsthand experience of the backlash - 136.2.) They are in fact what the student protestors might be expected to have become by 1977 when the miniseries was made; off the streets and into middle-class careers. They do, though, literally embody the capacity aptly summed up by Touraine; 'women have succeeded in maintaining a capacity for affective relations from which men

have been estranged by the structures of power - or have estranged themselves to serve the structures.'<sup>81</sup> It is the body imagery of this estrangement that we have called 'ritualism'. It is, however, a structure of power, if not the actual occupant of the highest position on it, that is preserved by this particular investment and interplay of semiotic constraints.

Through a re-reading of static functions in terms of their performance, this interpretation of the kinesically coded 'voices' which weave themselves into the text but which come from elsewhere, from the institutional society in which the object of analysis is embedded, raises the problems of how the text and its 'elsewhere' are related and how the audience partakes of that relationship. Part III will concentrate on examining the formal nexus of this relationship and ideological/theoretical attempts to appropriate it.

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## CHAPTER 3

### THE AUDIENCE AND THE CODING OF NARRATIVE KNOWLEDGE

#### 3.1 Layering

'Intelligence'--the detective element as the advancing edge of a narrative memory: the concept slips back and forth between Forster's elevating insights and a vitiating appropriation by popular material such as Washington: Behind Closed Doors. Our 'fourth term' in recomposing the latter is nothing other than the locus of a certain kind of intelligence; spying, ritualised probing, directing an agency of intelligence--intelligence organised, institutionalised, made subservient to capital. There is a strong risk of bathos here and it will constantly menace our later considerations of investigative structure. Do we not need vigilantly to separate that higher detective element called 'intelligence' from its debase-

ment in the mere detective story? And yet when all these stories, and the many others which depend on a similar investigative impulse, are drawn together, there emerges something of such proportions, something which has such a hold on the imagination, that we are compelled to ask if it may not be the obverse, the unconscious in a certain sense, of a refined and consciously investigative intelligence.

It might ultimately be asserted, in fact, that scientific inquiry and the detective story are the theoretical and ideological recto and verso of a single conception of the way that sign systems offer us 'truth'. In both instances it is assumed that there is something to be disclosed, uncovered, made visible, and that when it emerges it is not something produced by the very 'uncovering'. It would, however, be both bathetic and rash to embark on such an argument here. We will, though, re-articulate the assertion within the province of reading. Reading, as a domain of constant popular and critical activity, has its own nascent epistemology: what are the derivation, scope and reliability of the knowledge produced by reading? This can be variously assumed to be knowledge of



the world, of experience, of the unconscious or of sign systems themselves. Every instance, without exception, of epistemological argument or speculation in the present study should be understood to refer ultimately to reading and not to aspire directly to the branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge. In other words, it is not a rarefied scientific intelligence and the popular detective element which are our recto and verso but two kinds of reading; broadly the 'scientific' and the 'popular' (with finer distinctions to be made later). To concentrate on detective films (as in Part III) is not, therefore, deliberately to risk bathos (although the risk may still be there) but to have constantly before us a reminder of a certain inherent debasement of explanatory structures which rely on narrative. To what ends can narrative be relied upon? The question informs not only the purport of this study but also its structure.

One way to begin thinking this question is in terms of an archaeological layering as suggested by Peter Brooks in his highly relevant essay on Freud's 'Wolfman'.<sup>1\*</sup> Instead of the layers of an actual case-study we will first posit a general interbedding in which between the

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\* notes and references begin on p.265

reading and the read falls the hermeneutic code: of all the codes proposed by Barthes in his readings of Sarrasine and Valdemar, it is the one that most reverberates with the question of the end towards which it all tends and with the narrative memory which begs solution. 'It is in fact the Wolfman himself, in his memoirs, who tells us what we might have suspected all along', relates Brooks; 'that Freud was a faithful reader of Sherlock Holmes, and fully aware of the analogies between psychoanalytic investigation and detective work'.<sup>2</sup> However much credence is allowed to this and significance drawn from it, the very fact of the assertion derives its sense from the layering-in of the hermeneutic code between the discourse (syuzhet) of the interpreted and the discourse of the interpretation. The code opens up here a space in which the fabula occupies shifting positions and with it the 'truth' which the material is relied upon to offer up.

Consider an opening scene. A beautiful woman is cutting letters from a newspaper and arranging them to form the words 'we want'. She runs a tape of a man's voice and takes a huge pair of scissors to cut it up. She then coldly

murders her husband, whose voice it was, and in a disconcerting shot from floor-level we see her upside down from what would be the man's point of view were he not dead. She moves around, rearranging disturbed furniture, and finally removes the body. Again she is seen from the corpse's skewed point of view. As she destroys the body a slow dissolve to car headlamps superimposes glaring lights on her eyes making her momentarily (if rather too insistently) into something unnatural, even monstrous. It is this that the detective, Columbo (in the television film Ransom for a Dead Man<sup>3</sup>), has to expose behind her facade as a successful lawyer. 'We want...' is the phony ransom note, the red-herring, but behind it there is what the woman wants. Cutting her husband's voice with scissors is part of laying another false trail, but behind is the castrating threat of her transgression. We are not allowed to hear her speak until after her husband's death. In place of the man's voice there is the monstrous unnaturalness of what the woman wants. In place of the man's authority there is the woman's infidelity to the law into which she has insinuated herself. Columbo's job is to expose the woman. This is the ultimate aim of his investigation and his efforts are directed

so unequivocally towards this that there would seem to be no other possibility, no other story.

The problem has to be in the woman. She has to be the source of the disturbance. It is just a matter of exposing her. On his first visit to the house, Columbo looks respectfully at a photograph of the missing husband and father, and his fumbling manner draws from the woman an almost maternal response: giving him laboriously detailed instructions on how to find the lavatory she talks as one would to a child. Enlisting the support of the teenage daughter (plain, bespectacled, a boyish figure; she watches Double Idemnity on TV and looks up from Barbara Stanwyck's femme fatale to see her equally alluring step-mother), Columbo works to right the disturbance of what is natural, which is to say he symbolically returns the absent father by drawing down the power of the law on the transgressive woman. The father may be missing but his look is still there, as it is so obstinately before the body is disposed of. Columbo recovers the skewed look which has been cut off and literally left lying at the woman's feet. It returns as the look of the law, the look which recognises the woman's transgression

as if it were written on her beautiful body, the look which puts her in her place. Time and again, as federal agents question and organise, Columbo stands in the background and looks. Eventually it is the look before which the woman breaks down. As Columbo questions her, jabbing his finger accusingly towards her, she remembers her husband's last moments and in flashback a close-up of his staring eyes confronted by an almost subliminal shot of her face in lurid blue-tinted negative being engulfed by a blood-red patch which spurts from her gun. The brazen unnaturalness of the 'negative', of the gun which ejaculates blood: against this Columbo defends the look which recognises a monstrous opposition in what the woman wants.

As soon as some such pattern or (literal) disorder is proposed--breaching the peace of a simple story to read the look as a masculine structure and the woman as the evocation of castration anxiety--a certain layering can be postulated, in which such an account finds its place: (1) the disorder, the disturbance of what is 'just a story' by certain enigmatic symptoms of something other, supposedly concealed; (2) the chain of events 'reported' by the film and under-

stood to have its own order and timescale;  
(3) the order of appearance of (2) in reading;  
(4) the order of a second-generation report such  
as the one given above. If we suggest the  
implicit presence of the following strata in the  
kind of reading exemplified above, it is no  
accident that it is the structure identified by  
Brooks as operative in Freud's case history of  
'Wolfman':<sup>4</sup>

4/  
1/  
3/  
2

Fig. 16.

A chain of events or fabula (2) emerges through  
the structure of a film when read. (As the  
fabula does not actually take place anywhere in  
all of this it is not in the film so much as,  
following the argument of Chapter 2,\* in the  
reading.)

This layering is strictly, however, only  
an a posteriori summary and a synchronic one at  
that. The actual process of the accumulation of  
layers is in reverse order, beginning with an  
initial 'normal' reading of the film, from the

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\* see particularly pp.134-37

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fabula to the elements of its disturbance, its enigma, and then shifting into the rather different activity of recomposing the film in the kind of written account offered above (as an alternative to the disclosure/resolution offered by the film itself). So we have something like this:



Fig. 17.

Here the difference introduced by the critical recomposition of the object is represented by the step. But this is still not sufficient to clarify the nature of the layering. There are other differences at work within the object (2/3/1). While (2) and (3) are related as the history of supposed past events and their emergence in the 'normal' reading of the film (via the discourse or expression plane), (1) identifies the emphasis (in the discourse of the film and, therefore, in its reading) of certain elements at the expense of others. In this way a pattern is superimposed on events, drawing

together the elements of a certain disturbance which it is the detective's task to uncover and put right. So (1) is already a step in the direction of a final interpretation which makes the 'pattern' fully explicit. Moreover the controlled access to events through the pathways provided for a reading within the spatial text (narrative, actantial, inferential structures and so on; as considered in Chapter 2), is itself a step in the direction of the pattern of emphasis established by (1). So (3) is never simply the direct reflection in reading of an original chain of events, (2). What emerges is this kind of structure for the accumulation of layers:

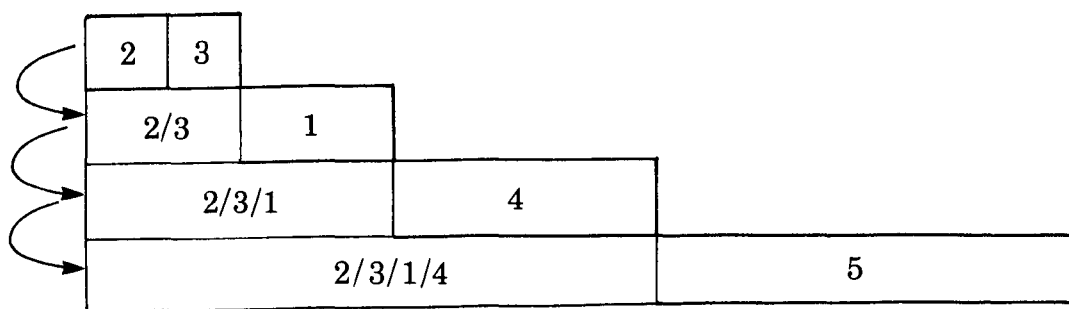


Fig. 18.

In this instance (5) is the addition of another



layer in which the object (2/3/1/4) is recomposed: it is, in short, these pages and this diagram. And just as the final level here is informed by the preceding levels it seems likely that each of the latter is informed by an anticipation of future levels: this would be the supposition that some final truth will eventually be grasped. This supposition seems often to be assumed as somehow dormant in the response of the 'average' reader while educational practices aim to awaken and, eventually, to satisfy it.

In effecting a layering such as this, work in and on the text shifts the fabula, the 'true story', from level to level. For the 'average' reader the true story is simply 'what happened', the recountable events which can be called to mind in response to the question 'what was it about?' Embarrassed with this response, perhaps thanks to the influence of educational practices, another reader will locate the true story at the level of the thematic patterning where questions of guilt and criminality come to the fore. Or again, with a more dense accumulation of levels, the true story becomes that of the masculine look and castration anxiety. There is no reason to

suppose that such shifts could not continue through some considerable development without exhausting the text.

What is constant throughout is the structuring effect of the hermeneutic code which intervenes between each reading and its object. It is the code which sends the reader in search of the truth, the finally unveiled given, without itself providing any information about what this truth might be. The hermeneutic code structures the inquiry, the investigation, the detective element, and provides, therefore, for an energetic participation in such activity irrespective of whether there is finally anything to detect. Clearly it can be a constraining mould on what Forster calls 'intelligence'.

One result of this kind of layering is a certain intolerance of activity on preceding levels. Analogous is Freud's insistence that anyone who 'breaks off the analysis in some higher stratum, has waived his right of forming a judgment on the matter'.<sup>5</sup> A reader uneducated in the more elaborate investments of the hermeneutic code will 'break off' a reading at perhaps the highest stratum, that of common sense with its unanalysed impressions of self and of

comprehension. The implication is that an ultimate reading is conceivable; one which does not 'break off' but which reaches the final truth which is precisely the uncovering of something that was hidden in the object in the first place. (What we have identified as centripetal structuralism is undoubtedly a participant in this.) Barthes makes entirely clear the apposite components of the hermeneutic code:

The proposition of truth is a 'well-made' sentence; it contains a subject (theme of the enigma), a statement of the question (formulation of the enigma), its question mark (proposal of the enigma), various subordinate and interpolated clauses and catalyses (delays in the answer), all of which precede the ultimate predicate (disclosure).<sup>6</sup>

This syntax of truth, its concord and government, has far-reaching implications for every level of reading and hereinafter its effects will have to be carefully gauged (particularly as it precisely summarises the supposed structure of a thesis).

It falls to Freud, with his customary sensitivity to the trope, to suggest the difficulties involved in a discourse of disclosure which intends finally to uncover the 'primal scene' of a truth. He does so in the bracketed additions to Chapters V and VIII of 'From the

History of an Infantile Neurosis'. Here it is suggested that the primal scene may not be a (veiled) given but rather the transference backwards of a 'memory-picture',<sup>7</sup> the coalescence of some more recently acquired pattern with the original object. That 'the scene was innocent'<sup>8</sup> entails re-thinking the status of what interpretation discloses and, therefore, of the structuring effects of the hermeneutic code as it intervenes between interpretation and interpreted.

### 3.2 The spectator and other factors

What has been outlined in the preceding section is an interchange between the referential and metalingual functions in relation to interpretation: the 'primal scene' referred to may be an effect of the coding of the discourse which does the referring (in Freud's case, of the patient's verbalised memory). Recognising this possibility depends on admitting that any message is situated in a network of other factors. Jean-Luc Godard's 'principles of reflection' provide a framework within which, as one of these factors, the position of the addressee (of the analyst in the psychoanalytical model, here split into the trained critic and the untrained spectator) may be itself put into question. (And Godard pinpoints a crucial ambiguity when he states, 'Sonimage is a manufacturer of light in the sense of throwing light on a situation to see it clearly or, on the contrary, to draw the veil'.)<sup>9</sup>

#### Principles of reflection

A in a cinema  
people are many (together)  
to be alone in front of the screen

B in an apartment linked to a TV aerial  
 people are alone to be many (together)  
 in front of a screen

that's to say:

set A: many to be (become) alone (cinema)  
 set B: alone to be (become) many (TV)

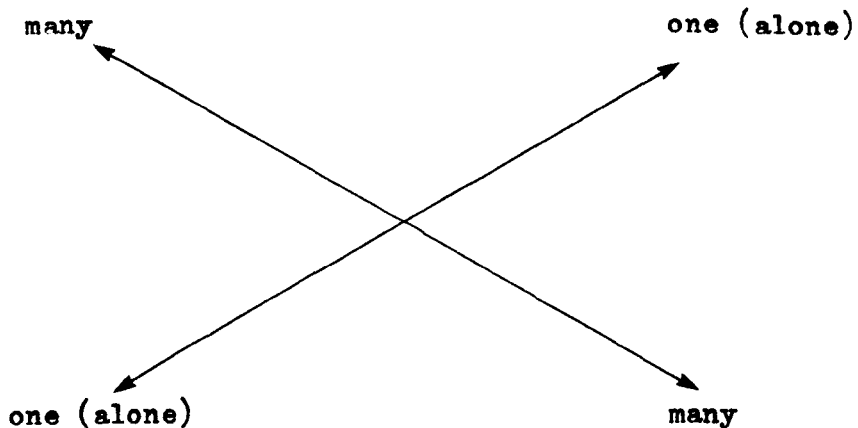
that's to say:

A = many  $\longrightarrow$  one (alone)  
 B = one (alone)  $\longrightarrow$  many

that's to say:

journey out  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{from cinema} \\ \text{to TV} \end{array} \right\}$  or  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{from} \\ \text{A} \\ \text{to} \\ \text{B} \end{array} \right\}$  or  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{from many} \\ \text{to one (alone)} \end{array} \right\}$   
 return  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{from TV} \\ \text{to cinema} \end{array} \right\}$  or  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{from} \\ \text{B} \\ \text{to} \\ \text{A} \end{array} \right\}$  or  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{from one (alone)} \\ \text{to many} \end{array} \right\}$

thus the following schema:



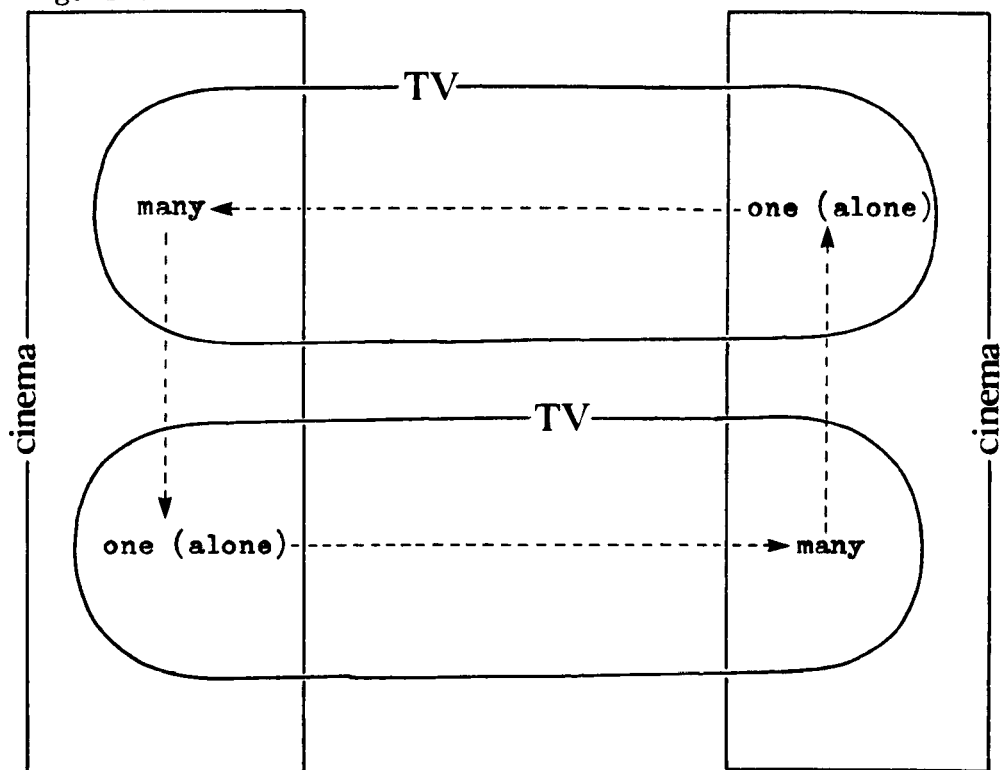
[Godard situates SONIMAGE at the intersection.]

Fig. 19.

Several points need to be made about the place of the dominant fiction film in such a schema. The difference between set A and set B is not a difference between the effects of two screens in two actual and differing spaces: any

screen necessarily separates by drawing attention to itself and it is only after this separation that the two sets diverge. Set A emphasises this separation (usually, but perhaps 'events' like Star Wars operate differently), while set B passes through it to offer membership of a larger public arrayed in front of other screens. But in front of each screen an initial and basic relationship of separation must inevitably tend to hold. It is when TV directly addresses itself to a national audience (occasionally international, as with the first moon-landing), chiefly through news and current affairs programming but also in aspects of light entertainment, that the movement from one to many is felt. What, though, is the effect in television of the film which is basically cinematic (whether in actual fact an original cinema film, a film made for TV or an episode in a film series)? There is perhaps the beginning of a circuit:

Fig. 20.



The cinematic movement from many to one and the televisual movement from one to many become inextricably stitched together through the film. The occasional cinema 'event' (with associated merchandising) repositions set A, the experience of actually sitting in front of the cinema screen, within a kind of framing set B (which may often include television coverage of the film, its director and stars). The 'TV movie', often a very anonymous piece of work and seldom properly reviewed or even referred to outside television's own programming magazines, effects the opposite movement--temporarily establishing the cinematic set A as a kind of



private moment within the 'many'. (The tendency to programme such material outside peak-viewing hours emphasises the move away from the 'feeling' of a large national audience.) Moreover, the intervention of video has been precisely a reinforcement of such a circuit, reclaiming television from the national audience of set B and emphasizing its cinematic possibilities (original cinema films constituting the bulk of pre-recorded tapes) but at the same time making the peculiarly cinematic qualities of set A more susceptible to the televisual movement.

It is ultimately in this context that the 'American screen' is here intended to mean a cinematic area of popular culture within which the rigid distinction of cinema and TV is a hindrance to understanding. It is, of course, a screen which does not have to be only in the United States. Indeed it is so exportable that the screens of many other countries not only show a great deal of American material but also come to resemble it in their own material.

Further specification of factors relevant to the placing of a text in relation to the 'principles of reflection' and to the effects of codes, is possible on the basis of Jakobson's

well-known model. It has proved to be generalizable and a useful starting point for such work: as Robert Scholes points out, 'not because six features are all that can be discerned in human communication, but because six are about all we can handle analytically, because they are so clearly differentiated, and because in Jakobson's hands they are immediately used to make important and interesting distinctions among major modes of discourse'.<sup>10</sup>

Jakobson schematizes the factors and functions involved in the communication act in this way:<sup>11</sup>

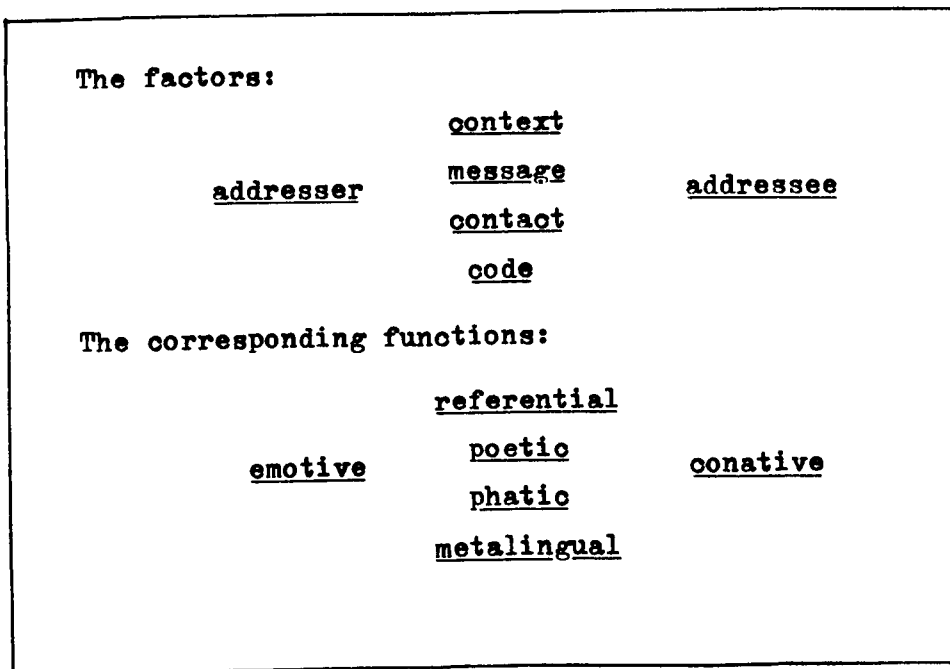


Fig. 21.

In his seminal 'Linguistics and Poetics' Jakobson settles into a discussion of the poetic function. It is rather the (neglected) phatic function which will particularly engage our attention here. By positing between the addresser and the addressee a factor analogous with that which permits the passage of an electric current, Jakobson has the message pass through a 'channel' as conventionally conceived, and through what he describes as a 'psychological connection'. In this way the possibility arises of describing a more dynamic relationship of addresser and addressee than the notion of a channel usually allows of. The contact has the function of 'enabling both of them to enter and stay in communication'.<sup>12</sup>

Jakobson goes on to suggest that the structure of a message will tend to be orientated towards one or other of the functions determined by the various constitutive factors. So we will proceed eventually to a consideration of 'messages' within the system of a film which effect a structural orientation of a phatic kind.\* As for other orientations: if the attitudes of a speaker, for instance, are being effectively communicated, it is because of an 'emotive' function determined by an orientation of the

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\* see, for example, pp.483-86 for one such orientation.

message towards the addresser. Such an orientation is extremely problematic in film, and this is no less so for an orientation towards the addressee. Film is generally not considered as being, in any easy sense, the 'voice' of an addresser and so as constitutive factors both addresser and addressee tend to be positioned at a distance from the message itself. (A distance within which conventional critical notions of authorship gain a purchase.) What Jakobson terms the 'conative' function or the orientation of the message towards the addressee ('Do this!') is, therefore, rare in any recognisably direct form in film. Both functions, or at least partial orientations towards both factors, may however occur in the case of film in a manner not immediately apparent, drawing both addresser and addressee into the message again in some rather more subtle way than straightforwardly declarative and imperative usages of speech.

Nevertheless the orientation of the messages in classic realist film appears to be largely towards the denoted matter and it is such a function that Jakobson terms 'referential'. In addition to functions related to the addresser,

the addressee and the denoted context, Jakobson describes orientations of the message towards the code (here the cinematic, such as sound/image relationships, and extra-cinematic, such as gestural and hermeneutic) and towards itself directly. Does the referential function in film dominate to such an extent that, like addresser and addressee, messages as coded constructs (rather than as 'transparent') tend to be erased? In fact, things are not so simple.<sup>13</sup>

Of an orientation of the message towards itself, Jakobson states, 'This function, by promoting the palpability of signs, deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects'.<sup>14</sup> Given that the referential function tends to dominate in film of the classic realist kind, any re-orientation of the message, however brief, away from the supposed referent and towards the message itself will also, simultaneously, be a re-orientation towards the addresser, a clouding of transparency. For example, when Travis Bickle in Taxi Driver<sup>15</sup> proceeds down a street in one continuous 'poetic' shot via an elliptical dissolve of his figure from one point in the street to another, an orientation towards an addresser, 'Scorsese', is indirectly effected. What begins

to emerge is the complex interlocking of functions like gears, so that a shift on the level of any one function entails a shift on some or all of the other levels. If the signs become 'palpable' as signs, the emotive function is engaged and the intervention of an addresser is automatically hypothesised. (The seventies' so-called 'movie brats' tend to make their Hitchcockian personal appearances in this way, toying with the palpability of signs just enough to remind us that a director has been there, without seriously threatening the illusion of transparency.) Similarly the addressee may (uncomfortably?) feel him/herself to be directly addressed (an engagement of the conative function) if there occurs that rare look, whether or not accompanied by a verbal address, of a character towards the audience (an actor towards the lens) without the addressee's point of view being identified with that of another character in the narrative space. Of course this can be done to comic effect, as so frequently by Oliver Hardy. (What is funny is often a displacement of what is uncomfortable.) And, as we have seen, such features as the shots from the dead man's point of view in Ransom for a Dead Man have a

'metalinguistic' quality (superimposing a second-order vision) which indirectly effects a particular orientation towards the hermeneutic code. We have here, overall, a kind of gear-ratio, a structure of interdependent functions such that everything in the text that can be drawn under the imperative of a function (with the referential dominant) serves to maintain a particular balance or orientation of the text towards the factors which mark out the space in which it operates. What then might be the implications of the obviously complex interlocking of the various functions for the phatic function and the working of the contact in film? In verbal communication, according to Jakobson, this 'may be displayed by a profuse exchange of ritualized formulas': he goes on to demonstrate that 'there are messages primarily serving to establish, to prolong, or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works..., to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention...'.<sup>16</sup> In terms of the ratio of functions operative under the sovereign discourse of representation in dominant film, what will interest us is not so much the possibility that these initiating, prolonging and terminating aspects of the contact actually work as directly

as does the question 'are you listening?' in verbal communication: rather it is to shifts within the referential function that we will attend in order to identify indirect orientations which draw the addressee into the textual space in such a way that a contact, as an analysable formal construct, is established. This will entail a return both to the 'principles' of the one and the many, and to the question of the investigative structure.



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# EXCURSUS

### EXCURSUS

This excursus needs to be understood as being appended to the preceding and the following Parts simultaneously. As such it might appear as a space in which their points of contact are elaborated but rather it is intended to indicate, to be in fact merely a gesture towards, a certain kind of history for what follows. It therefore momentarily supplants what has gone before in the present study in relation to that position. But at the same time it indicates briefly that what has gone before could have led into any set of texts, any period, rather than (as in Part III) the police film in the seventies. The excursus, in short, is intended to be a reminder of necessary absences, of what is neglected in limiting a study as this one is limited. This is particularly so in a culture where old films are as much a part of the seventies

as films actually made then. More specifically, it mentions some films of which those to be treated in Chapter 8 may be considered, 'from one perspective--that of the question to cinema' which they pose (as Stephen Heath puts it in relation to another connection<sup>1</sup>), as 'direct and ruinous' remakes.\*

'You're a pedlar?'

The question, coming from Verity Wade, the schoolteacher whom he decides there and then to marry, momentarily interrupts the exuberance of Hank Martin (James Cagney) in the opening scene of A Lion Is in the Streets (1953);<sup>2</sup> momentarily only, just long enough for his line of patter to give way to that flash of solemnity which Cagney could deliver so well. 'I'm Hank Martin. Also I peddle', is his studied response and then the moment is past, the exuberance returns. It is, however brief, a telling exchange. Hank Martin is clearly not ashamed of being a pedlar: his point is that the man determines the role rather than vice versa. This perspective is crucial to an understanding of the way films such as A Lion Is in the Streets operate, and to its

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\* notes and references begin on p.266

protagonist's thinly disguised relationship to Huey Long; but also, and more pertinently here, to a persistent tendency of American film in general. The pedlar and politician is that only after he is Hank Martin. And just as Hank Martin is inextricably James Cagney, so the star system takes to a logical conclusion this priority of the man over (or characterism of) the role.

Around this strongly characterised core A Lion Is in the Streets deploys in its own way the Western's boundary between civilization and wilderness. It does so primarily through the contrast between the schoolteacher Verity (Barbara Hale)--neat, homely, educated--and Flamingo (Ann Francis)--wayward, excitable, un-educated. Their names insist on the nature of the contrast: the tame and known set against the wild and unknown.<sup>3</sup> Flamingo tells Verity pointedly 'Hank came along one day and seen me swimming and diving and he said, "with them long legs and that long neck she's like to a wild flamingo".' So Hank negotiates, in a sense, between the two terms of the opposition. This negotiation draws into itself his life in politics.

When Hank confronts Castleberry, the businessman whom he accuses of cheating the poor cotton-growers, he precipitates the confrontation of two armed groups, the farmers and the gang hired by Castleberry and his puppet lawman. This confrontation harks back to the battles of small homesteaders against big cattlemen and business interests in countless Westerns (culminating, three decades after A Lion Is in the Streets, with Heaven's Gate). One fairly typical example is Trail Street (1947),<sup>4</sup> which has as its climax a virtual civil-war fought on the streets of a town called Liberal between an army of farmers and an army of cattlemen.

A modest production which has received little critical attention, Trail Street exhibits some details which have been curiously persistent in later years. The conflict between cattlemen and farmers is finally focussed on the imprisonment in the marshal's jail of a gunman hired to terrorise the farmers. This is essentially the situation subsequently employed in Rio Bravo and El Dorado,<sup>5</sup> with the later John Wayne position being here filled by Randolph Scott who creates for it the same ambience of slightly weary professionalism. In

Trail Street 'Gabby' Hayes plays Billy, the perennially disgruntled old deputy who reappears in the two films directed by Hawks as the characters memorably played by Walter Brennan and Arthur Hunnicutt. The history of this apparently useful situation does not end there; it includes notably (between Trail Street and Rio Bravo) The Proud Ones (1956) in which Robert Ryan (who has a supporting role in Trail Street) plays the marshal, and which introduces the main character's physical disability (used in El Dorado) and the resentful young deputy (used in Rio Bravo). What these films have in common is the reduction of a large social conflict to a situation of individual confrontation made particular by the personal dilemmas (in Trail Street the old routine of winning the girl) and the humour circulating in a small group (humour centred on the old deputy who manages to trivialise everything while recalling the simplicity and individualism of an imaginary pre-social frontier).\*

Clearly then, such a process of reduction or narrowing (taken by Hawks as far as eliminating the extras who conventionally populate the background of Western towns) militates against any

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\* on the social nature of such conflict see pp.687-89

overt political treatment of the social antagonisms, which are kept largely outside this inner circle and unfocussed.

We come, in other words, to a final implication of the statement, 'I'm Hank Martin. Also I peddle'. It is not just a matter of the role being secondary to the man, but of the suppression of the social reality to which that role belongs in favour of a world made comprehensible by the actions of an individual, alone or within the admiring setting of a small group. This is not to say, however, that social reality is simply absent. The question of whether (within the third interpretative horizon) it is still accessible through the form of the material brought into sharp focus within the apparently restrictive dimensions of the inner circle is precisely one of the questions to be addressed in Part III. We will first take another signpost from Trail Street; one other significant detail.

Standing in front of the jail in which they have one of the opposing gunmen imprisoned awaiting the judge's arrival, Bat Masterson (Scott) and his companions seem to be in precisely the situation of the Wayne character and his companions

in Rio Bravo and El Dorado. The farmers whom they have been defending have given up and set out eastwards by wagon train, leaving the professionals to defend the jail and confront alone the superior numbers of the cattlemen. 'When it starts, we'll be ready for them', boasts the marshal, but whereas coming from a Hawksian Wayne this would have implied a professionals-only stoicism, in Trail Street the lawman plans to have the men from the wagon train return to Liberal in order to be 'in on the kill' (as the mayor puts it). In the resulting climactic battle two armies (rather than Cagney's one 'lion' and his adversaries) clash on the streets.

Having expanded the situation in this way, the film is working on material of inherently, and it might seem unavoidably, political implications. These implications are, however, deftly avoided in a manner which returns us to the Verity/Flamingo relationship of A Lion Is in the Streets. The battle is halted (implausibly of course but an order to 'hold your fire, men!' works wonders in Hollywood battles) when Ruby (Ann Jeffreys), the beautiful singer from the Oriental Saloon, runs out into the street. Hers is the 'Flamingo' role, as the wayward



spirit with ambitions which lead her into a world of corruption and faithlessness. The 'Verity' of Trail Street is the frail and proper Susan (Madge Meredith) who is being protected by the hero in the jail when Ruby appears in the middle of the fighting, having just betrayed the arch-villain by destroying the unrecorded land deeds which he had taken from the farmers. This intimate network of individual loyalties and betrayals supplants the larger issues as the villain shoots Ruby down in the middle of the street, thus uniting the opposing forces in universal disgust at such a dastardly deed, for which of course, in the tit for tat which characterises such climactically individuated incidents, the hero kills the villain and the community's wounds are healed. This works on the screen with no troubling sense of an evasion, largely because we see Ruby. She is attractively, bodily there, visible, whereas the social conflicts which she short-circuits are invisible.

Clearly the American screen loves the body. Not that it is always, or even predominantly, kind to the body; indeed proliferating violence on the screen in the seventies has focussed on wounding, mutilating and even making horrible the very body

on which the cinematic spectacle conventionally depends, and often too on the return of the body-made-horrible to exact its revenge and continue the spiral towards some dimly anticipated (in fear and fascination) ultimate explicitness. Yet even the grotesque Texas Chainsaw killer serves ultimately to celebrate the wholeness of the young body (if not of the young mind) which escapes his saw. It is the celebration of the American screen in general that the body will persistently return, whole and attractive, in the midst of such violence. The omnipresent threat of mutilation or dismemberment (by madman, shark or alien) gives an edge to that wholeness.

There is something here about the relationship of the cinematic to the institutions of knowledge and power; the body at the centre of what Foucault has called 'a kind of generalised discursive erethism'.<sup>6</sup> This is a complex area of shifting forces, inadequately dealt with by any simple notion of an authoritarian interrogation aimed at controlling the body. The idea, for instance, that the very act of representation reduces women to objects and, therefore, degrades them, fails to take into account this context and the various places (including those which degrade) available within it for the cinematographic observations of the body.

Writing about the nineteenth century's intense observation of the body, Foucault has identified an underlying attempt to detect 'sexuality'; a detective operation uncovering its object, or so it was thought,

in the depths of the organism, or on the surface of the skin, or among all the signs of behaviour. The power which thus took charge of sexuality set about contacting bodies, caressing them with its eyes, intensifying areas, electrifying surfaces, dramatising troubled moments.<sup>7</sup>

This operation, drawing the invisible into the open, into the fields of view of medical, psychiatric, pedagogical and legal observation, clearly has its descendant in cinematographic observation, focussing exactly on the surface of the skin and constructing its stories, its logic, precisely among all the signs of behaviour, signs which, represented cinematically, can be read in the light of the discursive practices traceable to those nineteenth century fields of knowledge. Foucault is almost describing the cinematic when he describes the power which operates through such observation: 'caressing... intensifying...electrifying...dramatising troubled moments'. There is here the convergence of all the technology, the lenses, lights, film-stocks, effects,

with the performance which embodies the 'troubled moments' from which a narrative takes its momentum. Unable to appear directly to get inside the head of its objects, where in any case the novelist already rules the roast, there is an inevitability about the way cinema is so intent on 'electrifying surfaces' and on finding meaning there and a source of pleasure. And here cinema always already knows what the earlier practices of observation repressed: that power and pleasure are interwoven, that power in this instance prosecutes its object, 'sexuality', by producing (rather than repressing) forms of pleasure based on supposedly essential sexualities (including the fetishising of specific parts of the body) against which 'deviance' can be defined and, more generally, around which 'natural' social relations can be represented and anchored.

Pleasure is, through all of this, pursued and the question of whether it is for surveillance and prosecution or for gratification is never easy to untangle. There is, for instance, the story of Elizabeth Ray reported at length by Time in 1976 as a 'sex scandal' in the U.S. Congress, with a plethora of such phrases as 'the FBI probes deeper...', 'I'd been giving Academy Award performances once a week...', 'a congressional Watergate...', 'a mighty politician was certain to lose the power that he had

wielded so arrogantly...', 'power is the ultimate aphrodisiac...', 'sex at taxpayers' expense...', and so on.<sup>8</sup> The mixture of condemnation and delight is distinctive if not entirely unfamiliar, as if what matters is the sense of a secret glimpsed in an interstice which it occasions between two edges of power, the power of Congress and the power of Time. For the reader the attraction is not the information which Time provides, according to its overt function, or the question of fraud, presumably the most serious issue for the Congress in relation to its function, but rather the pleasurable sense of a secret residing where these functions gape, just as in the photographs of Liz Ray reproduced by Time her dress inevitably gapes, proffering the familiar presence-as-absence. This presence-as-absence is at the centre of the erethism of discourse described by Foucault, and is its double impetus: the pleasure that arises from the power of surveillance, of uncovering, and the pleasure that arises also from the power to evade, to scandalize. There is the beginning here of a spiral movement by which the drive to uncover, to know, will be perpetually turned back from the promise of a naked truth into the complex shifting of the pleasures within power and the power within pleasures in a tangled hierarchy.

This spiral will be considered again, in more general terms, in Part III, where one mechanism which serves to effect a surreptitious shift between levels, the displacement, is found to decoy the drive to uncover by always already installing a form of comprehension of what is to be uncovered. In this way there is never anything unexpected or uncanny about the secret because what matters is its boundary, its edge, the intermittence which it causes, rather than its content which is always already assigned a 'natural' place, known in advance. So in Seven Days in May (1964)<sup>9</sup> when the loyal army officer, Casey (Kirk Douglas), goes to the mistress of the general who is plotting to overthrow the government, he goes as a detective who knows what he wants to discover and he discovers, therefore, nothing else.

As the seduction (investigation) proceeds according to plan the woman makes the offer he has been probing for; 'I'll make you two promises--a very good steak medium rare and the truth which is very rare'. There is a curious connection between this scene and Casey's first visit to the President's office when he makes his suspicions known. In both scenes Casey is ill at ease, boyishly insecure,

before the other's composure. Both places have a bright airy appearance in contrast to the shadowy places where the errant general is often found. Both meetings begin with the same conversational trivia: whether Casey has been there before, and in both instances he has not, and then a drink is offered and delivered along with a request that Casey should come directly to the point of his visit, which he does not. In appearance there is a marked connection between the woman and the President: in a diegetic world chock-full of business suits and uniforms both wear comfortably homely cardigans. As if to emphasise this connection, the scene between the woman and Casey is briefly interrupted (immediately after her promise of the 'truth') by an inserted sequence of the first clear evidence of the truth towards which Casey is probing being reported to the President, who receives the news in pyjamas and dressing gown. The return to the scene in the woman's apartment is effected via a close-up of her framed photograph of the general in full uniform, which contrasts markedly with the President's appearance. What is subtly established here is a familial model for the relationships, which contrasts a parental authority and warmth with a power unconstrained by such a model.

To a post-Watergate audience President Carter attempted to offer the same model. Time reported Carter's first televised 'fireside chat' (and compared it favourably with Roosevelt's paternalistic radio speeches):

During his fireside chat last week, Carter introduced what may prove to be the most memorable symbol of an Administration that promises to make a steady use of symbolism--the beige wool cardigan, a favourite of his. Carter wore the sweater at dinner with Rosalyn, Amy, sons Chip and Jeff and their wives.<sup>10</sup>

In Seven Days in May Casey is told about a different image of power. 'I don't know when it changed', the woman says, 'but I began to realise that he never felt anything. Each move was calculated... I don't believe that he ever took a chance in his life or ever really felt anything, any real emotion. He was so sure of me that he could even write letters.' The letters, like Liz Ray's 'little black book', are the potential opening on to a secret constituted in the zone of 'sexuality', which displaces the investigation from the political level (why oppose government? what controls should there be on politicians' use of public money? how powerful is the army?...).



American film persistently operates this kind of short-circuit through the paths of lowest resistance (because of certain inherent attractions, such as the woman's image) which converge ultimately on a veiled zone of the sexual in order to decoy the investigation from what may be broadly categorised as the political. One intention in Part III<sup>\*</sup> is to make a beginning in penetrating the paths of high resistance which lead (divergently?) to the political, including the politics of pleasure and power (rather than the secret of 'sexuality') and of the way representations of social relations are structured.

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\* see Volume 2

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NOTES &  
REFERENCES

Only sufficient information is given in references to enable the cited work to be identified in the Bibliography, section one (Volume 2, pp.758-71).

Credits:

d -director. sc -writer. p -producer.

exec.p -executive producer.

l.p -leading player(s).

UA -United Artists.

TCF -20th Century-Fox.

(Other production credits are given in full.)

## Chapter 1

### Theme of the enigma : locus, genre and symbolic landscape

1. See in particular Terence Butler, Crucified Heroes: The Films of Sam Peckinpah, Chapters 4 and 12.
2. The John Ford Movie Mystery, p.182.
3. Invasion of the Body Snatchers, 1956, Allied Artists; Hell is for Heroes, 1962, Paramount; Two Mules for Sister Sara, 1969, Universal/Malpasco; Dirty Harry, 1971, Warner: (see Part III for extended comment on Dirty Harry). These films have different producers, writers, cinematographers, composers, etc., whose varied work cuts across Siegel's supposed consistency and puts it constantly into question. On the other hand the 'unity' of, for example, Coogan's Bluff, 1969, Universal; The Beguiled, 1971, Universal; and Dirty Harry, may derive to some extent from the contributions of Dean Reisner (writer on first and third), Carl Pingatore (editor on second and third), Bruce Surtees (cinematographer on second and third), Alexander Golitzen (art director on first and second), Lalo Schifrin (composer on all three), and Clint Eastwood (leading player in all three).
4. Stuart M. Kaminsky, American Film Genres, p.250.
5. Alan Lovell, Don Siegel : American Cinema, p.31,p.74.
6. Kaminsky, American Film Genres, p.20.
7. Tom Ryall, 'Teaching through Genre', p.28.
8. Jim Kitses, Horizons West; for example p.24.
9. The Enforcer, 1975, Malpasco, d--J. Fargo; Any Which Way You Can, 1980, Malpasco, d--B. Van Horn.
10. Genre : The Musical, p.3.
11. 'The Idea of Authorship in the American Cinema', (in BFI Study Unit 12) p.69.

12. Universal, sc--W. Talman, N. Jolley,  
d--Richard Bartlett.
13. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction :  
Contemporary Poetics, p.66.
14. 'The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema', pp.64-5.
15. See for example, Reds, 1982, Paramount,  
d/l.p--W. Beatty; The Four Seasons, 1981,  
Universal, sc/d/l.p--A. Alda.
16. See Deceit, Desire, and the Novel and  
Chapter 7 below.
17. Christian Metz, 'History/Discourse : Note on  
Two Voyeurisms', p.23.
18. Frank J. Sulloway, Freud, Biologist of the Mind.
19. ibid., p.447. (The quotation is from Joseph  
Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces,  
p.29).
20. ibid., p.486.
21. ibid., p.489.
22. Colin McArthur, Underworld U.S.A.
23. Horizons West, p.68.
24. ibid., pp. 77-80.
25. The John Ford Movie Mystery, p.125.
26. Crossroads : The Drama of a Soap Opera, pp. 135-6,  
p.171.
27. Andrew Tudor, Theories of Film, pp. 139-42
28. ibid., pp. 149-50.
29. Crossroads : The Drama of a Soap Opera, p.170,  
p.136.
30. 'The Westerner', p.161.
31. Deconstruction and Criticism, p.14.
32. Edward W. Said, Beginnings, p.378. (Said is  
paraphrasing Gilles Deleuze).
33. The New Science, Book 1, para.51.
34. 'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism (1)', p.7.
35. Extract from Jean-Paul Fargier's Cinéthique  
article in Christopher Williams (ed.),  
Realism and the Cinema, pp.177-78.
36. The New Science, 'Idea of the Work', para.12.

37. Beginnings, pp.372-73.
38. Critique of Dialectical Reason, p.67.
39. Pietro Chiodi, Sartre and Marxism, p.24.  
Chiodi's account of the 'privileged status' of subjectivity in Sartre's later work would benefit from Said's distinction between origins and beginnings.
40. 'The Idea of Genre in the American Cinema', p.64.
41. Richard W. Etulain, 'The American Literary West and Its Interpreters : The Rise of a New Historiography', p.158.
42. 'They Have Not Spoken : American Indians in Film', p.141. On Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here, 1969, Universal, sc/d--A. Polonsky.
43. 'The Indian in the Western Movie', p.104.  
On Soldier Blue, 1970, Avco, d--R. Nelson;  
Little Big Man, 1970, Cinema Center, d--A. Penn.
44. Per un Pugno di Dollari, 1964, UA-Spanish-W.German co-production, d--S. Leone, l.p--Clint Eastwood, who was familiar to TV audiences as Rowdy Yates, the young cowboy sidekick of a paternal trail boss in Rawhide, 1959-65, Universal/CBS. (cf. Matthew Garth in Red River, 1948, UA, d--H. Hawks.)
45. 'The Westerner', p.161.
46. See Iron Cages, ch.XI.
47. Quoted in Colin Gordon, 'The Subtracting Machine', p.29 (originally, Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet, Dialogues, Paris 1977, pp.68-9).
48. 'Sections - Or Classes?', p.51.
49. 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History', p.3, p.30.
50. 'The West and American Ideals', p.293, pp.298-300, pp.305-307.
51. Ray A. Billington, America's Frontier Culture, p.56.
52. *ibid.*, p.57.
53. *ibid.*, p.57.
54. *ibid.*, p.61.
55. *ibid.*, p.68.

56. See Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence, pp.21-22 (Boone), pp.414-417 (Crockett). 'The aura of the free hunter which surrounds' Crockett and others like him, 'makes romantic and palatable the essentially commercial and exploitive character of their ambitions and activities.' (p.417)
57. America's Frontier Culture, p.60.
58. Turner, 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History', p.4.
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60. The Comancheros, 1961, TCF, d--M. Curtiz; Cheyenne Autumn, 1964, Warner, d--J. Ford; Cat Ballou, 1965, Columbia, d--E. Silverstein; The Sons of Katie Elder, 1965, Paramount, d--H. Hathaway; El Dorado, 1966, Paramount, d--H. Hawks; The War Wagon, 1966, Universal/Batjac, d--B. Kennedy; True Grit, 1969, Paramount, d--H. Hathaway; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, 1969, TCF, d--G. R. Hill; Chisum, 1970, Warner/Batjac, d--A.V. McLaglen.
61. Winchester '73, 1950, Universal, d--A. Mann, l.p--James Stewart; The Searchers, 1956, Warner, d--J. Ford, l.p--John Wayne; Decision at Sundown, 1957, Scott-Brown, d--B. Boetticher, l.p--Randolph Scott. (See Chapter 8 below for discussion of Assault on Precinct 13.)
62. The New York Times, 26 June 1969, p.45.
63. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, p.455.
64. The New York Times, 3 July 1969, p.20.
65. Narrative Fiction : Contemporary Poetics, pp.66-70.
66. On the narrative image see Stephen Heath, Questions of Cinema, pp.133-34.
67. *ibid.*, p.181.

68. *ibid.*, p.187.
69. Cynthia Chase, 'Oedipal Textuality: Reading Freud's Reading of Oedipus', p.57.
70. Melanie Klein, 'Our Adult World and its Roots in Infancy', pp.293-94.
71. Concept and Quality: A World Hypothesis, p.14.
72. See Paul Seydor, Peckinpah: The Western Films, for a very full account of Peckinpah's struggle to find 'conditions conducive to making a work of art' (p.69) against studio interference and truncation (Major Dundee, 1965, Columbia) and the inherent constraints of TV formulae. For example, only the European version of The Wild Bunch has the flashback of Pike's wounding and more cuts were made to the American version after release to remove all the flashbacks, Villa's raid on Mapache, and Dutch and Sykes dancing during the festivities in Angel's village. The eventual video release restored these with the exception of the flashback of Pike's wounding which had been seen in the original European prints.
73. History and the Dialectic of Violence, p.223.
74. For a brief discussion of the basic distinction see Sartre, Critique of Dialectical Reason, pp.74-76.
75. John R. Searle, Intentionality, p.3.
76. Peckinpah worked on Major Dundee between 1963 and 1965 having already directed The Deadly Companions (1961) and Ride the High Country (1962) but throughout this period he also worked in TV: His early TV work includes episodes of The Rifleman (1958), Zane Grey Theatre (1959) and Klondike (1960), while during the period of his first excursions into cinema he continued with The Westerner (1960), Pony Express (1961) and 'Noon Wine' for ABC Stage 67 (1966). Meanwhile the spy series and then the crime series gained ground (The FBI, 1965-74; Felony Squad, 1966-69; NYPD, 1967-69) culminating in 1970 with the NBC Mystery Movie slot which hosted some



of the best known crime dramas well into the seventies, while Peckinpah had moved to the cinema and into his string of Westerns: The Wild Bunch (1969), The Ballad of Cable Hogue (1970), Junior Bonner (1972 - a 'modern' Western), and Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid (1973).

77. See Erik Barnouw, The Sponsor, p.58.
78. 1967, Universal, sc--D. M.Mankiewicz, C. Young, d--J. Goldstone, 1.p--Raymond Burr (Ironside). (Series: 1967-75, Universal/NBC 1.p--idem.)
79. Taken from Erik Barnouw, Tube of Plenty, p.375.
80. Get Smart: comedy - investigations of Max Smart, Agent 86, and his female partner Agent 99, for CONTROL, an international spy organisation opposed to the evil intentions of KAOS. The FBI: crime drama, supposedly based on FBI files. The Man from UNCLE: two investigators for the United Network Command for Law Enforcement combat THRUSH, an evil organisation bent on world domination. Wackiest Ship in the Army: adventure/comedy--a leaky schooner works for US Intelligence in the S.Pacific during W.W.II. Run for Your Life: drama--a dying man crams a lifetime of experience into his remaining years. Smothers Brothers: two comedians. F.Troop comedy/Western--Fort Courage, 1866, the misadventures of Capt.Parmenter, 'the scourge of the West', and his NCOs who run a business dealing in Indian souvenirs. I Dream of Jeannie: comedy--astronaut crash lands and finds a beautiful female genie who 'protects' him from other women while he tries to conceal her presence. Gomer Pyle USMC: comedy--the disruptive antics of a simple-minded private at a marine base in California. Hogan's Heroes: comedy--prisoners in Stalag 13 make life difficult for their German captors. Combat: drama--fictionalised progress of an infantry platoon from D-Day to victory. Jericho: drama--three allied agents (American, French, English) infiltrate enemy lines (W.W.II but setting left vague). Rat Patrol: drama--a military patrol harassing the Germans in N.Africa during W.W.II.
81. Tube of Plenty, p.375.
82. 1957-66

83. 1976, De Laurentis/CIC, sc--M. H. Swarthout, S.Hale, d--Don Siegel, l.p--John Wayne (Books), Lauren Bacall (Bond).
84. As a result of, for example, the eponymous characters of Chisum, 1970, Warner, and McQ, 1974, Warner.
85. 1974-- , Paramount/ABC, 30 min., d--include J. Paris, D. Weis, l.p--Henry Winkler (Fonzie).
86. Quoted in Steven Albert, 'Redemption of Discredited Authority', p.10.
87. Glendon Swarthout, The Shootist, p.185.
88. Paramount, sc/d--P. Bogdanovich.
89. Charles Derry, Dark Dreams, pp.33-34.
90. Terry Ann Knopf, 'Sniping--A New Pattern of Violence?', p.24.
91. Quoted in Derry, p.34.
92. Knopf, p.22.
93. ibid., pp.28-29.
94. See Iain Johnstone, The Man With No Name, p.82, and Derry, p.33.
95. Albert, p.9.
96. 'That the corporate state thrives on anti-feminism and the sexual repression of men like Harry Callahan is beyond question.' Anthony Chase, 'The strange romance of "Dirty Harry" Callahan and Ann Mary Deacon', p.18.
97. Quoted in Richard Meyers, TV Detectives, p.135.
98. 1981, sc--Barbara Avedon, d--T. Post.
99. The Jordan Chance, 1978, Huggins/Universal, sc--S. J. Cannell, d--J. Irving: Jailed for a crime he did not commit a lawyer and his young assistants now dedicate themselves to helping those who are unjustly convicted. The A Team, 1983- , series, S. J. Cannell/Universal, created by S. J. Cannell (sc/The Jordan Chance), F. Lupo: Jailed for a crime they did not commit an ex-army officer and his young assistants now dedicate themselves to helping, for money, those who have a 'problem' which can be solved using their skills with weaponry. The group in The Jordan Chance (Jordan, Jimmy, Brian, Karen)

translate directly into the group in The A Team (Hannibal, Murdock, Peck, Amy) with the addition to the latter of 'BA' representing the brute force now introduced to the more subtle tactics of the lawyer's team. The shift from Raymond Burr (Jordan) to George Peppard (Hannibal) is a change from the 'external mediator' (Jordan is an eminently successful lawyer) to an 'internal mediator' (described in publicity material as 'a macho man with sex appeal'): these categories will be introduced and developed in Part III where, for instance, Baretta (another Cannell creation) will be considered.

100. Paul Wilkinson, The New Fascists, p.194.

## Chapter 2

### Dialogue

1. 'The Structuralist Activity', p.148.
2. The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes, p.4 and passim.
3. 'The Structuralist Activity', p.149.
4. *ibid.*, p.150.
5. *ibid.*, p.152.
6. Roland Barthes, 'Science versus Literature', p.410.
7. 'What is structuralism?', p.258.
8. *ibid.*, pp.258-59.
9. Introduction to Structuralism, p.15.
10. 'Science versus Literature', p.415.
11. Culture and Communication, p.96.
12. Structuralism : an introduction, p.1.
13. *ibid.*, p.1. For a fuller account see Ladislav Matejka, 'Postscript : Prague School Semiotics'.
14. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, p.21.
15. 'Science versus Literature', p.415.
16. 'Structuralism in Social Anthropology', p.49, slightly modified.
17. *ibid.*, p.49.
18. Barthes, S/Z, p.5.
19. Dan Sperber, 'Claude Lévi-Strauss', p.49.
20. Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p.147.
21. Structural Anthropology, p.218.
22. S/Z, p.3.
23. Barthes, 'Change the Object Itself : Mythology today', p.165.

24. Structural Anthropology, p.211.
25. *ibid.*, p.213.
26. See Simon Clarke, The Foundations of Structuralism.
27. V. Propp, Morphology of the Folktale, p.21.
28. Structural Anthropology, p.95.
29. Fredric Jameson, Marxism and Form, p.4.
30. 'Textual Analysis of Poe's "Valdemar"', p.136.
31. *ibid.*, p.136.
32. *ibid.*, p.137.
33. Barthes, S/Z, pp.20-21.
34. 'Textual Analysis of Poe's "Valdemar"', pp.135,137.
35. For the concept of a 'horizon' in this context see Fredric Jameson, The Political Unconscious, pp.74-102.
36. *ibid.*, p.75.
37. 'Articulations of the Cinematic Code', p.601.
38. *ibid.*, p.603.
39. *ibid.*, p.603.
40. *ibid.*, p.597.
41. 'Social Bodies', pp.13-14.
42. *ibid.*, p.15.
43. *ibid.*, p.24.
44. Mary Douglas, Natural Symbols, p.93.
45. *ibid.*, p.98.
46. 'Social Bodies', p.31.
47. 'Objective Sign and Subjective Meaning', p.78.
48. J.A.R.A.M. Van Hooff, 'Categories and sequences of behavior : methods of description and analysis', p.363.
49. *ibid.*, p.364.
50. *ibid.*, p.365.
51. 1973, UA--Lion's Gate, sc--L. Brackett from Chandler's novel. d--R. Altman, l.p--Elliott Gould (Marlowe).
52. Narrative and structure : exploratory essays, p.96.

53. The Role of the Reader, p.13.
54. ibid., p.18.
55. ibid., p.31.
56. ibid., p.32.
57. Structuralist Poetics, p.207.
58. Alan Dundes, 'Structuralism and Folklore', p.83.
59. The Role of the Reader, p.15.
60. Elli Köngäs Maranda and Pierre Maranda, Structural Models in Folklore and Transformational Essays, p.26.
61. See particularly, A.J.Greimas and F.Rastier, 'The interaction of semiotic constraints'.
62. Structural Models, pp.26-27.
63. ibid., p.27.
64. 'A.J.Greimas and Narrative Semiotics', p.259.
65. Aspects of the Novel, p.94.
66. ibid., p.95.
67. ibid., p.96.
68. ibid., p.96.
69. Vincent Terrace, Television 1970-1980, p.210.
70. Alvin H. Marill, Movies Made For Television, p.322.
71. Michael J. Arlen, The Camera Age, p.281.
72. Gary Nelson, notable TV director: episodes of Have Gun--Will Travel (1962-63); Get Smart (1966); Kojak (1973); Police Story (1974); etc.; and TV films, The Girl on the Late, Late Show (1974); Medical Story (1975); Panache (1976); To Kill a Cop (1978); etc.
73. For discussion of 'embedding' see John Holloway, Narrative and structure, ch.5.
74. Natural Symbols, ch.5 and passim.
75. 'The interaction of semiotic constraints'.
76. An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method, pp.65-8.
77. See Lawrence Kritzman, 'A.J.Greimas and Narrative Semiotics' for further discussion of levels.
78. 'The interaction of semiotic constraints', p.88.
79. ibid., p.89.
80. D.H.J.Morgan, Social Theory and the Family, ch.5.
81. Quoted in André Gorz, Farewell to the Working Class, p.86.

## Chapter 3

### The Audience and the Coding of Narrative Knowledge

1. Peter Brooks, 'Fictions of the Wolfman :  
Freud and Narrative Understanding'.
2. *ibid.*, p.74.
3. 1971, Universal, sc--D.Hargrove, exec.p/d--  
Richard Irving, 1.p--Peter Falk (Columbo),  
Lee Grant (Leslie Williams).
4. 'Fictions of the Wolfman', p.76, footnote 2.
5. 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis',  
p.282.
6. S/Z, p.84.
7. Freud, p.292.
8. *ibid.*, p.293.
9. This is part of a document produced by Sonimage  
(the company set up in Grenoble by Godard  
and Anne-Marie Miéville in 1972) for the  
Mozambique government. See Colin MacCabe  
with Mick Eaton and Laura Mulvey, Godard :  
Images, Sounds, Politics, pp.139-40.
10. Robert Scholes, Semiotics and Interpretation,  
p.xii.
11. Roman Jakobson, 'Linguistics and Poetics', pp.89,  
95.
12. *ibid.*, p.89.
13. The practical importance and difficulty of this  
question is well argued in concrete terms  
in Cary Bazalgette, 'The Myth of  
Transparency in Film Study', pp.7-14.
14. 'Linguistics and Poetics', p.93.
15. 1976, Columbia, sc--P.Schrader, d--M.Scorsese,  
1.p--R.DeNiro (Travis)
16. 'Linguistics and Poetics', p.92.

## EXCURSUS

1. 'The Question Oshima', p.75.
2. Warner, p--W. Cagney, sc--L. Davis,  
d--R. Walsh, l.p--James Cagney (Hank)
3. Barbara Hale was familiar at the time as a pleasant leading lady, e.g. The Window, 1949; Jolson Sings Again, 1949 (as a wartime nurse); The Jackpot, 1950 (in suburbia with James Stewart); and as the eponymous Lorna Doone, 1951; she would later play Perry Mason's secretary in the TV series, 1957-66. Anne Francis tended to be cast as a more wayward, less homely character, e.g. Elopement, 1952 (as a student eloping with her professor); Lydia Bailey, 1952 (as an heiress in Haiti); and as Debbie Reynolds' rival in Susan Slept Here, 1953; she would later play the ingénue-temptress in Forbidden Planet, 1956, and more than a dozen roles in films made for TV, beginning appropriately as a convict in Wild Women, 1970.
4. Trail Street, d--Ray Enright. In the tradition of, for example, The Mysterious Rider, 1938; The Night Riders, 1939; The Lone Ranger Rides Again, serial 1939; and carried on after Trail Street, 1947, by Stampede, 1949; Shane, 1953; The Lone Ranger, 1956 (in which the powerful rancher is called Kilgore, cf. the crazed officer in Apocalypse Now); The Sheepman, 1958; etc.
5. Rio Bravo, 1959, Warner, p/d--H. Hawks, l.p--John Wayne (Chance). El Dorado, 1966, Paramount, p/d--H. Hawks, l.p--John Wayne (Thornton), Robert Mitchum (Harrah)
6. The History of Sexuality, p.32.
7. ibid., p.44.
8. Time, 7 June 1976, pp.24-25, and 14 June 1976, pp.25-27.
9. Seven Arts, p--E. Lewis, sc--R. Serling, d--J. Frankenheimer, l.p--Kirk Douglas (Casey), Burt Lancaster (Gen.Scott), Ava Gardner (Eleanor), Fredric March (President)
10. 'Warm Words from Jimmy Cardigan', Time, 14 Feb.1977, p.34.