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Suspense and the Influence of Cataphora on Viewers' Expectations

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The experience of suspense essentially lies in equally calculating, expecting and evaluating a coming event. I want to call this activity *anticipation*. It consists of several different acts:

(1) given information should not only be understood as such, but should also be regarded as the starting-point for future developments in a story, social situation or course of events;

(2) it is necessary to draw up a scenario of what is coming from what the text has informed viewers and what viewers know outside of the text - about life, physics and psychology in general, but also about genres and modes of narrative;

(3) the future situations in the plot are an ensemble of alternative possibilities which are more or less probable - and it is in the acts of anticipation that the degree of probability with which the story can develop in one or another direction can be calculated;

(4) finally, the individual possibilities can be evaluated and possible counteractions by the protagonist conceived. Only this scenario will create the conditions for the feeling of suspense: there is no experience of suspense without anticipation!

The dramaturgy of suspense refers to the activity of anticipating, it provides the material from which viewers can extrapolate future developments. The textual theory of suspense describes operational aspects of the staging. It is charged with describing elements of the text in their function, role and status. This starting-point holds true for the examination of processes of suspense in all medias and genres.

1. Cataphoric Text Elements

It is of absolute importance for the dramaturgy of suspense to be informed about the "place of suspense" - for suspense is not in the text, but rather in what the text triggers off. Viewers cannot make any extrapolations from what they are told if regularities and legalities didn't bring a given situation together with a forthcoming development - so that knowledge of rules and conventions are always incorporated

into the prognostic work of the experience of suspense. Such pieces of information are "pre-information" (cf. Borrigo, 1980, p. 53), references to future developments in the plot. Seymour Chatman, who speaks of *foreshadowing* (1978, p. 60) brings this together with an evaluation of scenes and episodes regarding the narration: narrative "kernels" are those scenes which propel the narrative forward; "satellites", though, where the announcement function is characteristically bundled, are the kind of scenes that prepare the way for the kernels. Satellites can be removed from a narrative without it suffering any major damage - although the text would then lose any suspense it had.

Chatman's distinction makes an important point: in the examination of processes of suspense, the issue is not the recording of narrative structures as they are realised in the text itself. Rather, it is about possible and probable developments in the plot, which often cannot even be proven on the surface of the film. At issue are hypotheses and expectations that viewers form upon seeing a film. A certain task that the text must fulfil can be defined here: all the advance references, all the anticipation of future events undertaken by the text, are attempts to influence the area where the anticipation of the following event can happen. Thus, one should enquire less about how the plot is represented in the text than how readers are guided through the plot: it is instruction, rather than representation, that is the basic textual semantic function.

It seems appropriate to determine classes of textual elements which serve the purpose, within the framework of textual reception, of evoking or indicating possible future courses of events. Semantically, these elements of suspense construction can be taken as *cataphora*, as textual references pointing to subsequent information in the text [1]. They help to shape the viewers' scope of expectation. The cataphora are not used primarily for the representation or the exposition of the narrative course of events, but rather for the manipulation of the anticipated course, the mo-

dulation of the area for problem solutions in which viewers move and orientate themselves. The cataphora include viewers' cognitive operations, it is only these that result in any meaning.

Such cataphoric elements operate, naturally, in the textual process in an "open" textual field of reference where further developments have not yet become manifest and where they can only be forecast with more or less probability from the respective place of reading. The analysis of suspense constructions is thus only useful and possible as an analysis of textual processes and not of synoptic textual structures. The advance reference takes place in a still undefined information process and is targeting a specific element in the text. It is characteristic for cataphoric elements in suspense constructions to stay "unfulfilled" here and to show themselves to be an advance reference for a course of events that does not happen.

When subsequent information in the cataphor is only indicated but not exposed, the cataphora are constructions of attention (although it may remain to be seen whether the cataphorically aroused attention is satisfied or disappointed by the actual following text). Brugmann (cit. from Bühler, 1965, p. 122 Fn. 1) speaks of a "preparatory" function of the advance reference and thereby gives a name to this aspect of the manipulation of the textual scenario that is so central to the understanding and processing of a text: viewers are prepared for possible future courses of events, they are put into the mood for the web of possible events, the probability of future events and intrigues are altered, etc. In other words, cataphoric advance references are a central means of developing a "field of anticipation" in viewers.

The possibility of using cataphoric advance references is closely linked with the fact that word processing systems are regulated by schematised stores of knowledge which are activated and applied in the processing (compare Ohler [1990] as well as Ohler & Nieding in this book). Bühler writes, in his "Sprachtheorie", about the understanding of sentences:

The "anticipating" of something that has not yet been said is, psychologically, quite understandable now that we know how often our as yet unrealised thoughts are preempted by a more or less "empty" sentence schema. The advance reference

follows on from places in this schema (1965, p. 121, Fn. 1).

This observation can be applied fully to the function of cataphoric information in suspense constructions, but must be modified in one respect: the nature of a story's development is quite an open number of possibilities, moving either towards a good or bad ending, always open to enlargement through the introduction of new informational elements. The "schema" in which the advance reference is possible is a productive calculation of alternative textual developments.

In the linguistic study of cataphora, it is said that advance references are cohesive relationships of one sign to a subsequent one. Cohesion results there, above all, from co-reference: such as when a pro-form stands in front of the co-referring expression ("Das Glück der Frau, die *er* liebt, ist eine Tortur für den *Eifersüchtigen*") or when reference is made to a following line of text ("*These* were the verses the White Rabbit read:..."). The co-referring expression can be deduced even when it doesn't actually appear in the text; it is connoted by the cataphoric term.

In semiotic terms, cataphoric information has its own particular position, but then the factor of showing ("*Zeigement*"), which is always present in cinematic speech, can be identified particularly clearly in them. At the same time, the cataphor is a manifestation of a textual instance, an authority which controls the action in such a way that it points to future developments. If one so wishes, this is a paradox: the advance reference aimed to a still open situative development. It is one of the conventions of storytelling that one only foreshadows things that actually happen, that actually become a subject of the situation. The following course of events must, therefore, already be known before a cataphor can be installed.

Let us refer to Bühler on anaphoric expression as he writes in general about textual references:

There is a showing in the form of the anaphora; and whoever looks for the field of showing ("*Zeigfeld*") where it is happening, will find the ribbon of emergent speech itself being treated as a "*Zeigfeld*". The context is the anaphoric "*Zeigfeld*", the emergent speech becomes retrospective

and prognostic in places, becomes *reflexive* (1965, p. 258).

In two respects, this concept is important and puts in a nutshell the juxtaposition of a work's structure and the activity of reception that is so difficult to convey: (1) The staging of this field of reference, and thus of the movement of reception, is absolutely essential for the dramaturgy of suspense.

(2) The experience of suspense follows a strategy of "referential showing" and is thus always orientated to the text. Viewers cannot free themselves completely from the text - despite the importance which the workings of the imagination have for the experience of suspense. In fact, the viewers are always being led back into that domain of controlled information.

2. Narrative, Thematic and Atmospheric Frameworks

Every narratively eventful storyline opens up a series of possible connections which each person who has mastered the laws of the genre or the rules of everyday life can "calculate". Someone, for example, who steals some money, commits an offence, is sought after by the police (and possibly others). Another person, who finds some incriminating material that can send the highest echelons of a crime syndicate to prison, must be conscious of the fact that there will be an attempt to get the material back from him at any price. One can dispense with further examples here - it is clear that the way someone gets caught up in a story is almost identical to the way that one gets further into a field of complications, antagonisms and the like. When the story gets going, the further developments can be extrapolated, at least in part, from what has already happened.

Let us stay with the first example. The connections are there at the point when someone commits an offence. An interpretative framework is thereby created where viewers may be able to transform accidental, coincidental and perhaps peripheral things into an scenario of future events. An example of this very simple, initial constellation comes from Hitchcock's *PSYCHO*, in which one can see that we are dealing with conclusions when one attempts to pass from the given situation to what is to come: The action centres on a chance meeting of Marion Crane with her boss. Marion is on the run to her lover with the 40,000 dollars that she had been entrusted to bank.

She has to wait at a traffic light in the town, where pedestrians jostle over the crossing in front of the cars. One of them is Marion's boss who is under the impression that she is ill and at home, since she had left with a migraine a few hours before. He recognises her and stops in confusion and in thought, but is then pushed on by the other passers-by. -- The reception of a film is also a comparison of what one knows with possible outcomes for the film characters. What do we know about the boss? 40,000 dollars is a lot of money for him too, we were told. What could he do? We don't know whether the chance meeting has aroused his suspicion. If he really had become suspicious and had called the bank, Marion's robbery would have been discovered and the police would already be on her trail. The meeting with her boss thus forms a possible element of uncertainty for the protagonist - perhaps her situation has been aggravated, perhaps she is no longer on the run by herself, but pursued by others. Then the police would be involved. -- Hitchcock clearly picks up on this in *PSYCHO*: Marion has slept in the car after the terrible journey through the night. A policeman wakes her up, a dramatic idea that once more stresses the heroine's possible uncertainty. He is, however, unsuspecting. The diversion which the meeting with the boss had made possible does not come about.

A theory of filmic or filmic-textual referential structures is still to be formulated. A first attempt at this would be to elaborate upon the distinction made between *narrative*, *thematic* and *atmospheric* advance references. Helmut Korte writes, in his analysis of *JAWS*, about "advance references", and means by this, those elements of the props or the staging which can be brought together with the action in the broadest sense - skeleton fish heads are characteristics of Quint's passion for hunting; on several occasions, a jawbone frames the picture; etc. (1987, p. 111). We are dealing here, though, with details of a film's staging which serve the purpose in the further functional framework of attuning the narrated world to the problem of being treated in the narration. I only want to speak more closely about "narrative cataphors" when they have immediate relevance to the textual or dramatic narration, when they have the function of being more specific about a problem or problem-solving area or when they install them to start with. The elements that Korte lists are part of the film's thematic strategy and can be classed as the principle of redundancy which takes many forms in

Hollywood cinema. When, in *Jaws*, for example, the issue of the "sharks", the "fishing hunt", or "the big-game hunt at sea" is dealt with, the intense description of Quint as an obsessive shark hunter is part of the thematic structure. The framing mentioned above is also a reference to this subject as well as to an atmospherically effective detail that underscores the fundamental nature of the battle being fought here. On the other hand, the particular emphasis on the oxygen tanks which Brody will use to kill the shark in the end is an advance reference which can be effective after all. Let us note Korte on this particular scene:

Even the most important detail for the solution of the "shark problem" [!] is presented beforehand almost in passing: Brody mistakenly undoes the wrong knot. The oxygen tanks roll overboard. He has almost caused a catastrophe, as Hooper angrily declares. The observer now knows that they are explosive, but doesn't attach any further importance to all of this at this stage. Quint mocks: "I just wonder what this bastard of a shark would do with them. Perhaps he'll swallow them. I once saw how one of them ate up a rocking chair" (Korte, 1987, p. 112).

In fact, such narrative long-range references play a significant role in many suspense films: because objects of the narrated world, which can be functionalised in the final problem-solving, are being presented in the film's exposition strategy (Hartmann, 1992). When we learn that someone loses their self-control when they drink, this knowledge infiltrates through the reception into the development of the scenario (a comic example is Blake Edwards' *BLIND DATE*). Of major significance here are the rules and laws, taboos and bans that apply in the narrated world (Wulff, 1985, pp. 10f, passim). Lüthi rightly draws attention to the fact that bans are also anticipations, and generalizes:

[Bans] say negatively what will later happen positively, the later event is, in this respect, a repetition of what has been expressed in the ban. Every outline, whether it be an announcement, an instruction of how to act or a ban, creates expectation, suspense is created. Every anticipation, even those with a minus sign, and especially those ones, are straining to be realised (Lüthi, 1975, p. 105).

Because the disregard of taboos and bans is one of the most elementary approaches of narration, viewers can always reckon, in their anticipatory activity, on the infringement of the law, the breaking of the rules, and the consequences of such a deed. At the same time, they operate in conventional territory: for infringements of laws result in other actions that are implicit. If someone steals money from the mafia, a whole structure of roles can be created - something that works very closely with one's knowledge of genre and is part of the viewers' "genre competence".

Lüthi's ideas are also so central because, on closer observation, the depicted moral of a story (regarded by Carroll as a separate defining element of suspense) lets it be referred to as the functional aspect of the predefinition of actions and outcomes. The "moral correctness" of an outcome does not only play a role in the evaluation of possible courses of events but also in the estimation of the characters' outcome. How well the narrated figure is fitted into the story only becomes really tangible when the rules are broken: a protagonist, who is falsely accused and is almost executed by hanging (as in *UNDER SUSPICION* [1991]), is perceived using the hypothesis that he will do everything to clear his name; when he turns out, in the end, to have been the real culprit, who organised the evidence against himself so that he could then accuse another person of the crime, viewers are forced to revise their hypothesis about the hero's motives - and the *outcome* of the story becomes ambivalent. The protagonist has cleared himself, in that respect, the *good outcome* that is formally expected of the protagonist role has been reached; but, in the moral sense, it has turned out to be a *bad outcome*. The interesting thing about this is that the potential of intentions and actions that viewers think the hero capable of are rigorously restricted once the protagonist is regarded as a *framed person*.

3. Dramatic Danger Area

A whole series of cataphoric advance references which occur in the dramatic-situative close-range area already begin below the narrative level. This has very much to do with the fact that, over and above the narrative intricacy, the execution of actions and the existence of situations are the textual instances which focus viewers' registering and creative activities. The entity "scene", "situation" or "sequence"

is, moreover, a separate, integral space of orientation, both in respect to the cinematic structures as well as to the unities of treatment.

A scene is often not fully developed, but only realised to the extent necessary to give an impression of the relevant information that a protagonist must respond to - which the pro- or antagonists themselves do not even have to be aware of. It is important to give viewers a picture of the situation so they can see a field of dangers, resistances and obstacles. It is not necessary for a possibly dangerous situation actually to come about. Complications in actions are, for example, often only hinted at. A typical case is the following: the protagonist is hanging from a rope which is scraping against a cliff edge and could snap. The rope often doesn't snap, but that is not what it is about. The important thing is that viewers can visualise the possibility of an unhappy course of events. The danger indicator remains as an anticipatory reference to a possible complication (or here, even, to the mortal danger which the protagonist is in).

Dangers are brought into play as possibilities but not as actual developments. The danger is the *"not yet"* of a catastrophe or injury. The activity of anticipation reaches out to this *state of "not yet"* and tries to give it a more precise definition. What is the target for a given course of events? Which rule, law extends a given situation into other possible situations? What probability do the various alternatives have for the course of events? A given situation, thus, is located in a *field of possible developments*. The action of reception covers the transition between the real and what is coming about. An intermediate area is established between the modes of being, a given situation is compared with what might possibly happen. The viewers and the work are equally involved in this process: viewers themselves must create the possibilities where the situation can be developed. It is the job of the film to give hints about which possibilities, in the respective case, are nearer than others.

The characteristics of objects play an important role in these deliberations. In this respect, moreover, understanding film is often not much different from the planning of actions and calculations of risk in everyday life. In one of the Laurel and Hardy shorts, the idea is that a piano will be heaved up on to a balcony. A block and tackle is tied to a sun-blind that cannot possibly take the weight. Laurel is on the bal-

cony and makes a great effort to pull the rope up. Hardy, who has put a ladder against the balcony, is supporting the piano from below. One can extrapolate from everyday knowledge about the stability of objects that the awning must tear and the weight of the piano will be come down fair and square on the fat man... But the film disappoints our expectation, the piano arrives above in one piece. Hardy only comes to harm when Laurel undoes the block and tackle and carelessly throws it down. It lands on Hardy's head.

The dramaturgical conception of suspense scenes are intended to show the *"not yet"* of the scene or to evoke this in the viewer. It is evident that the indication of danger forms a central starting-point for receptive activities. Dramaturgy of the scene and processes of anticipation are closely interrelated: clearly, the resolution of the scene is arranged in such a way that the individual elements - from which the picture of the situation must be composed - have the primary function of depicting the danger of the situation and the actors' corresponding actions.

In the James Bond film *A VIEW TO A KILL* (1984) there is a short sequence which can illustrate the forementioned principle.

- #1: Bond and the girl are trapped in a lift stuck between two floors. The villain has thrown a Molotov cocktail onto the lift and then escaped. We see Bond and the girl in the cabin. Bond tries to kick one of the steel trapdoors off from the lift ceiling.
- #2: We see the burning mountings of the lift. The pressure of heat causes some of the cords to break.
- #3: The girl is terrified.
- #4: As in #1, Bond manages to break open one of the trapdoors.
- #5: As in #2, the mountings burn.
- #6: As in #4, Bond disappears through the gap.
- #7: In the shaft, Bond tries to reach out to the girl to pull her out of the cabin.
- #8: As in #5, the mountings burn.
- #9: As in #6, the girl climbs out of the cabin.
- #10: The lift shaft is burning.
- #11: As in #7, Bond.
- #12: The girl, almost from Bond's perspective, tries desperately to reach out for Bond's hand.
- #13: As in #11, Bond is still reaching out to the girl. The camera follows the stretched out hand.

- #14: As in #8. A burning mounting.
- #15: As in #12. The girl tries to get hold of the hand.
- #16: As in #14. The mounting breaks away.
- #17: We see the girl's foot and the lift falling away into the depths below. The girl does not fall.

In this short scene, whose structure also appears in countless other films, the elements which make the situation "exciting" are the very centre of attention. The situation is almost a classical one: the protagonist is trapped, he is in the greatest of danger, escape seems impossible [2].

There are two kinds of danger here and an awful end seems unavoidable: the fire, which has spread like a wall of flame above the cabin in the lift shaft, has cut off the way upwards; and the lift's cables, whose mountings are burning one by one, threaten to give leaving the lift to crash into the depths. The protagonists are threatened by a double tragedy: they are in danger of being burnt alive and of falling to their deaths. Bond does the absurd thing: he tries to make a run for it above the lift despite the danger from the fire. The first danger proves to be surmountable. The second danger now has to be shown so that it will stay in the viewer's consciousness, especially as the events are coming to a head. This is the reason why the shots of the mountings are so important for the montage. In fact, they chiefly make us aware that Bond is working under pressure. So it is also a last-minute rescue that we have at the end. The cramped space corresponds with the restricted amount of time left for the protagonist to act.

This example is about constructing a particularly dramatic field that can be analysed specifically as a suspenseful situation. The breakdown of scenes is based on scene-by-scene analysis. In the suspense scenes, dangers, conditions of actions, complications and counteractions form a referential network of situative-dramatic entities, which must be obtained by a breakdown of scenes and be orchestrated in the film's staging. It may be that this idea is methodically very significant. If so, one would then be able to come up with a hypothesis about how viewers are located between the components of a situation. The partial situations gained in this way should be regarded as descriptions of situations, namely "danger situations".

The dramaturgy of suspense - particularly when it is a question of the staging and depiction of scenes - is the dramaturgy of danger on all levels of the staging through to the process of framing. A almost classic example for the use of indicators close up is Spielberg's *JAWS* (1975). Spielberg does not only use classic, indirect danger indicators, but also plays, sometimes in a stylish way, with filmmaking techniques. Interestingly, the shark, for example, is shown via the subjective camera. Right at the beginning, the film passes between shots from above and below the water line: the underwater pictures are filmed with a moving camera that is clearly observing the girl. Earlier, I had assumed that the viewer develops the hypotheses from this material. The inference [3] offered by *JAWS* is as simple as it is effective: firstly, it is assumed that there is an intention steering the camera movement; if an intention is there, then a protagonist capable of some intent can and must be assumed - an underwater protagonist could be the shark announced in the title. Secondly, an interaction will be assumed between the protagonist who is only shown via the camera angle and the girl depicted. The intentional framework for the image is quite different depending on whether the protagonist is a bloodthirsty shark or a pubescent voyeur.

Another example is the *showdown* of the same film, beginning with the shark attacking the boat. Here, Spielberg starts by showing the movement of the drum(s) on the water as an indicator of the shark's movements under the water; then he shows from within the boat's interior how the planks are breaking and the water beginning to seep through the cracks into the boat. The depiction of the shark's activities are given an implicit perspective - we only see those things which the protagonists could also see. The shark itself stays hidden underwater, an element of the action which must be synthesised and pieced together by the viewer from circumstantial evidence.

Getting the perspective in scenes of suspense is very ambivalent. The only fundamental thing appears to be the separation of the world into pro- and antagonists. While the activity of the antagonists may be shown through their influence on the environment of the protagonists (i.e. the events are perceived by protagonists) in another case, it will be depicted as if the antagonist was observing the activities of the protagonist. Here, it is mainly the means by which one creates a subjectivizing of the perspective that also serves to indicate an absent "actor". While in

the case of *JAWS*, it is the obviously intentional movement of the underwater camera which leads one to conclude the existence of an underwater protagonist, in Clément's *LE PASSAGER DE LA PLUIE* (1969), it is the height of the camera in several scenes which leads one to suspect that the camera is here representing a secret observer (the female protagonist has just thrown the body of the rapist, whom she had killed in self-defence, over the cliff). Here the camera exactly copies the viewpoint of an as-yet-unidentified opponent who could possibly pose a new threat to the girl - an observer who watches her doing a forbidden act [4]. The example may, in addition, stand for viewers, who have to transform themselves into a "foxhound" for the purpose of the act of anticipating (Wuss, 1993b, p. 108), making use of generic patterns like the role model of pro- and antagonist to propel the story forward into that area of narrative "not yet" which is the centre of the actual attention.

Representing the antagonists directly may be deduced from the fact that the orientation of the viewer occurs by means of the orientation of the protagonist's actions. When one doesn't directly present protagonists' opponents or the source of the danger threatening them, but only shows its effect on the protagonists' world, then antagonists become uncontrollable, pure calculation, the product of the workings of the viewers' imagination - for, what is only documented in traces can, on the one hand, be calculated, but then proves, of course, to be a free projection surface for the workings of one's imagination. Indexically represented antagonists are structurally defined, can be deduced from the material, and are not empty; but they are only defineable as a "functor", and are not presented in all plasticity. One hears that the indirect representation of antagonists makes the working of the viewers' imaginations inevitable. And because fantasizing about evil is pleasurable, the monster is consequently so disappointing and scarcely terrifying when it finally does materialize and is shown to viewers. The best monsters only appear in the imagination of the viewer - they are not shown, but just indicated and established as opportunities for the imagination to work.

Another thing results from the indexical representation of the antagonist. Since every event that is interspersed with such indexes is immediately a "suspenseful" scene on which the pro- and antagonists both exert their influence. Portraying one of the suspense roles indirectly opens the events, at any rate,

into the area of the action (cf. Comisky & Bryant, 1983, pp. 50f).

It is easy to find plenty of examples. A simple one occurs in the Bond film *A VIEW TO A KILL*. There is an establishing shot opening a scene in which a dark figure, an armed man who evidently has the house under observation, moves in the foreground at the end. The dramatic space is immediately broken, a moment of danger changes the subsequent events, a further figure is introduced. With each moment, viewers are certain that the scene is under observation. It is only when Bond and the girl are attacked that the danger indicator presented at the beginning of the scene disappears, possibility becomes reality, the suspense (coming from the uncertainty as to who the observer is and what he or she plans to do, etc.) dies down. Appearances by villains are often prepared using such a designatory and anonymous technique as indicating figures as shadows. In *THE LADYKILLERS* (1955), Professor Marcus (Alec Guinness) appears at the beginning of the film only as a shadow, which seems to chase the old lady and encircle the house. John Badham's *STAKEOUT* (1987) provides a very good example which articulates both dramatic and narratively relevant information with the same iconographic trick: the violent criminal, who had been hunted by the police throughout the whole land, has crashed into an icy river whilst on the run. He has, apparently, drowned - at least, that is what the police firmly believe. The fact that he is still alive is made clear by a brief shot showing him secretly emerging from the water, unnoticed by all the others who we see searching the river in the background.

4. Narrativization of Objects

In the dramaturgy of suspense all the elements of the text should be examined to see how one can use them to exert influence on the viewer's expectations. In particular, the world of objects is used to present the viewer with a world that is interspersed potentially with meanings and dangers. The fact that the world of objects cannot be left neutral, but is incorporated into the film's discourse and strategies to establish meanings, is perhaps one of the most elementary principles of cinematic signification and communication. No landscape is serene, one might agree with Eisenstein, that it loses its innocence in cinematic narrative, turns out to be full of threats and profound thoughts, is filled with meaning becau-

se people act in line with the environments. In his often very direct manner of addressing basic elements of filmic narrative, Hitchcock said, in talks with Truffaut: "We use lakes for drownings and the Alps to have our characters fall into crevasses" (Truffaut, 1968, p. 85). The world of objects is presented in the actions of the protagonists and thereby given functions which can be different in every story. What remains the same, though, is how the world of the material outer is occupied in the story by the action's outer layer. The most elementary of rules are combined with this basic movement of how the story can be brought forward: in Kusturica's film *ARIZONA DREAM* (1993), one of the protagonists says very aptly: "If a gun is shown in the first half of the film, you can be sure that it will be used at some time during the film".

It is the communicative frame of the narration that ensures that objects are used in such a way as to cast light on and be specific about the actual subjects of the narration. The principle of the (thematic) relevance ensures that the framework of meaning for the story does not get lost. Pudovkin describes in his "Film Manuscript" a little scene where the images of a tramp, a down-at-heel, rough fellow, are juxtaposed with a little, plump kitten dozing in the sun; the tramp picks up a stone, with the obvious intention of smashing the sleeping little animal - and only a coincidence prevents him from actually carrying out his evil plan. Pudovkin writes:

In this small scene there isn't a single explanatory title. The impression is clear and vivid in spite of this. Why? Because it was the correct and appropriate vivid material that was selected. The dozing kitten is the perfect expression of pure innocence and carefreeness and the heavy stone in the hand of the enormous man is an apt symbol for brutal, senseless cruelty (1961, p. 53).

The "vivid material" is one of cinema's basic means of expression, and it is no surprise that it also occupies an important place in the strategies of the generation of suspense.

A popular term for suspense-related aspects of objects or uses of objects is Hitchcock's *MacGuffin* (Truffaut, 1968, pp. 111-114). Hitchcock includes here objects around which a story can be developed, but which, formally, can be neutral. If one follows Peter Wuss' arguments, then it seems

to be enough if the action of the figures has a goal [5] which the viewer accepts as being important for them without them having to know any more about it or to accept as something particularly valuable. The problem solving can then be undertaken within the prescribed sphere of investigation so that the field of reference is not altered during the game by pragmatic information (1992, pp. IV-18-19).

On closer examination, the MacGuffin proves to be a particular kind of strategy which Hitchcock made use of in many different variations and which one could label "narrativization of objects". It is a question of giving meaning to objects that are legible or open to interpretation for viewers with regard to the situation, possible threats, the intentions of the pro- and antagonists. In the deployment of objects in a film's action, Hitchcock provides items of *evidence* whose subjective or objective meaning must be read for the course of the action. The indexical value assigned to the objects connects them with actions and scenes. An interesting example are the ties in *FRENZY*:

During the confusion surrounding the dead body [at the beginning of the film] the speaker says in the cool, 'British' way: "I say - this is not my club tie, is it?", and the tie is given a *colossal importance* when the camera picks it out in close-up around the dead woman's neck. It becomes a *sign of recognition* in the film. Its use, though, immediately takes the audience on a ride. We are thrown into the next information-packed scene [...] without any kind of leisurely transition like a fade-out or fade-in. We see *Richard Blaney*, alias Jon Finch, standing in front of a mirror as cool as a cucumber, carefully putting on his *tie* (Frevel, 1993, p. 25).

The tie is used to suggest an ending which would make the "murderer" comprehensible within the murder schema. The viewer becomes a criminological *bricoleur*: objects are elements forming the hypothesis, they have the status of circumstantial evidence [6].

The situativity of the filmic scene is closely connected with the fact that the way people deal with a danger also - and even in particular - cover the adapting of the people to the facts of the situation. This requires one to instrumentalise the object's surroundings

for the purpose of showing resistance. Objects are newly defined as weapons etc. In a given framework, the situation will be newly constituted as a scenario for the story. By being able to define objects anew for the purpose of analysis, one sees, on the one hand, that the hero has left his impotence, paralysis and helplessness behind; on the other hand, it shows that his intelligence, alertness and craftiness can also be a match for a seemingly powerful antagonist [7]. In *TORN CURTAIN* (1966), the protagonist and the peasant woman have to kill the Stasi agent, Gromek, in a long and desperate fight. The fight must not be noisy, otherwise it will attract the attention of the taxi-driver, who is waiting in the farmyard. Thus, the peasant woman puts Gromek's pistol in a drawer. Among all the other household items, there is a big meat knife, which looks as if it could be used even against an enemy who fights like a lion. The knife almost proves irresistible as a weapon. It has a cataphoric impulse which is oriented to the mortal struggle. A similar, microsituative re-interpretation of a knife as a murder weapon can be seen in Hitchcock's *SABOTAGE* (1936). It falls, by chance, into the hands of a woman who will kill her husband because he was responsible for the death of her young brother (cf. Truffaut 1968, pp. 86-89).

The way Hitchcock approaches the narrativization of objects becomes particularly apparent when he drops a narrated object for no reason. A famous and oft-mentioned example is a bundle of money in *PSYCHO* that represents a "new life" for the protagonist as well as a "break with the bourgeois existence". It is reason enough for viewers to draw conclusions about intricacies specific to the plot - a report to the police, a chase, a new burglary, etc. - which have a major influence on the sphere of information in which viewers are orientating themselves. The fascination of this film comes, in part, from the fact that this bundle of money, which has been exposed beforehand in numerous acts of emphasis and underscoring, is not given as much attention after the murder of the protagonist. Its narrative significance is greatly reduced. Hitchcock calls the bundle of money a *red herring* and says

[T]hat was deliberate, you see, to detract the viewer's attention in order to heighten the murder. We purposely made that beginning on the long side, with the bit about the theft and her escape, in order to get the audience absorbed with the question of whether she would or would not be

caught. Even that business about the forty thousand dollars was milked to the very end so that the public might wonder what's going to happen to the money (Truffaut, 1968, p. 228).

Such strategies of staging can be directly referred to the processes where viewers construct the problem-solving area in which they can interpret the course of the plot, evidence and other exhibits, and so produce their own plot scenarios.

The fact, though, that these strategies are so prominent in Hitchcock, that they can also be ironically alluded to, can be demonstrated by the final reference to the bundle of money in *PSYCHO*. After the murder of the protagonist, the camera travels and pans once more through the apartment to end in a close-up on the newspaper where she had hidden her booty. This final underscoring at the end of what appeared to be an aimless search by the camera is also a sly reference to the strategy by which the film had guided viewers so far - the unmotivated emphasis of the object that was part of the narration until now and has no importance whatsoever for the murder. We are confronted here with a *reflexive retro-reference*, a metadramaturgical anaphor. Of course, the robbery is still important for the story. It motivates the investigation of the detective, the second victim. But the narrative compactness developed to this point, which had covered a dense network of actions with the motives of robbery/embezzlement and escape/pursuit, is abandoned, and the money is marginalised as well as presented in an ironic light.

5. Indicativeness

Indirect portrayals of danger indicate to viewers that they should interpret them to complete the presented *pieces of evidence* and arrange them as dramatic partial information. We are dealing here with the *expansion* of information into the area of future, the possible and probable developments of the drama. According to Bruner, one must go "behind" the given information (cf. Bordwell, 1992). There is a close correlation between the productivity connected with the formulation of given information and the intensity of subjective experience. This seems to be closely allied to a finding in research on pornography, which says that the subjectively experienced stimuli are all the more intense the more the imagination works on comprehending a text (Byrne & Lamberth, 1970).

The more indirect a depiction is, the more viewer activity is drawn to it and the greater the increase in the experienced involvement.

A given description of a situation provided by a film will be processed by viewers into an ensemble of possible extrapolations of the situation, into the open horizon of the "not yet" of the situation. I call this work *anticipation*. Now, the viewer is not left to his own devices, and not every film simply refers back to the competence of the everyday calculation of risks. Rather, film offers a whole series of conventional and film-specific techniques which allow it to influence viewers' development of a storyline. These are, to start with, advance references (cataphora) with which references are made to the forthcoming text, regardless of whether the reference comes about or not. Then there are the principles of the breakdown of scenes in which the situation is analysed for its moments of danger (so that a cataphoric power is present even in the cinematic forms of representation). Thirdly, there are the techniques by which objects as plot elements are developed into their own carriers of meaning so that the viewer can read the object level as carriers of evidence referring to other strata of meaning of the work.

The experience of suspense does not live from something exciting being shown in a film. Rather, it results from the extrapolation of possible events from a given situation, it is the result, or concomitant, of the anticipating activity. It is not what the film shows, but what it discloses, that is the subject of the analysis of suspense.

Notes

[1] On the one hand, "anaphor" is used as a complementary term to "cataphor" (in the sense of "reference back"), on the other hand, it is the generic term for all kinds of textual reference.

[2] On the restriction of space as a characteristic of the dramaturgy of suspense, see Borringer, 1980.

[3] Peter Wuss (1993b, pp. 107ff) points out that such conclusions can be regarded as abductions - a point that is highly significant.

[4] It has since become standard practice to show the antagonist through the camera. A film like *PLATOON* indicates, in the position of the camera and in the framing, the view of the Vietcong, an unsettling moment which pervades the whole of the film. In some of the more recent horror films

(Vera Dika calls them, significantly, *stalker* films), the subjective camera of the murderer is even the basis of the film's staging (see Dika, 1990).

[5] Vale identifies suspense completely from this vantage point; he writes: "Suspense is the doubt of the spectator as to the outcome of an intention of an actor in the story. Therefore the first necessity in order to achieve suspense is the intention. A story without intentions cannot possibly cause suspense" (1987, p. 174).

[6] One only has to think of the cigarette lighter in *STRANGERS ON A TRAIN*, Donald Spoto wrote (1977, p. 210): "The whole story in a single early image!"

[7] A wonderful example is *WAIT UNTIL DARK* (1967) where the situation is fundamentally altered with every action by the pro- and antagonist. With each move, the old ingredients in the situation are evaluated and functionalised anew.

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