



1 (A)



2 (B) Hingo: Set down here, ma'am



3 (D)



3a (E)



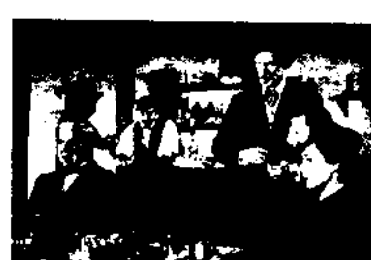
3a (C)



3b (C)



3b (E)



7a (C)



4a (B) Dallas: Thank you



4b (B)



7b (C)



8a (B)



4c (B)





9 (C)
Hatfield: *May I find
you another place,
Miss Mallory? It's
cooler by the
window*



10 (B)



11a (C)



11b (C)



11c (C)



12a (F)



12b (F)

29 · Nick Browne: 'The rhetoric of the specular text with reference to *Stagecoach*'

Communications, no. 23, 1975

The articulation of spectating positions through the structure of field-reverse-field and the point-of-view shot has been the object of a considerable amount of recent theoretical work.* Most influential, and perhaps most productive in this area, has been the development by Oudart, out of its use in Lacanian psychoanalysis, of the concept of suture** (a concept which is commented on in the 'Notes on terms', p. 298). In this essay Browne mobilizes notions of field-reverse-field, point of view and suture (with its concept of the 'Absent One' who 'authorizes' the look from a position off-screen) in an attempt to establish a formal rhetoric of the text – a 'geography' of the placement of authority for the look. This rhetoric falls within the terms of history and discourse which are elaborated in previous essays, posed by Browne as a relation between the fiction and the act of enunciation, the enunciation being masked by the placement of authority for the look with the characters of the fiction – 'the enunciative authority comes from the fiction itself'. Browne's essay is concerned with authority and spectatorship within the text. Its analysis of a 'geography of authority' corresponds to the rhetoric of the order of discourse which Foucault's essay seems to call for, a rhetoric which is a crucial component of the formal analysis of the function of the author within the text.

This essay appeared, in French translation, in the highly influential special issue of *Communications* (the journal of the Centre d'Etudes Transdisciplinaires) on psychoanalysis and the cinema (no. 23, *Psychoanalyse et cinéma*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1975). The version used here is Nick Browne's original. A revised and extended version, 'The Spectator-in-the-Text: the rhetoric of *Stagecoach*', subsequently appeared in *Film Quarterly* (vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 26–44). While the later version raises interesting questions (notably, the elusive question of

* See particularly, Edward Branigan, 'Formal permutations of the point-of-view shot', *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, Autumn 1975, pp. 54–64. Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, 'Space and narrative in the films of Ozu', *Screen*, vol. 17, no. 2, Summer 1976, pp. 41–73.

** See 'Dossier on suture' (Miller, Oudart, Heath), *Screen*, vol. 18, no. 4, Winter 1977/8, pp. 23–76. Daniel Dayan, 'The tutor-code of classical cinema', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1, Fall 1974, pp. 22–31. William Rothman, 'Against "the system of the suture"', *Film Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 1, Fall 1975, pp. 45–50. The latter two articles are also in Nichols.

sympathetic identification), I have preferred this shorter version, which seems to deal with the immediate question of rhetoric more concisely.

(A note on stills. Where different moments within the same shot are shown, the still is marked 'a', 'b', etc. with the number of the shot. Readers who are unfamiliar with the context and significance of this scene within *Stagecoach* are referred to the published screenplay in J. Ford and D. Nichols, *Stagecoach* (London, Lorimer Publishing, 1971). The text is also available as one of the frame blow-up reconstructions published by Picador in the Film Classics Library series edited by Richard Anobile.)

The sequence from John Ford's *Stagecoach* shown in the accompanying set of stills raises a little explored question of filmic narrative, the relation in a text between the saying and the said, the act of enunciation and the fiction. To begin to account for certain important formal features of these images – the framing of views, the direction of glances, the position of characters, the sequence and repetition of shots – as a set of ordered relations requires an initial organizing premise: that this set of formal relations, the filmic structures that present the action, can be understood as a structured answer to a rhetorical problem. We mean that these formal structures are linked, in a way whose complexity and integrity we are prepared to demonstrate, to a rhetorical situation – the act of showing a dramatic scene to a spectator, an act we are calling the enunciation. Because of the importance of views, glances, screens and framing, both in the relations of seeing among the depicted characters and in the presentation of those relations to an audience, we are provisionally conceiving the structure of filmic discourse, here, this set of stills from *Stagecoach*, as a product of this double and linked set of views. The structure of this 'specular text' is the object of our commentary.

The paper argues through an analysis of the stills that the requirements of a rhetorical presentation are articulated as a set of integrated structures and strategies that give form to the action of the fiction and at the same time determine the locus of the spectator in what might be called his reading of the film. The paper shows in analytical detail the way in which the two levels of view, enunciation and fiction, relate in a 'text' whose structure proceeds initially from a prohibition against a meeting of glances between spectator and actor, and secondly, from social premises implied

the relations among characters. Generally, the paper proposes to consider this short but classical text for the purpose of showing the structural importance of the rhetorical situation, the integrity and coherence of the specular structures that are articulated, the determinants that give them form, the notion of the role of the implied reader, and finally for suggesting certain critical concepts needed to account for or describe these structures.

Set-up and place

There are a number of concrete features of the stills which must be noted. Of the twelve shots, there are six different set-ups: A (1); B (2,4,8,10); C (3,7,9,11); D (5); E (6); F (12). As a camera position, each set-up is a marker of the enunciation that shows the scene from a different geographical point, constituting a view.

But each set-up relates in a complex and different way, both geographically and in the logic of its connection, to the action of the fiction. The geographical places of the characters are defined by reference to the configuration of the table. Thus B, the view showing Dallas and Ringo, is from the head of the table and is presented, in a remarkable coincidence of person and view, from the place that Lucy occupies; C, the view of Lucy and the group behind her which excludes Dallas and Ringo frame left, is from a place to the left of the table that nobody in the scene occupies; D, of Lucy, from near the middle of the table, forms a shot-reverse shot unit with E, of Dallas; A and F show the entire group. Lucy, as a body, appears either by herself or with the group in all the shots except those with Ringo and Dallas, and is shown, with a single but problematic exception, from a set-up which is not from the place of anyone in the room. Ringo and Dallas are never shown in the same frame with Lucy or the group, and whether they appear together (2,4,8,10) or alone (6), they are shown from the set-up at the head of the table associated with Lucy's place. That is, each of the twelve shots of the sequence refers to Lucy's presence either by actually showing her, or by the showing of the scene of Dallas and Ringo associated with her glance, that is, either through body or the product of her eye.

View and glance

The views shown on the screen have associations of different kinds with the glance of particular characters in the fiction. As has been

pointed out, in set-up B there is a literal coincidence of view and glance, which in shot 4 is given special force by the dolly forward. By contrast, A, C and F are from locations in the room that no character literally occupies. Nobody's shot, though, is concretely located by showing a particular view, and is thus connected with the depiction of a certain kind of consciousness associated with characters in the fiction. Finally the elaborate and systematic strategy of the 'depicted glance' is articulated by the shot-reverse shot paradigm, as studied in Daniel Dayan's commentary on Oudart (*Film Quarterly*, Fall 1974). In this paradigm the shot on the screen is presented as the glance of another spectator, the 'Absent One', from an implied, complementary but invisible field, in our sense from an off-screen character. In the reverse shot, the off-screen field is shown to be occupied by this character, the owner of the glance that corresponds to the first shot. The 'Absent One', the off-screen spectator of shot 1, is transferred in shot 2 from the level of enunciation to the level of fiction. The circuit of entailment and presentation proceeds like a revolving door. Views 5 and 6, the shot-reverse shot paradigm in the sequence, is made readable by this logic and shares with set-up B a justification by reference to a literal glance from within the fiction. Reading a shot as a character's view, however, does not depend on a geographical coincidence of set-up and body. For an account of the complexity and details of the structure of the enunciation in the sequence, particularly in the matter of the presenting and framing of nobody's shot, the play of this generalized logic must be concretized and elaborated.

Though the glance can be the unacknowledged explanation of the source of a view, the glances shown within the frame, that is on the level of fiction, have a structural as well as a thematic importance. Matching of shots by eyeline is not an inconsequential feature of intelligibility. There are two shots where specular relations are enclosed within a single frame – the intimate and unmediated exchange in 4a and the group's watchful suspense in 11a. But views out of the frame, the turning around to look (3), a repelling by a glance (5), an acknowledgement of shame by averting the eyes (6b), are the central actions of the sequence. To summarize, then, the regard can be associated, as a source, with the act of enunciation – as a view – by a coincidence with the place of a character, or more indirectly as a depicted glance. On the level of fiction, the regard, charged with emotion and directed either on or off screen, can be the action.

An exchange of glances in context

The presentation of the moment of highest drama, the exchange of glances between the glowering Lucy and the uncertain Dallas, illustrates the basic rhetorical structure of the sequence. Just preceding this critical moment, the prostitute Dallas, on Ringo's invitation – 'Set down here ma'am' – has seated herself beside Lucy, the married woman in the white hat already sitting at the head of the table, thus transgressing a social code well understood by those in the room, for they turn their heads. The code, of which Lucy is the primary custodian and defender, requires the distancing and exclusion of the impure, the black. The *mise-en-scène* in which this exchange of looks is enacted thus depicts, in the terms purity/impurity, the alliances and exclusions within the social structure of the group.

The figuration of shot-reverse shot stands in a necessary structural relation to its place in the chain, and is paradigmatic of the rhetorical organization of the sequence. Its presentation (5,6) is asymmetrical in the degree of frontality of the two women – Lucy is shown nearly straight on – and corresponds to a different angle for the set-ups chosen for their depiction. The asymmetry of angle is read with particular clarity by the operation of the premise of the averted glance. Dallas is depicted as being seen by Lucy, for shot 6 is, like 2 and 4, from Lucy's place at the head of the table. But the showing of Lucy, that is the depiction of Dallas's return glance, is from a place, the center of the table, that Dallas could not actually occupy. Unlike Lucy's, Dallas's depicted glance (5) does not coincide with the place of the eye of the character, the source and authority of the enunciation. Dallas's depicted glance is, in other words, displaced. In shot 6, she is looked at directly as from Lucy's eye, but she can return the glance only by averting her eyes frame left to avoid breaking the prohibition against meeting our eye. The important difference is not on the level of the fiction – the women exchange glances simultaneously – but on the level of enunciation, in which Lucy's glance is authorized and Dallas's dispossessed.

The asymmetrical presentation of the shot-reverse shot is not arbitrary, but linked in demonstrable ways to the entire pattern of views. The shot of Dallas (6) is linked by similarity of angle, if not by scale to 2, and follows by an elliptical jump from the dolly forward shot (4a, b, c). This dolly, beginning from Lucy's place at the head of the table, emphasizes its enunciative force by a movement that corresponds to or refers to a concentration of Lucy's

attention. Thus, by presenting itself as the subjectivizing force of a glance, it serves as a formal means of furthering the action by introducing a change in scale. Shot 5, as a change from 4 in scale and direction, is linked by the tightest of specular logics: it is the paradigmatic shift from a scene shown by Lucy's eye (4) to the reverse field of the originating glance (5), from enunciation to fiction. The transition from 5 to 6, and from 6 to 7, follows in different ways the same current of induction. The analysis confirms that this shot-reverse shot has internal and necessary relations to surrounding views, in that it requires, and explains, its narrative movement by the same specular logic. Of course, what is yet to be accounted for from shot to shot is the precise set-up and framing which realizes this logic.

Though Dallas, as the object of Lucy's glance in 2 and 4, is presented at a weaker angle at the moment of exchange, she is given by scale, if not by set-up, a kind of independent standing through the symmetry of a static close-up. A comparison by scale is asserted. Though the enunciation favors Lucy as a position and as a figure of authority over a diffident and dislocated outcast, the exchange is a moment of dramatic tension and illustration, because the narrator asserts on Dallas's behalf, by the emphatic effect of scale, the close-up, an image of presence (6) that is put in dramatic play. The enunciation which adopts the authority of Lucy's glance as its mask, and dispossesses Dallas's, both theatricalizes the moment by scale and juxtaposition and comments on it by an asymmetry of angle. That our sympathies in the sequence are strongly with Dallas suggests the compelling force of the situation shown in the fiction.

Invisibility and the geography of authority

The presentation of this exchange of glances depends for legibility and force on its links with views (1,2,3,) that present a complementary orientation, and particularly on its relation to the view from set-up C (3,7,9,11). Structurally, the alternation of set-up C with B places and confirms Lucy's glance as the source of views 2,4,6 and 10. Excepting the first and last shots, C is the only set-up which is not referred, apparently, in some direct way for its authority to a glance of a character in the fiction. As the product of an enunciatory act, its geographical source and its authority seem transparent and unquestioned – it is shown to us by the narrator from the eye of the camera. But the frame of set-up C

excludes in a severe way the object of the group's attention (e.g. 3a, b) – Dallas and her act of transgression. Though screened from us, the prostitute and criminal are present from this set-up by the collective glance off-screen of the audience-in-the-film. The plasticities of the image, differentiated into foreground and background zones by the table, are the scenes, first, of Lucy's glance of repulsion as an actor and, in the second and deeper plane, the source of a glance which defines the group as spectators or witnesses. Thus the framing of the shot responds to an off-screen scene which to us as audience at this moment is a point of invisibility, but a point that nonetheless structures the rhetoric of the sequence.

The relation of set-ups B and C is a rotating of field-reverse field. B, from the head of the table, is the product of Lucy's glance and C, the reverse field, shows the source of that glance – Lucy at the table with Dallas excluded by the frame. This structure, like 5 and 6, is an asymmetrical presentation, for Lucy is present as eye (B) and body (C), whereas Dallas, though present in body (B), is not associated as an eye with the source of C. On the contrary, her exclusion by the frame, her invisibility as being off-screen, is not the same as Lucy's invisibility as the beholding eye. The view from set-up C, 'nobody's shot', belongs not to Dallas, and this is the remarkable feature – it is the complementary field of Lucy's glance, Lucy's person. The relation of B and C makes Dallas as a source of the enunciation, an absence, a point of invisibility, by making the field-reverse field paradigm apply to two aspects of only one person – Lucy's eye and body – corresponding in turn to first- and third-person views. The view from set-up C then, showing Lucy's support by the public and excluding Dallas, is a figuration not embodied in a single glance, but is the depiction or acknowledgment by someone of all the specular and power relations in the room. It is an image of Lucy's social self-consciousness and Dallas's invisibility.

The rhetoric of invisibility or of insufficiency extends, as has been suggested, to the presentation of the shot-reverse shot of 5, 6 through an asymmetry of frontality. The asymmetry of angle in 5, as the depiction, displaced and frontal, of Dallas's glance, acknowledges Lucy's social position and her stern defense of prerogatives, and registers Dallas's own unapproachability with respect to it. In fact, by this displacement, Lucy's presence in 5 has as much the status and effect of a self-presentation as of Dallas's depicted glance, and thus, as an enunciation, is similar to 'nobody's' viewpoint in C. The angle of Dallas's depicted view in both cases is presented as social dislocation, a correlative of the

depicted shame, in the system of differences that constitutes the authorized system of seeing in the film. Because of the first-person presentation, and the premise of the averted glance, Dallas's return glance must be a look elsewhere, out of the frame. The prohibition is put in play by the enunciation in 6 as a screen to keep Lucy's and our own glance inviolate, and to insure that Dallas remains invisible – as a social phantom. The general rhetoric of views and the way characters are made visible or invisible is motivated, the sequence implies, by differences in social standing justified by reference to a moral schema that distinguishes those inside from those outside customary law.

The structural incapacity to return a glance, Dallas's invisibility, corresponds to her position in a social milieu. It corresponds as well to a concrete geography, for authority of enunciation in this rhetoric presents itself as being derived from places, of characters in the fiction. As such Dallas is the place of incapacity that can not authorize a view. In this geography of authority there are multiple points of assertion that correspond to the position of each set-up. But there is a place on the left side of the table that the camera can not occupy, though it can be referred to by a glance (C), or looked into by others (B). The points of enunciative assertion, and of absence, are the masks of narrative authority.

The further significance then of set-up C is as a mask of full authorial presentation that locates the position of Lucy's objectified social self-consciousness, as outside and from a distance, as transcendental. The image is a figuration of a psychology based on a transparency of gesture that locates personal authority in a social role and conceives drama as the enactment of conflict of such roles.

The spectator/reader

The structured presentation of the enunciation implies a rhetorical design. The 'specular text' incorporates, in other words, the place and role of the spectator, though it acknowledges his presence only by honoring the prohibition.

The role of the spectator as a reader is structured to recognize but to close gaps – differences of scale, angle, location of presentation – asserted by the shifting views of the enunciation. The spectator/reader is required to occupy, from moment to moment, nodes of enunciation that present and define the action of the scene through establishing relations to the consciousness and perception of characters depicted in the fiction. Occupying these positions

identification, is not meant here as in the strictly Freudian sense, but rather as an enabling function that supposes a process of induction that makes an intelligible connection between the place of enunciation and the action of the fiction, a relation that we are calling the locus of the spectator's reading.

The locus, for us, is a vantage point, structured into the presentation, that permits the reader to follow the sequence of actions as a coherent chain of events. As the spectator's abstract 'position', the locus does not have a fixed or concrete location but follows the action. We have shown above that Lucy's presence both on the level of the fiction and enunciation dominates the organization of the sequence. In this sequence the locus is a centre structurally associated with Lucy, the figure of authority who is privileged by Ford's moral and social code to serve formally, as in B and C, to articulate and integrate the sequence of views that constitute the discourse. The location of the camera and the views of the action are made coherent and legible by reference to the authoritative function which Lucy performs and defines. Rhetorically, that is in terms of the locus of the spectator's reading, this center, occupied or depicted as the visual presence of a body or as a glance from an eye, is with each view constantly shifted. The spectator as reader thus follows and occupies a new view by the alternation of the 'location' of Lucy's presence between enunciation and fiction. Indeed, those characters on and off the screen, and the way they are there – the general organization of the spatial relations of the sequence – follow this centered logic of authoritative presentation.

In occupying a vantage point, the reader is engaged in a way that requires that he identify in two formal capacities – as actor and as spectator. In the shot-reverse shot, like 5, 6, he identifies formally, in terms of the enunciation, with the off-screen spectator whose glance is depicted as the view on the screen. But the primary and more strictly Freudian identification, the one which has been little discussed here, and which explains our response to Dallas as an outcast, is an emotional identification with the actor-character in the fiction. Thus the critical pair actor/spectator formulates the double capacities for audience participation structured by means of the enunciation.

In each enunciative situation, there is a competitive appeal to these two roles. 'Nobody's shot', set-up B, for example, establishes the reader's position as distanced, as pure spectator. He is present to the image in much the same way as the spectators-within-the-film. By contrast, with the dolly forward in set-up B, it is the force of the act of enunciation which predominates, an act which by its

movement incorporates the reader's glance, making him an actor. In general, the reader is present, one might say identifies with or sees the views of the film in accord with the way his double role actor/spectator is structured by the rhetoric of presentation. The process of reading this sequence of views, of feeling its effects of drama, coherence and continuity is a product of following the presencing of this centered figure of authority.

This governing rhetoric depends on the premise of the averted glance and asserts by its own means an effect of fascination and continuity. Daniel Dayan's commentary on Oudart exposes the logic of continuity through the operation of the 'suture'. The logic of the prohibition is double: ontologically it proposes a boundary and asserts that the space shown on the screen is virtual, an imaginary product, and of a different order than that of the projection hall; structurally it creates an obliquity, a difference, between the spectator's view and the character's that provides the ensemble of forms, and a medium of imaginary exchange available to the enunciation. It makes it possible to occupy, fictionally, the place of another's view. It creates a kind of readable space the audience must necessarily participate in, and the asymmetries noted above correspond to the formal place of the spectator. The sequencing of views around a center, when joined with this double logic has the effect, and it is a rhetorical strategy, of creating a certain form of dramatic illusionism by suggesting that the enunciative authority comes from the fiction itself. But all the shots, the personalized forms just as much as nobody's view, are masks of authority, that is presentations of an invisible narrator-author. As a production of the reading of the text, continuity and the 'effect of the real' protects this account of the status of the discourse.

The rhetoric of the specular text, the structures of viewing that mediate the relation between film and spectator and imply his 'location' as a reader, is, we propose, a stylistic-historical form. The analysis of *Stagecoach* and the critical concepts, enunciation, fiction, center, authority, locus, etc., proposed in this paper, might be regarded then as part of a semiological study of filmic texts in the way they present themselves as spectacles.

30 · Jean-Pierre Oudart: 'The absent field of the Author'

Cahiers du Cinéma, nos. 236-7, March/April 1971

Oudart's essay, focusing on Bresson and the 'New Wave', re-installs the author as a social, ideological, sexual subject ('*le sujet Bresson*') into the problematic of author-subject. More accurately, he attempts to provide an articulation of this subject (in social and productive relations) with the subject produced in the textual operations. In this sense, the essay can usefully be read as an extension of Oudart's 1969 essay, '*La suture*', an essay which has been translated and extensively commented on in *Screen* ('Dossier on suture', *Screen*, vol. 18, no. 4, Winter 1977-8). Oudart, here, refuses the view that the author-subject is simply a construct of the textual operation, outside history and sociality.

Oudart's essay also provokes questions about the author in the 'art cinema': in the same way Pam Cook, in the essay which follows this, raises the question of the avant-garde. The privilege which has been given to Hollywood cinema in the debate about *auteurism* has tended to flatten out distinctions between different cinematic practices, treating the relations between author, text and spectator as if they were always the same. In fact, such relations vary considerably within, as much as between, 'art cinema', 'popular cinema', 'modernist cinema'. In this respect, it is useful to refer to an earlier essay, 'The Name-of-the-Author', written by Oudart with Serge Daney, on the relations between the social, sexual and political subject, Visconti, and his text, *Death in Venice* (Daney and Oudart, 'Le Nom-de-l'auteur', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, nos 234-5, December-February 1971-2. Translation forthcoming).

The difficulty of an unfamiliar psychoanalytic terminology is apparent, and I have tried to indicate the psychoanalytic sense of as much of it as possible in the section 'Notes on terms' at the end of the book. Those terms which are included there are marked by an asterisk on their first appearance in the essay.

I 'Quatre Nuits d'un rêveur' [Bresson, 1971]

1 The intrigue¹ which is developed in the screenplay is no different from that of any of Bresson's other films: it always consists of an