

Sinister Cine-scape

An Ostranenie of the Everyday
through the Films of Alfred Hitchcock

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of the University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Landscape Architecture

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An abstract watercolor splash in shades of blue, teal, and grey, with the word 'Abstract' written in a black serif font over it.

Abstract

Formal education is primarily based upon learning about space through static two-dimensional representations, while landscape architecture responds to the ever-changing spatial and temporal conditions of the material world. The film medium, with its illusion of movement and three-dimensionality, offers an easily accessible antidote to this conundrum. Although cinematic settings are often constructed to promote a particular narrative rather than emulate physical reality, these filmic worlds trigger powerful imagery which overwhelms the lived experience of space. Through the analysis of three seminal films by director Alfred Hitchcock – *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest* and *The Birds* – this project represents an endeavour to deconstruct the haunting filmic atmospheres which transformed my perceptions of three familiar landscapes. Through the use of drawing and composite graphics, I have sought to understand this cinematic *ostranenie* – or defamiliarization – of the everyday and its underlying creative potential for the realm of landscape architecture.

To Mom and Dad: I wouldn't be here without you.





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Finally, I would also like to express my gratitude to those who affably granted their permission to include their beautiful photographs within this document, namely: R. Dian Durant, Mike Fleming, Gryffindor, Jiat-Hwee Chang, Methanie Dempsay Binder, Joe Fletcher, Thom Watson, Mike Cotter, Frances Hui, Sébastien Lucas, Adrien Teurlais, Tomas Sklenar, Giacomo Spagnoli, and Jamie Allen. Your kindness is very much appreciated.

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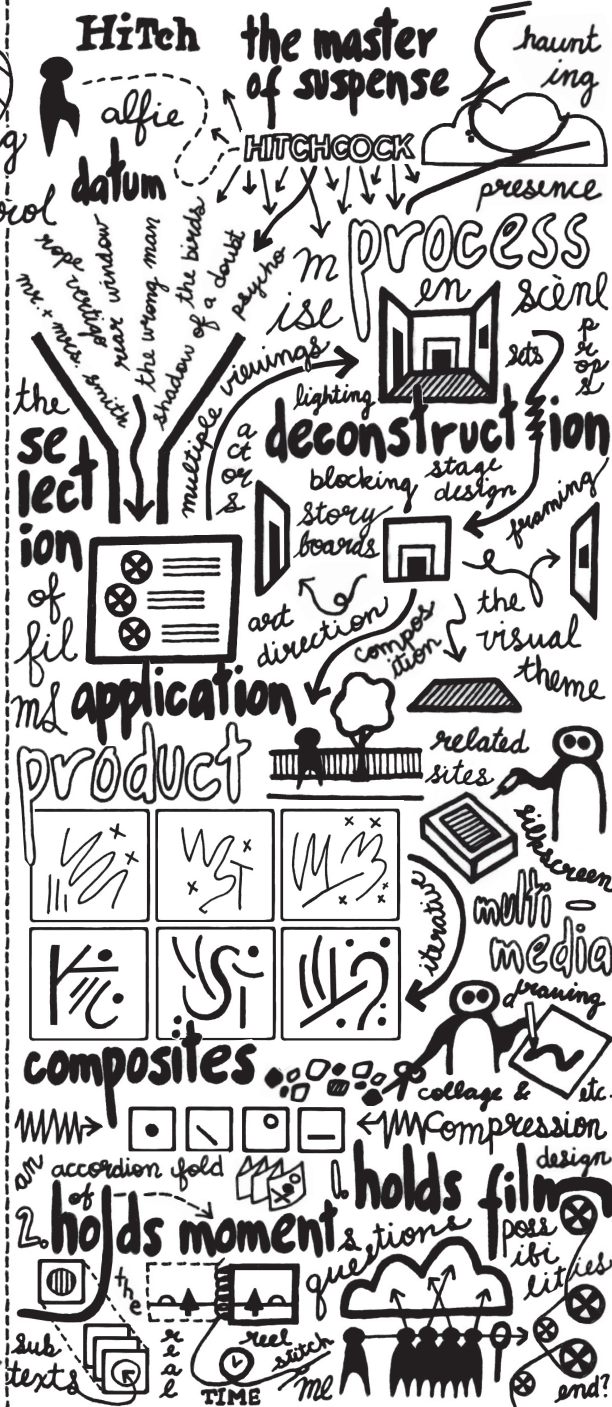
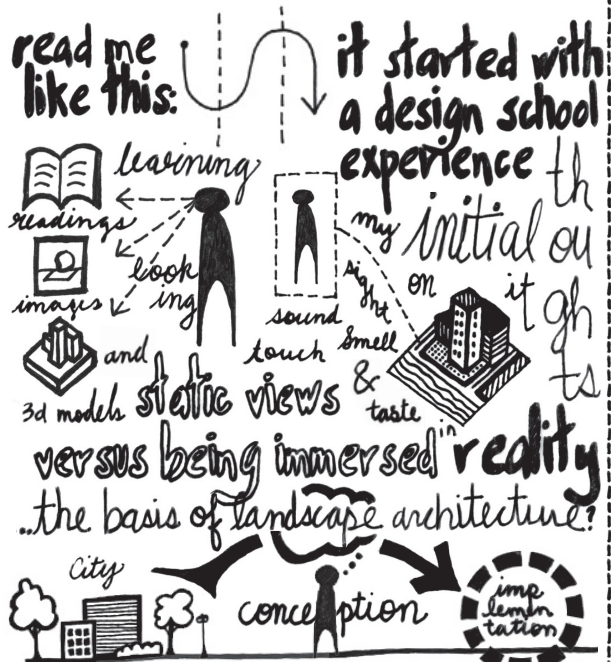


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Due to difficulties in securing copyright permissions, a number of the graphics in this document were removed or digitally altered prior to the final submission of this practicum. These images, which appear in Chapters 1 through 7, have either been removed and replaced by a graphite box, or contain portions that have been blurred out or omitted. Each redaction is accompanied by a short note. A complete list of these omitted materials can be found in 'Appendix A: Illustration Sources'.

In addition, there are several photographs in Chapters 2 and 7 for which permission was obtained to include these works in this document. Copyright information for these photos appear in the caption below the images themselves, as per the requests of the right holders.

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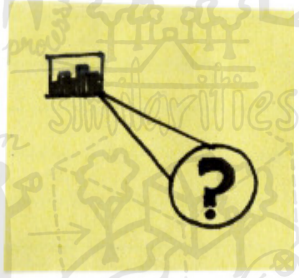


Figure 1.3 Desk Collage (Inset)



Figure 1.4 Picto-Grammar Details (Fragments)



Introduction

This graphic (Figure 1.1, overleaf) represents a visual outline of my project and it is meant to shock and overwhelm, just as I felt at the beginning of this practicum journey in the autumn of 2008. This illustration is an attempt to sort out all the new ideas I had encountered in the realm of film studies in relation to landscape architecture.¹

INITIAL THOUGHTS

The preliminary ideas inspiring this practicum project reach back to my experiences as both an undergraduate and a graduate student in design school. It is my belief that my formal education over the years has been primarily based upon learning about space through static representations such as readings, photographs and models of projects both constructed and unbuilt. To me, landscape architecture is conceived on the basis of physical reality: although design requires a great deal of imagination and vision, projects constitute a response to the spatial and temporal conditions of the 'Real World', even if they are not realized. Therefore, my question becomes: how can I reconcile these static two-dimensional depictions vis-à-vis the dynamic, multi-sensorial reality of motion and change in which design operates?

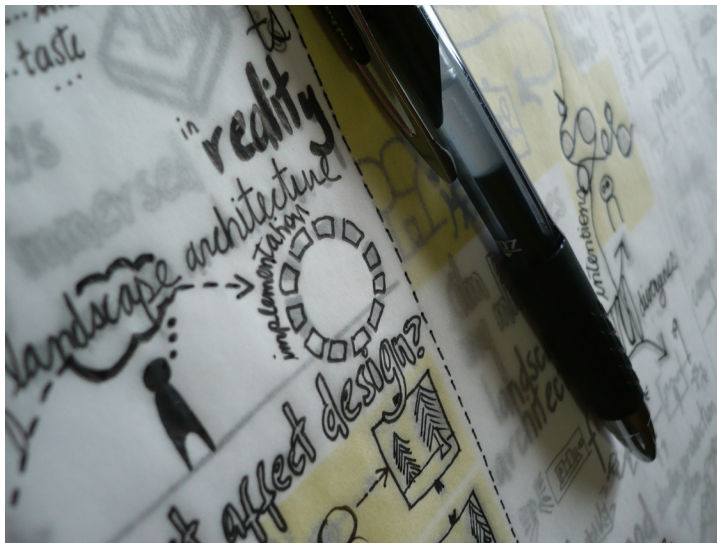
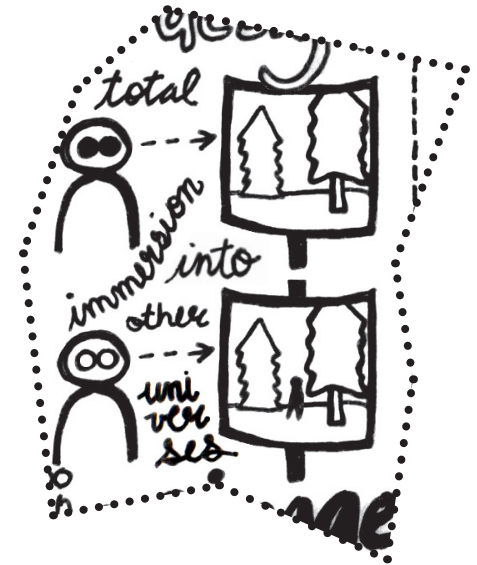


Figure 1.5 Graphic Development

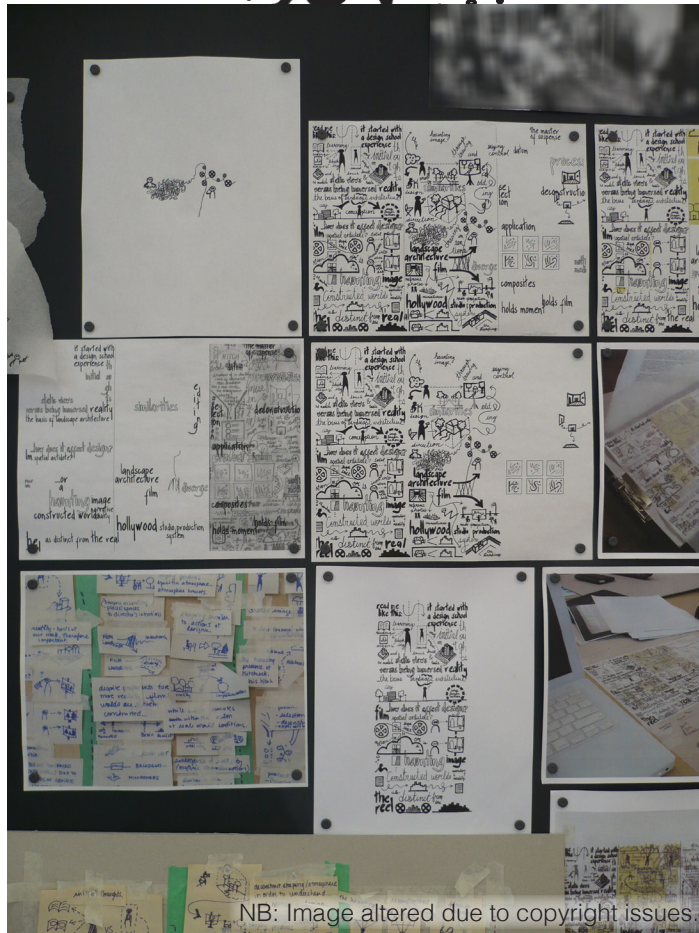


Figure 1.8 Picto-Grammar Details (Fragments)



FILM AS SPATIAL ANTIDOTE AND HAUNTING IMAGE

The film medium offered an apparent and easily accessible solution to this query. The sequencing of images in cinema creates the illusion of movement and three-dimensional space that is incredibly vivid, completely engaging and so strangely similar to the experience of physical reality that the impressions generated by this 'Reel World' tend to overwhelm my lived experience of space. This seamlessness, while allowing one to inhabit fantasy worlds, also triggers powerful imagery which lingers and persists as a ghostly vision long after the movie itself has finished running.



NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

Figure 1.9 Graphic Wall

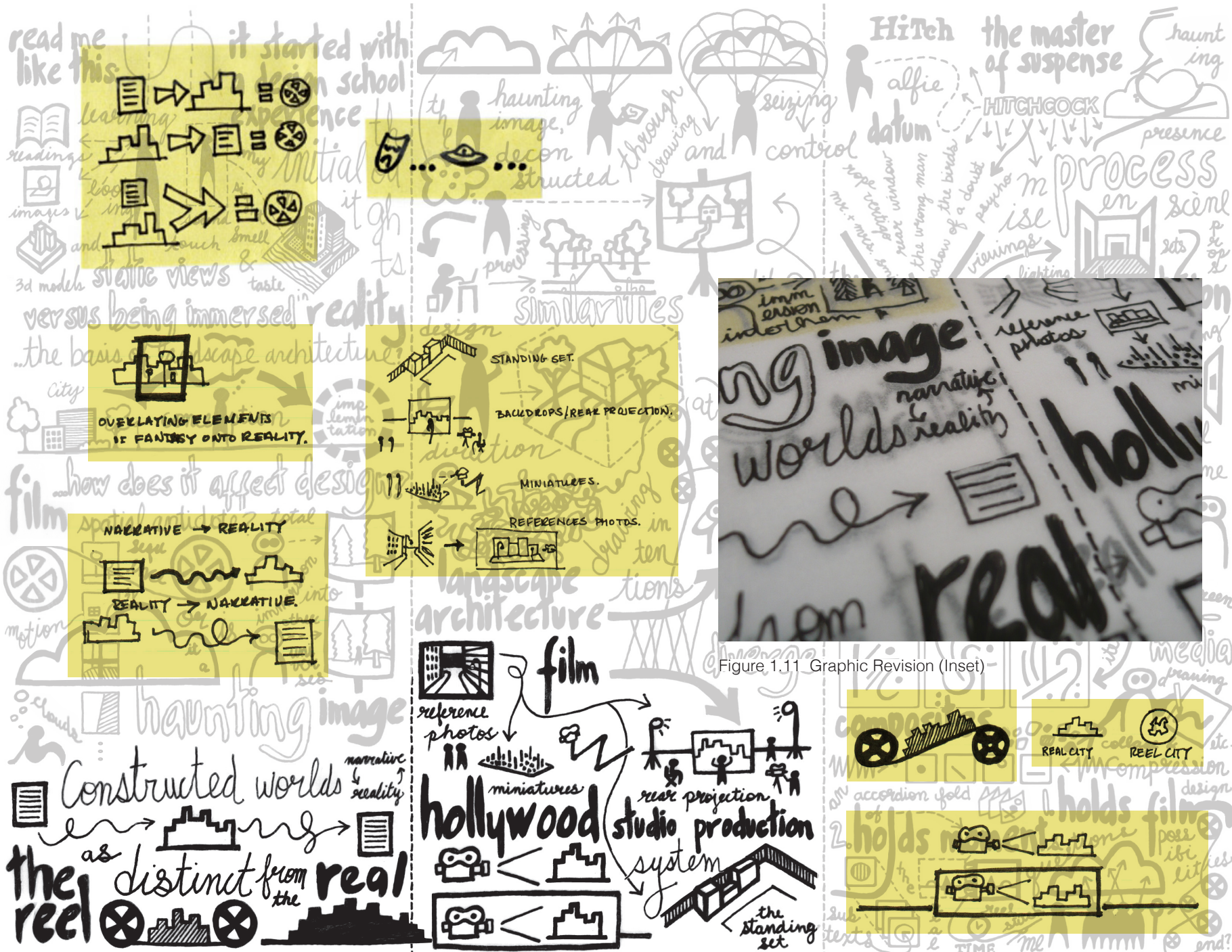


Figure 1.10 Constructed Worlds (Field)

Figure 1.11 Graphic Revision (Inset)

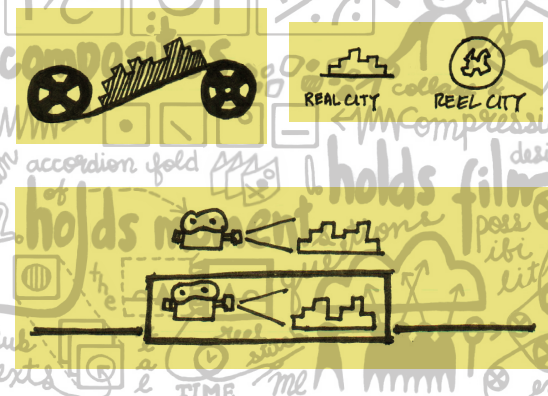




Figure 1.12 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

CONSTRUCTED WORLDS

As I began to contemplate the role of cinema in my developing understanding of space, I studied the film medium and the manner in which the surrounding landscape has been depicted throughout its history.

Early Cinema

With the advent of motion pictures in the late 19th century, the first films often involved a single long take to captivate audiences through exotic or dynamic views captured by this novel new medium.² Without a fictional narrative, this cinema focused on “street scenes or views of other topographical subjects, some of them photographed from moving vehicles and boats” to form the earliest genres: *actualities* and *phantom rides*.³ While *actualities* often involved recording urban scenes of daily life in the big city, often from a upper story window above the street, and *phantom rides* captivated audiences through unfolding dynamic views of the surrounding countryside captured by a camera strapped to the roof of a train or streetcar, both of these types can be considered to offer extensive, unedited views as a faithful reproduction of the surrounding landscape, even though these silent films were created on monochrome stock.⁴ Furthermore, cinema offered the ability to capture the movement and change inherent in nature which still cameras simply could not, even in the most verisimilar panorama.⁵

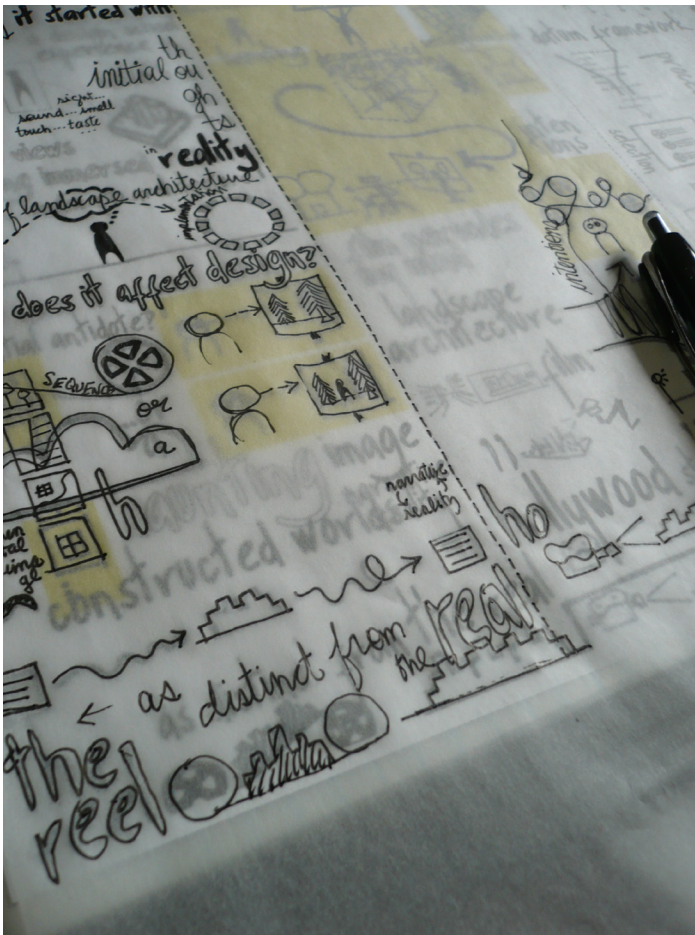


Figure 1.13 Graphic Development



Figure 1.14 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

Hollywood Studio Production System

As cinema continued to evolve into the 20th century, films generally became “longer, but with shorter shots, close-ups and, increasingly, fiction and studio sets” and consequently the landscape was relegated to the background as a setting in which narrative events took place.⁶ A particularly evocative period in cinema with regard to this notion of constructed worlds is the development of the American film industry during the early 1900s with the introduction of sound movies and the establishment of the Hollywood system of production.⁷ Since contemporary equipment was considerably bulky and microphones were apt to capture background noises, it was necessary for most films to be shot almost entirely on a soundstage. This meant that in many cases settings had to be almost entirely fabricated from scratch. A variety of clever technologies were devised to create this image, extensively documented by massive catalogues of

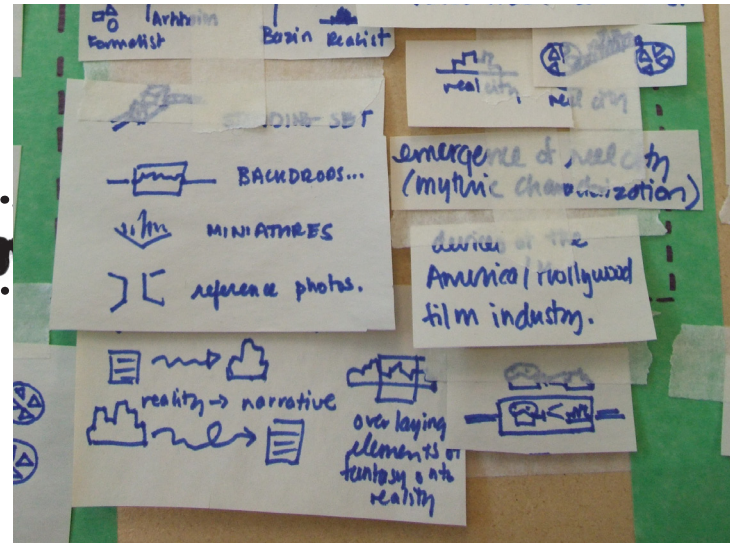


Figure 1.15 Desk Collage Detail

reference photographs, including the use of a large, permanent standing set located in the back lot of many studios, immense hand-painted backdrops, rear projection of film shot on-location to impart a dynamic feel, and miniatures or models skewed according to a false perspective to lend the illusion of increased depth in order to appear more convincing.⁸

Genre + Constructed Worlds

Since this Golden Age of American cinema, equipment has grown more portable and more sophisticated so as to permit filming to return to the streets, and it is common these days for movies to comprise a combination of location shots edited together with studio footage.⁹ Although contemporary narrative cinema has retained the emphasis on plot over setting, and consequently “cinematic locations serve as backdrops for characters that shape the story”, setting can also be expressive of underlying psychologies or overarching social

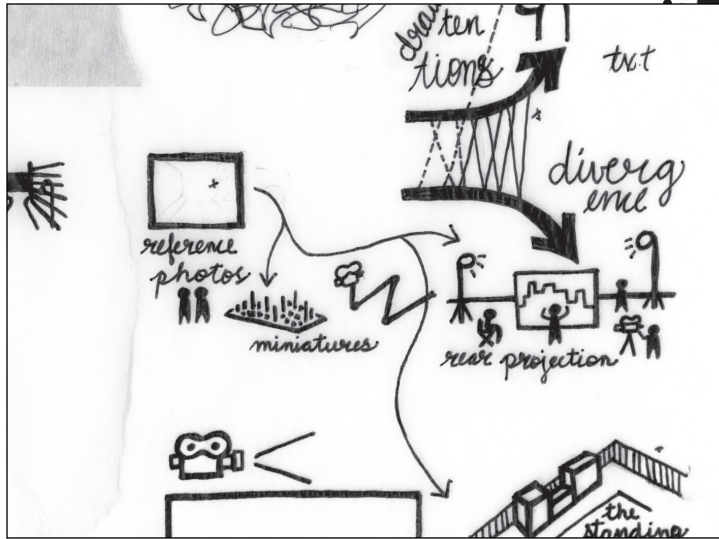


Figure 1.16 Graphic Scan

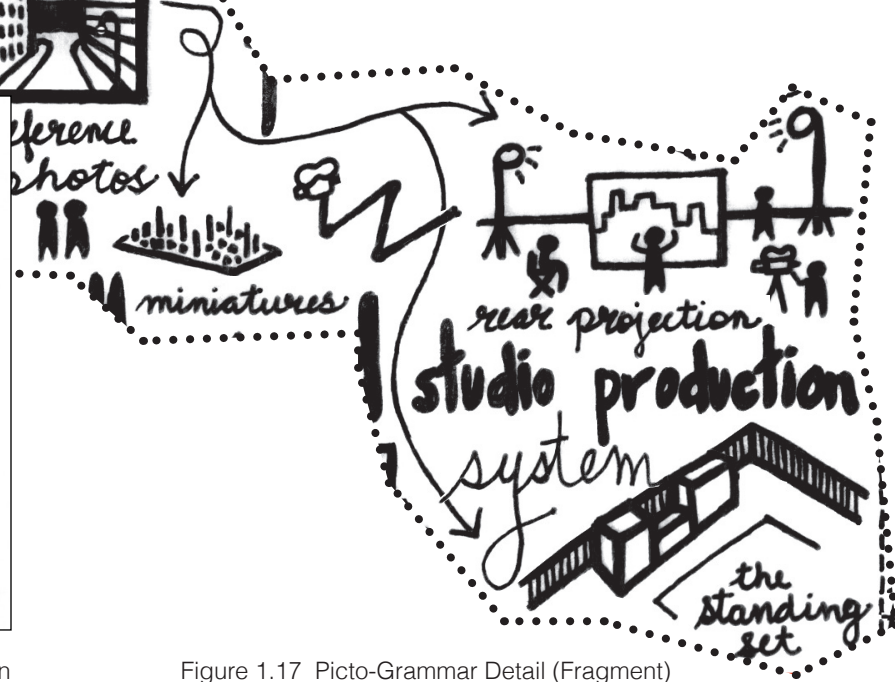


Figure 1.17 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

critiques, although these roles are mainly prevalent in experimental, rather than mainstream, film.¹⁰

Having watched a multitude of diverse films by this point in my research (see: Filmography, Appendix C), I noticed that the discussions with my advisor Richard tended to concentrate on movies from a few specific genres: drama, fantasy, and sci-fi. With this observation, I decided to investigate these categories in order to understand how genre and its associated conventions influenced the depiction of the landscape and drew several conclusions.¹¹ While drama films focus on human characters and their relationships, they require a setting which supports the unfolding narrative while not overshadowing it. In some cases, this setting is embellished as an extension of the characters, and other times it is mundane and banal, but generally it is manipulated to a certain extent according to diegetic needs of the storyline. In contrast, fantasy and sci-fi

films both tend to emphasize bizarre or extraordinary hypothetical situations, at times issuing warnings regarding dystopian futures. Occasionally these films present a totally detached universe from our own, and often require an entirely constructed reality to support these strange stories. While the impositions of genre result in a variety of distinctive realities, it is undeniable that all fictional films require a believable setting, an alternative world into which we enjoy escaping.¹²

While a film can begin with a narrative which requires the molding of reality into a plausible setting, as in many Hollywood films, or with a specific reality that inspires a particular narrative, as in Italian Neo-Realist pictures, cinema generally involves the deliberate manipulation of place and in this sense all filmic worlds are constructed to a certain extent, creating an ontological distinction between the 'Real' and 'Reel' worlds, and between the realms of landscape architecture and film.

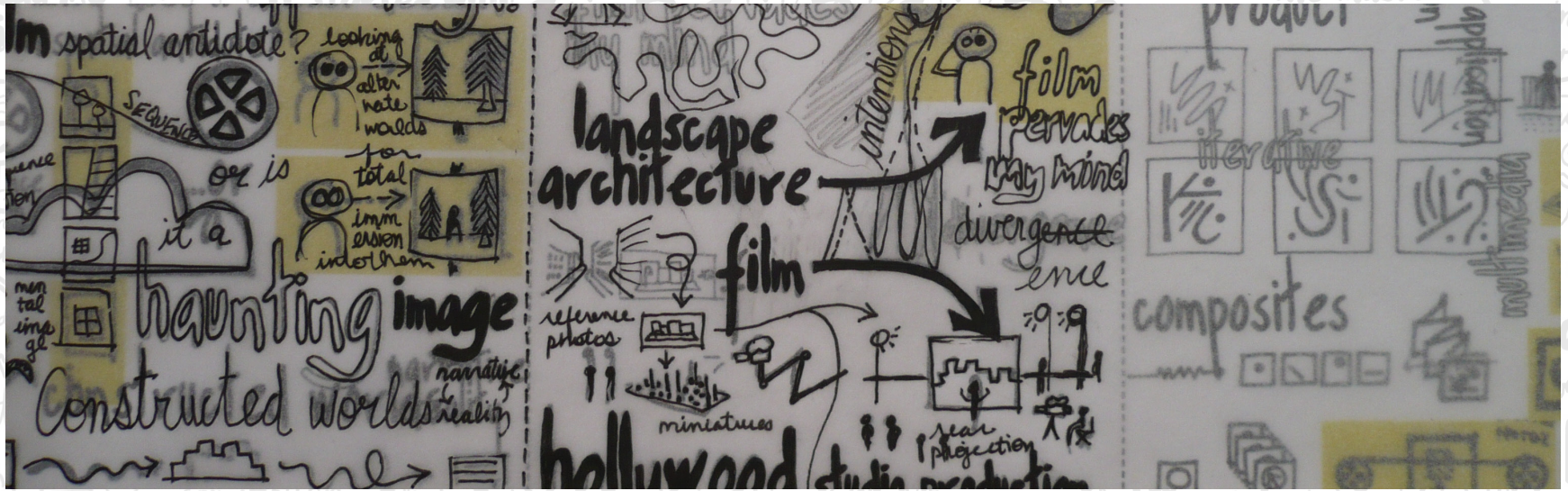


Figure 1.18 Graphic Progress (Inset)

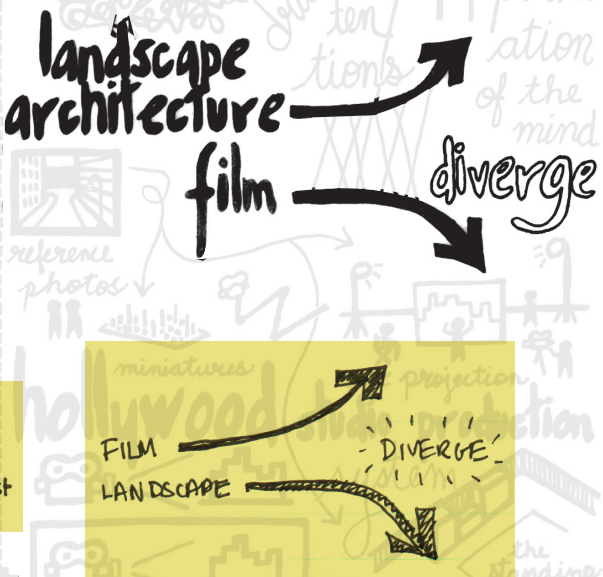
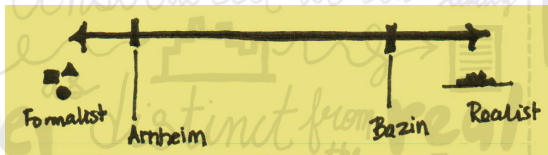


Figure 1.19 Divergence of Landscape + Film (Field)

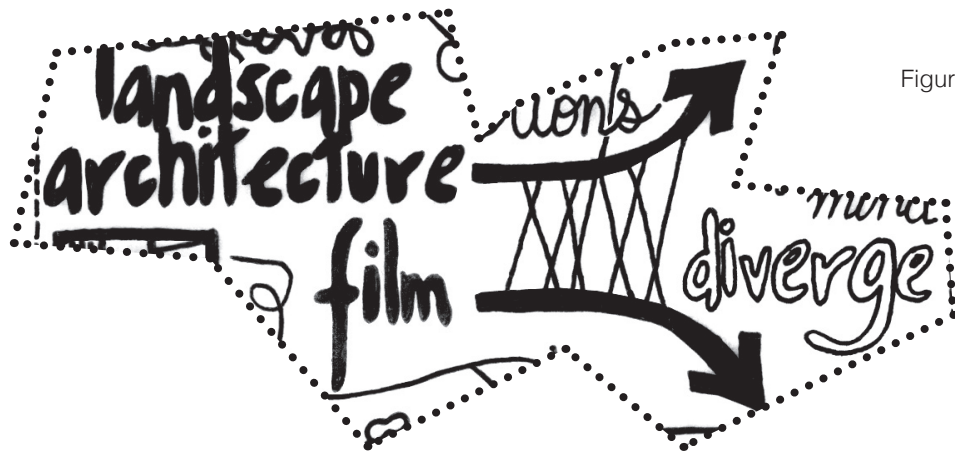


Figure 1.20 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

DIVERGENCE OF LANDSCAPE + FILM

As I continued to study the nature of the film medium through theoretical readings, it seemed to diverge from my understanding of landscape architecture.¹³ The seamlessness between our 'Real' world and filmic 'Reel' worlds is an illusion, after all, and despite the semblance of three-dimensionality, the cinema is still just a two-dimensional image...albeit in motion or sequence.¹⁴ The worlds depicted on film are for the majority shaped according to narrative, and therefore produce their own reality. While the 'Reel' World provides a captivating diversion into an alternate universe which makes film-watching such an enjoyable pursuit, the primary objective of film-making has been to develop a plausible setting rather than an authentic depiction of our physical milieu, the 'Real' world, in which landscape architecture maintains its agency.¹⁵

This represents the fundamental difference between landscape and film: while cinema creates worlds into which we escape, landscape architecture acts within the parameters of the world we currently inhabit.



Figure 1.21 Graphic Development

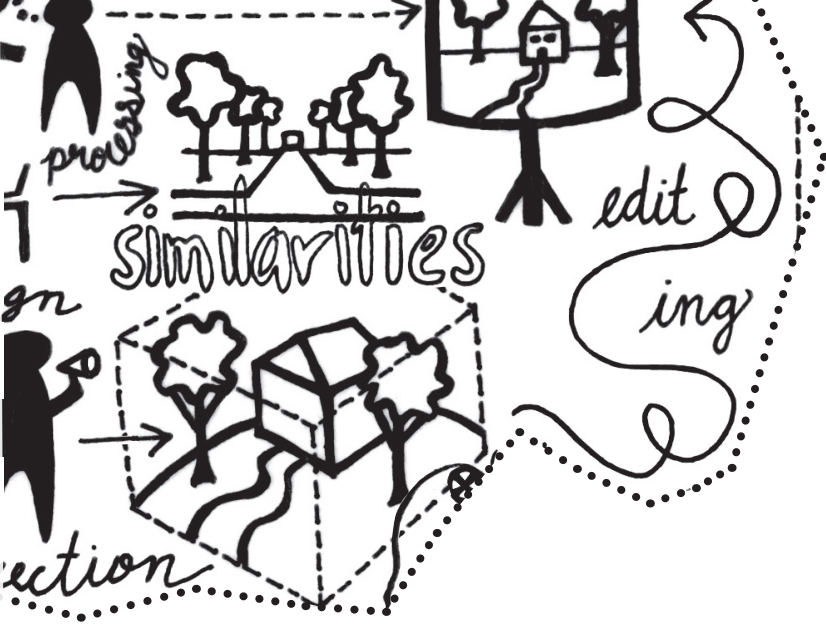


Figure 1.23 Picto-Grammar Details (Fragments)



[DRAW]ING PARALLELS OF INTENTIONALITY

In spite of this intrinsic gap, the haunting visual imagery in movies maintains a significant influence over my thinking, insidiously infiltrating my design process as I constantly return to particular moments in films when I begin to consider and manipulate spaces. Wondering why this effect is so pervasive, I started to ponder how it might be useful for designers to realize the covert influence of cinema. Through further readings in film theory, I became aware of the way that spaces are shaped according to the intentions of the director to elicit a specific emotional effect.¹⁶ This manipulation of setting can produce a particularly palpable atmosphere and indelible visual imagery, outcomes that I believe designers also strive towards with regard to interventions within the landscape.

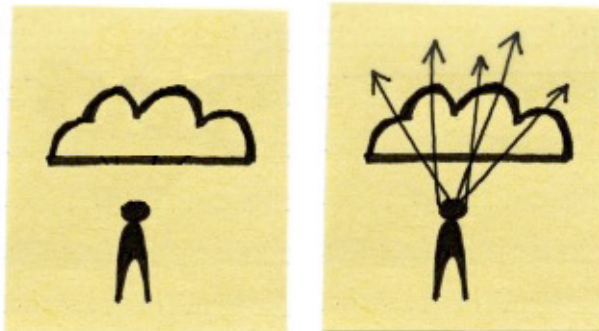


Figure 1.24 Breaking Through

The purpose of this practicum project is to deconstruct the manner in which cinematic atmosphere is shaped through an examination of the *mise-en-scène* and the specific devices employed by the director to achieve a certain emotional impact.¹⁷ Through the use of drawing to analyze this cinematic imagery, I explore how these concepts and techniques may be applied in landscape architecture to achieve similar effects.

Drawing as process and product is a notion that underlies this practicum. In my experience, landscape architecture is fundamentally driven by drawing: all design starts with the act of drawing to ascertain the conditions in which an intervention is proposed, as well as to generate possible solutions to a problem at hand by drawing out various alternatives in order to understand and communicate these possibilities. While this activity can result in the production of an artifact, engaging graphics which express ideas long after inception, design drawing is equally focused on the awareness that this act of making, the drawing process, stirs in our consciousness.¹⁸

Several different types of drawings were employed throughout this project to record, deconstruct and explore the imagery within a selection of films. In this document, the term 'drawing' is used to designate the spectrum of image-making processes that emerged over the course of this practicum rather than solely referring to its traditional sense as the act and the outcome of bringing pencil to paper. In this section, I will introduce each different drawing type utilized in this project and explain the specific reasons behind these selections. While the various categories are by no means discrete, this list attempts to distill the principal types used and is arranged according to the order in which the drawing types appear in this document, which roughly corresponds to the sequence in which they were adopted during this project as a whole.

1. Picto-Grammar

The first type of drawing employed in this practicum was a personal system of diagramming, a Picto-Grammar, which pervades my design work. This type of drawing generally appears as thick black lines and is often self-referential as I frequently used it to clarify my own thought process and actions in relation to the project in addition to communicating these ideas to my

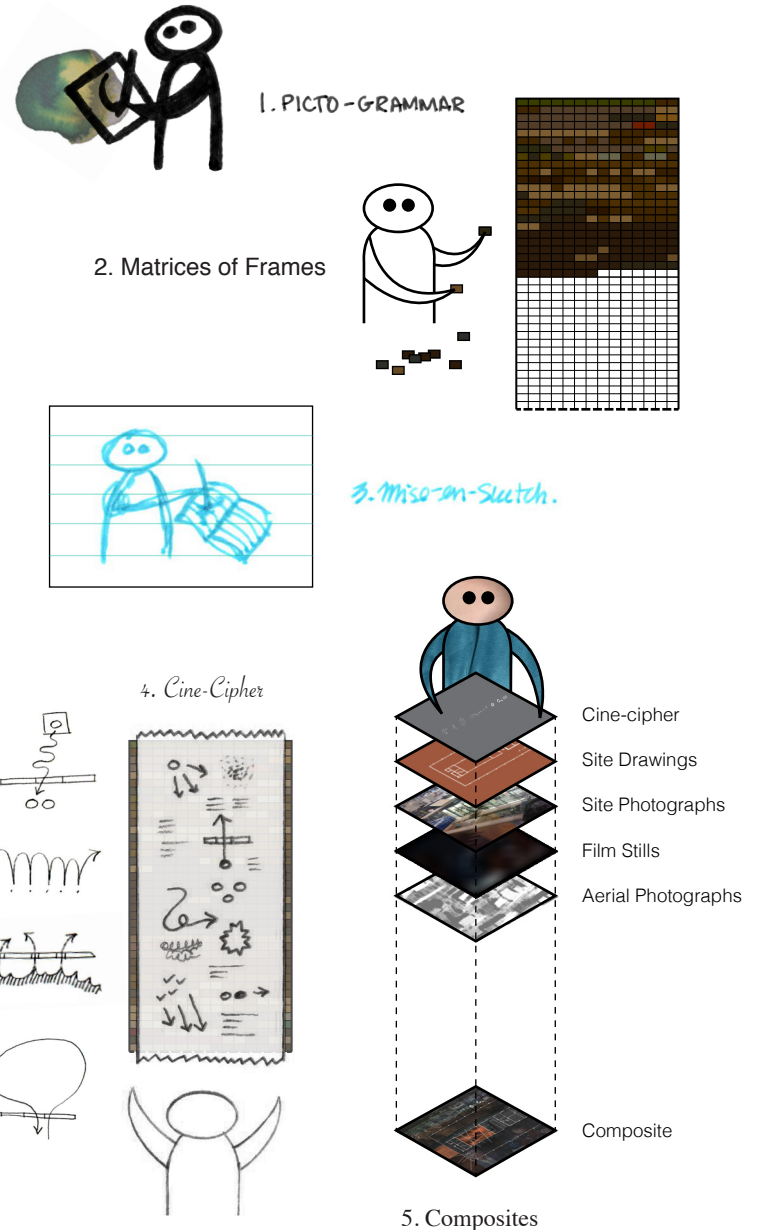


Figure 1.25 Practicum Drawing Types
NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

committee. Illustrating the complex theoretical concepts I had encountered in my research was my attempt to restrain the mental turmoil and confusion that emerged from these readings, and produced a visual chaos that paradoxically served as a graphic outline for this entire project (Figure 1.1). This Picto-Grammar was also used extensively in the compilation phase of this project to describe the specific methods of analysis applied in relation to the films studied (see Chapter 2), as well as combined with liquid watercolours to illustrate the themes themselves (see Chapters 3, 5 and 6).

2. *Matrices of Frames*

The second drawing type with which I engaged for this project was an alternative type of image-making. Being a slightly tentative drawer, that is to say that I am often overwhelmed with the task of attempting to illustrate the intricate vision in my head, it seemed much easier to draw upon existing cinematic imagery to begin. In this process I sought to capture exact moments in the films I studied and organize them into grids, Matrices of Frames, to generate an overview of the mise-en-scène in order to effectively study and understand this aspect of the selected features. To accomplish this, I used screen captures to generate a series of digital images and laid them out in sequence on the computer. These matrices are explained in greater detail, and in relation to the specific films chosen, at the end of Chapter 2, while excerpts of these graphics appear throughout Chapters 3, 5 and 6.

3. *Mise-en-Sketches*

The third category that emerged during this project was traditional sketching, a technique which I had developed throughout my design education. This approach was used primarily during the second viewing of each film selected for this practicum, to encourage a closer reading of the mise-en-scène, effectively producing

a series of Mise-en-Sketches. These drawings, which appear in Chapters 3, 5 and 6, were completed using ordinary pens in a lined notebook during moments in the films which seized my attention and prompted me to pause the movie and simply sketch. The Mise-en-Sketches visually capture these instances as well as my impressions of the cinematic imagery during the analysis phase of this project.

4. *Cine-Cipher*

The fourth type of drawing that I utilized exhaustively in my work was a variety of ideogram that I termed the Cine-Cipher, which initially appears in Chapter 2 and pervades Chapters 3, 5 and 6 of this document. While this category is visually similar to the Picto-Grammar in that both drawing types are diagrammatic, there is one crucial difference: while the latter was used primarily to illustrate my thoughts and actions in relation to this project, the Cine-Cipher serves as a notation of the settings and events in the films themselves. Using the Matrices of Frames as a base, I drew these ideograms directly from the individual frames of the movies. Ultimately, the Cine-Cipher helped to illustrate the spatial aspects of the cinematic image as well as to invent a new language that translated these concepts into the realm of landscape architecture.

5. *Composites*

The fifth and final category of drawings employed in this practicum was the series of Composites produced at the conclusions of Chapters 3, 5 and 6. Essentially an assemblage of the visual materials gathered throughout the analysis phase of the selected films, the Composites are the product of this research, enabling me to relate these notions back to the landscape while simultaneously providing closure to this project. Further description of this drawing type can be found under 'Product' in this chapter.



Figure 1.26 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

The drawings produced alongside the written component of this document, ranging from ideograms to composite graphics incorporating a variety of media, have permitted me to record, to reveal and to reflect upon ideas emerging from the textual analysis of the films. The fluidity and unselfconsciousness of the drawing medium render it a true antidote to the static representations which permeated my design education.¹⁹ While drawing has enabled me to engage with the process behind the image and to seize control over the persistent haunting of the filmic image by giving form to intangible atmospheres, in turn it has also served as a catalyst to generate new speculations on approaches towards the landscape as well as my emotional reactions towards these spaces.²⁰ With the capacity to represent a variety of conditions, ranging from the description of empirical reality in a technical axonometric to the fanciful expression of possibilities in imaginative collages and cartoons, I have been able to harness the power of drawing to bridge the gap between the 'Reel' and the 'Real'.²¹

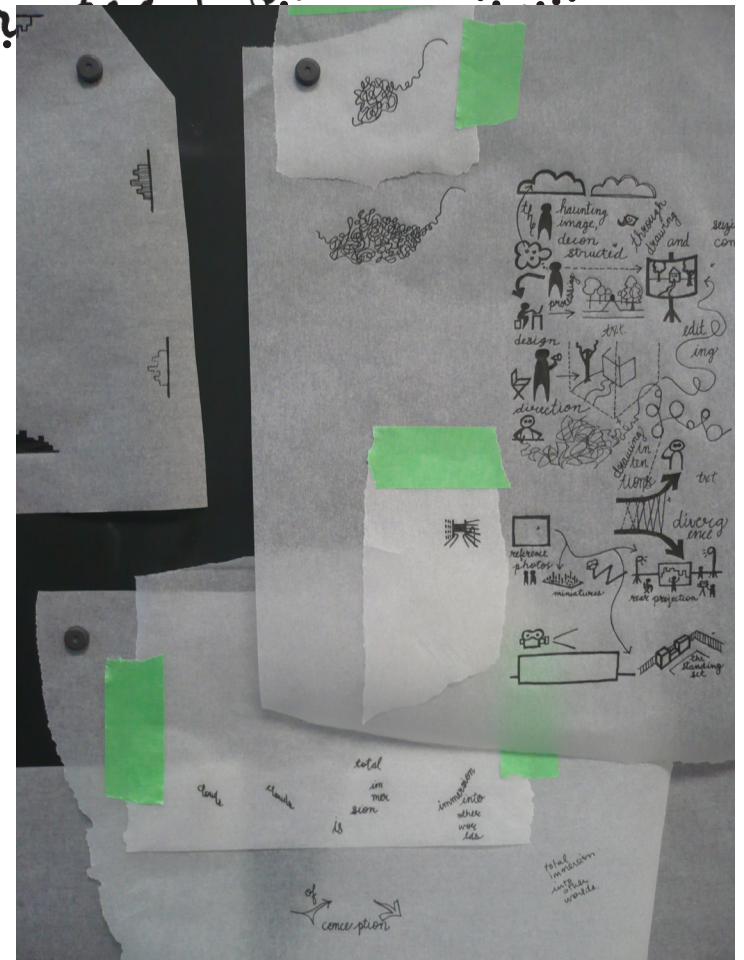


Figure 1.27 Graphic Layering



Figure 1.28 Drawing Parallels (Field)



Figure 1.29 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

HITCHCOCK DATUM

Returning to the notion of a haunting presence, the films of director Alfred Hitchcock began to reappear in my personal research as well as throughout my elective course in film theory.²² Watching several of his features over the term, namely *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Psycho*, and *Vertigo*, I realize how Hitchcock's films provoke a strong reaction, even on repeated viewings, as my classmates and I jumped and twitched in our seats. Sifting through the profusion of material on the 'Master of Suspense' and his meticulous process of filmmaking, I came across an interview in which he remarked that he was "playing the audience like an organ," that is to say that he deliberately pre-planned his productions to manipulate the viewer to achieve a specific emotional effect.²³

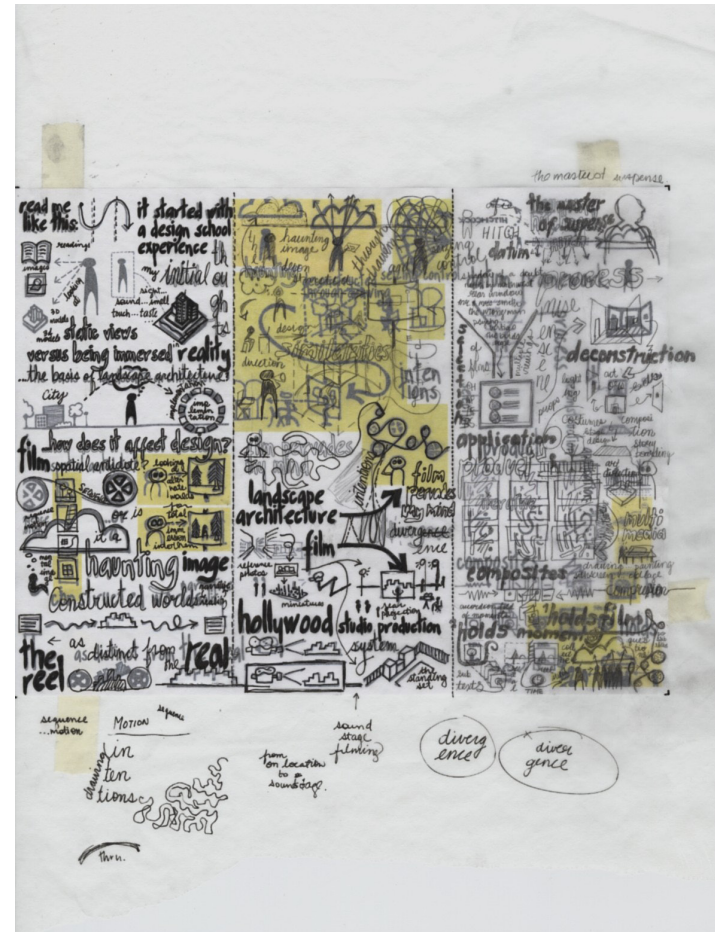


Figure 1.30 Graphic Progress Scan



Figure 1.31 Graphic Studio (Inset)

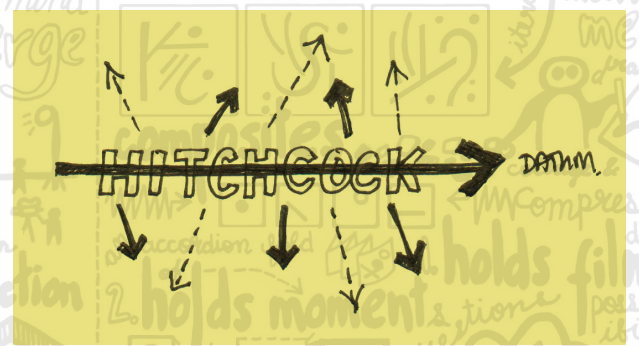


Figure 1.32 Hitchcock Datum (Field)

Childhood & Embellishment

As a designer, I was amazed at Hitchcock's ability to affect his audience so potently through his films, and I studied several biographies in order to explore the extent to which his background had influenced his method of filmmaking. Born in Leytonstone, England in 1899, Hitchcock was the youngest child of a Roman Catholic family in the wholesale grocery business.²⁴ Reserved and quiet, he preferred to play alone and was fascinated by the study of maps and train timetables.²⁵ At the tender age of four or five, as the famous anecdote goes, young Alfie was sent to the local police station with a note from his father instructing that the boy be locked up in a cell for five minutes as punishment for some trivial naughtiness.^{26,27} Although the different accounts of this incident vary considerably, and particular sources question the truth upon which this myth is based, this story certainly represents Hitchcock's characteristic propensity to embellish reality with a certain amount of fiction for artistic effect.²⁸

Design & Art Direction

In 1914, Hitchcock studied draftsmanship at the University of London and subsequently found employment at the W.T. Henley Telegraph and Cable Company as an estimator.²⁹ Finding this work repetitive and monotonous, he turned to film as a diversion, continuing to pour over trade publications and attend the cinema as he had in his early youth.³⁰ After noticing an advertisement in one of these papers, he submitted a portfolio of original designs to the newly established Famous Players-Lasky studio in Islington and was hired to design title cards for the films.³¹ While working at this fledgling studio, Hitchcock took on many different roles, however, his career truly began in production design as he designed and dressed the film sets.³² Eventually promoted to the rank of director, Hitchcock had learnt the art of visual storytelling and had accumulated the

requisite technical skills in production design to follow through on this approach towards filmmaking.³³

Drawing & Cinematic Vision

As a director, Hitchcock was notorious for exercising complete control over each and every aspect of his productions, and engaging in exhaustive pre-planning activities.³⁴ While the extent of this control has been disputed, it is clear that Hitch, as he was known to his collaborators, made elaborate preparations, including the use of drawing to visualize the film, often sketching out these ideas during the development of the script itself.³⁵ Although the artistic skill that Hitchcock possessed were also called into question, the director often utilized various types of drawings to communicate and to plan specific shots and special effects, prior to and during shooting, in order to make the production process unfold more smoothly and produce a film more closely related to his initial vision.³⁶

Realism & Atmosphere

Although Hitchcock's cinematic narratives often take a curious twist, they are for the most part inspired by ordinary events, particularly crimes reported in the British press.³⁷ Fascinated by these news stories, in which the macabre unexpectedly sprang from seemingly normal circumstances, Hitchcock tended to plunge ordinary characters into bizarre, dark situations.³⁸ After moving to the United States from England in 1939, the director began shooting films on Hollywood soundstages as well as within the American landscape.³⁹ Working on location, thereby capitalizing on familiar views of iconic places, as well as re-creating the city through the construction of hyperreal sets, this director was able to "lull the audience into a false sense of security" then jolt them with a sudden shock, usually delivered through narratives based on murder or espionage.⁴⁰ The power of Hitchcock's mise-en-scène is that it persuades us

into believing things that we would not normally accept through its verisimilar appearance to reality.⁴¹ In addition to this suspension of disbelief, the imagery in his cinema is so particularly vivid as to leave an indelible imprint on the mind. Certain scenes have definitely lingered in my subconscious, past the experience of actually watching his films.⁴² I find myself drawn to the intricacy of the detailed mise-en-scène which yields to a powerful atmosphere: Hitchcock realism deliberately sets the stage for a specific feeling to emerge.⁴³

Project Datum

Through this research, I decided to focus on Hitchcock to provide organization for this project in the form of a datum since each of his films are essentially haunting, intellectually loaded yet simultaneously engaging and entertaining.⁴⁴ Although his filmography is substantial, it is also finite, which enabled me to examine a range of work while permitting me to engage in a more detailed analysis of the work. While many of his films take place in the “Big City”, sometimes New York, often times these narratives shift back and forth between dense urban locations to more rural spaces as the action unfolds, establishing an interesting juxtaposition of landscape types.⁴⁵ While Hitchcock often adapted his scripts to certain places, he recognized the suspense inherent within these landscape.⁴⁶ Within the studio, Hitchcock constructed settings “in an obsessive manner, so that it is possible to find cogent significance for most of his details.”⁴⁷ Whether set on a soundstage or shot within an actual location, Hitchcock’s films exude atmosphere yet comprise a tightly controlled mise-en-scène: through the deconstruction of these production design elements as well as my impressions of the films, I have endeavoured to understand the manner in which Hitchcock created this imagery, the power it holds over the viewer and the potential that these methods hold for the realm of landscape architecture.⁴⁸

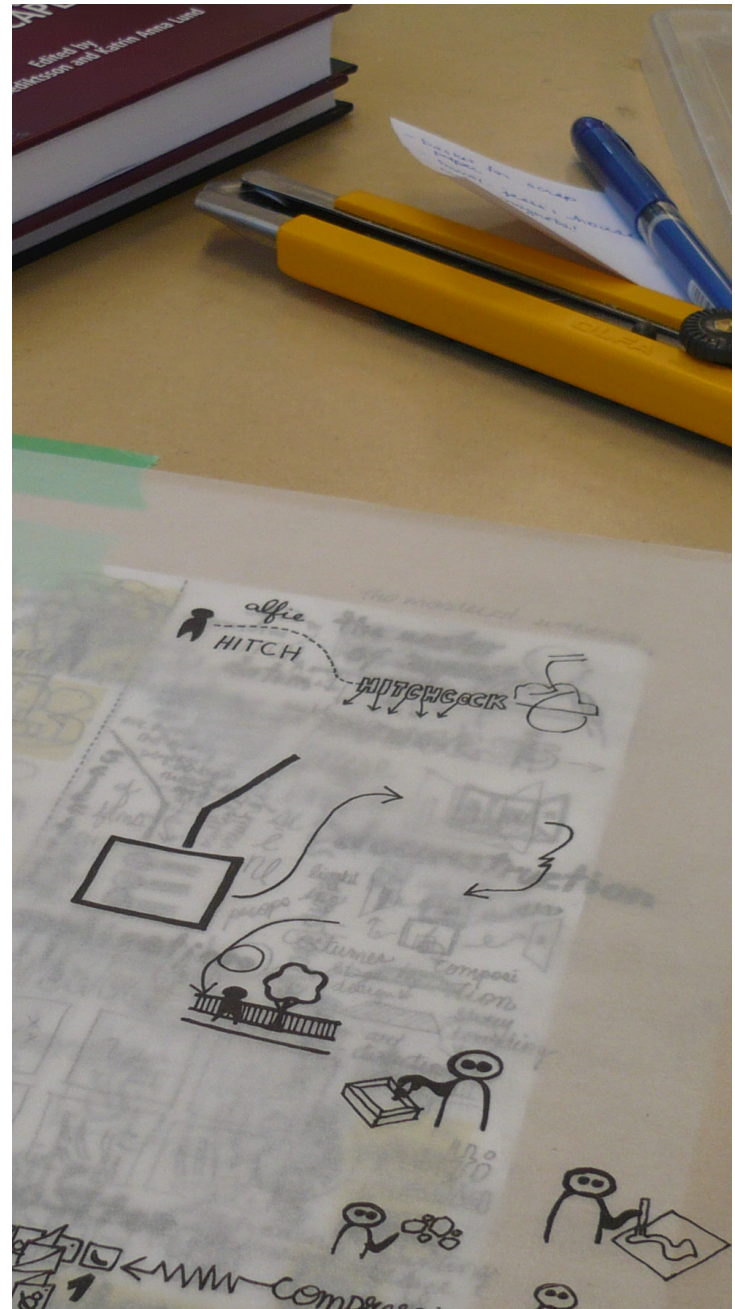


Figure 1.33 Datum Graphic

Figure 1.34 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

PROCESS

Throughout my practicum, process has been equally as important as final product and this notion of developing ideas is embedded within this document.⁴⁹ Through the incorporation of process photographs and sketches as well as written passages describing various image-making activities, discussions and the discovery of key concepts at different points throughout this journey, such as the detour represented in Chapter 4, I have endeavoured to mimic the process I have undertaken during this practicum experience.

Initially, my intentions were to select a few major films from Hitchcock's Hollywood productions, analyze specific scenes from the movie, and discuss the atmosphere of the filmic image in terms of the mise-en-scène and my personal reactions towards it. Each film was to form a separate chapter in the final document in which I constructed this haunting imagery through an analysis of the manner in which it was constructed. However, as I began working through these materials and contemplating my role as a designer, I decided that it was more appropriate to return these ideas to the landscape in a set of themes which are introduced in Chapter 2. It was always my intention to correlate the concepts discovered in the films to real-world sites by exploring places which embody these cinematic atmospheres. These explorations, as well as additional investigation of the landscape themes, form the basis of Chapters 3, 5 and 6 within this document.

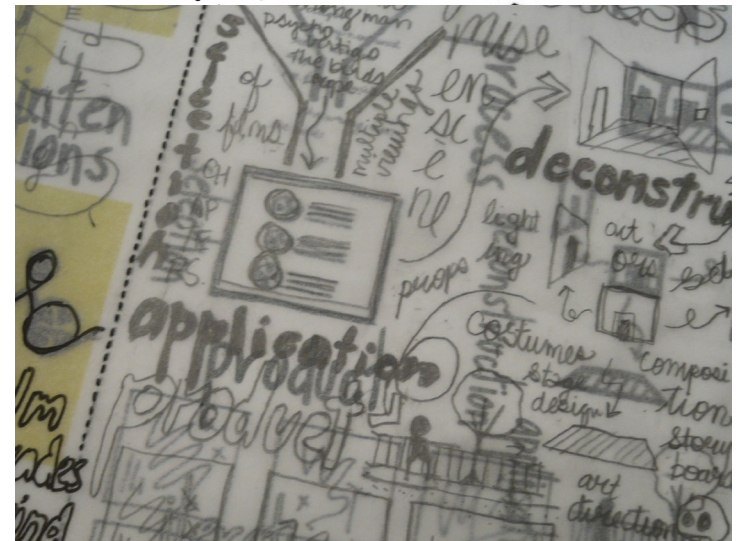


Figure 1.35 Graphic Evolution

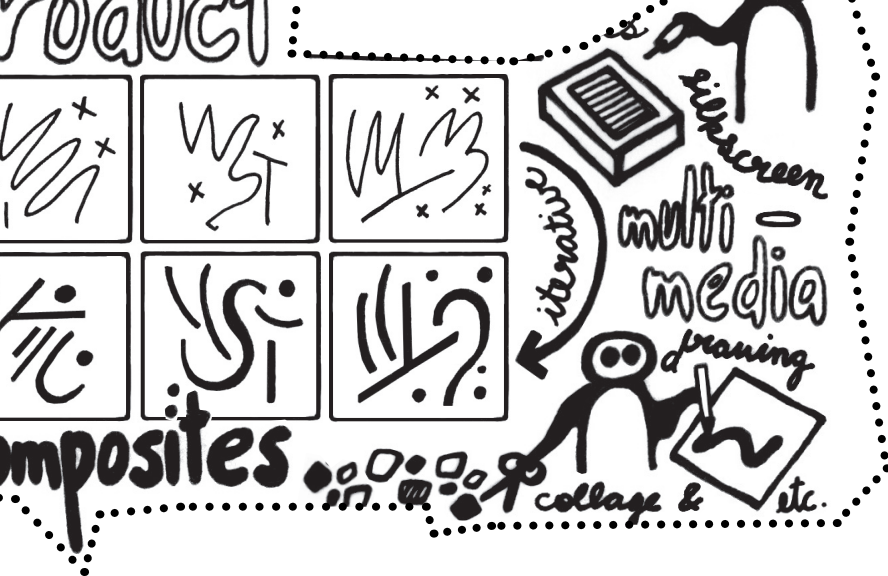
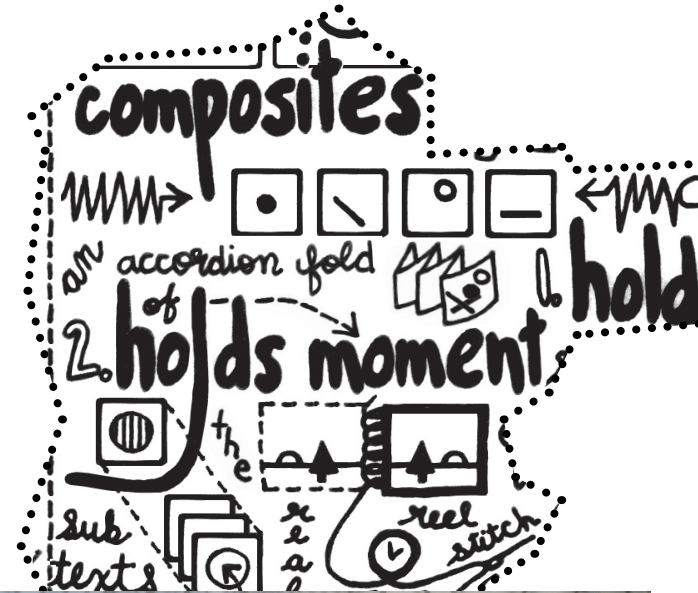


Figure 1.37 Picto-Grammar Details (Fragments)



PRODUCT

Through this analysis, my intent was to produce a set of composite images to reflect upon how the devices employed by Hitchcock can apply to the material world as well as to graphically communicate these ideas in my final presentation and within this document. These illustrations, produced alongside the writing, are composed as digital collages and have served to inform my investigations along with exploratory sketches and ideograms. While these drawings each describe a separate condition, they share the common objective of stitching together landscape and film through the visual description of a temporal condition, a moment in time within a particular film as well as a related space within my everyday reality. These composite images appear at the conclusions of Chapters 3, 5 and 6, although their development is also rooted in Chapters 2 and 4 through my burgeoning awareness of everyday landscapes.



Figure 1.38 Graphic Shift

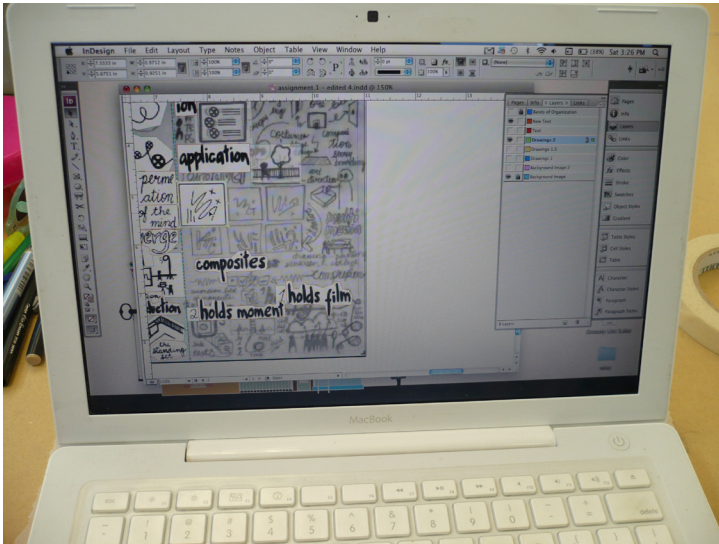


Figure 1.40 Digital Graphic



Figure 1.41 Picto-Grammar Detail (Fragment)

APPLICATION/S

This dialogue between landscape and film, and between image and text, is embedded within this final document. It is intended to stimulate other designers into questioning the extent to which cinema has coloured their perceptions of the landscape, prompting a re-examination of the cinematic spaces normally taken for granted in film and an active engagement in the dramatic possibilities proffered by the 'Reel World'. A discussion consolidating these concepts and their relevance to the realm of landscape architecture is presented in Chapter 7, along with the culmination of my personal journey through the application of the composite images onto canvas and the process of developing this practicum document.

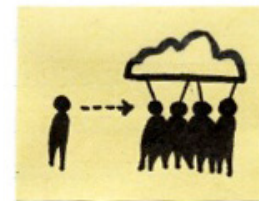


Figure 1.42 Communication & Sharing

NOTES

- 1 I must acknowledge that this drawing was inspired by a piece created by artist Mason McFee in *Beautiful/Decay's Book 6: Future Perfect* (2011). This illustration can be located at: Mason McFee, "B/D Book 6," *Hello Maseman*, accessed 3 January 2012, <http://www.hellomaseman.com/2011/07/bd-book-6/>.
- 2 Patrick Keiller. "Urban Space and Early Film," in *Cities in Transition: The Moving Image and the Modern Metropolis*, eds. Andrew Webber and Emma Wilson. (New York: Wallflower Press, 2007), p.32.
- 3 Ibid., p.29.
- 4 Further information on *actualities* can be found in: James Sanders. *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), p.26-31, 33 & 42.

A detailed discussion of the emergence of the *phantom ride* genre and the ability of these films to mesmerize audiences through the vividness/motion of the medium can be found in: Tom Gunning. "Landscape and the Fantasy of Moving Pictures: Early Cinema's Phantom Rides," in *Cinema and Landscape*, eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner. (Chicago: Intellect, 2010), p.30-70.
- 5 Scott MacDonald, "The Attraction of Nature in Early Cinema," in *Adventures of Perception: Cinema as Exploration*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p.198-213.
- 6 Quoted from Keiller, "Urban Spaces," p.32.

Maurizia Natali. "The Course of the Empire: Sublime Landscapes in the American Cinema," in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre. (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.104.
- 7 The migration of the American film industry to the West Coast at the beginning of the 20th century can be attributed to the emergence of sizable studio spaces in California where land values were considerably cheaper at the time. Further details are described in: Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.43-60.
- 8 The major film studios employed small armies of designers and craftspeople to devise and construct any background imaginable. Although the cost was exorbitant for the sets themselves, this expense was spread over several films as sets were often modified and re-used again and again. A description of these elaborate sets is included in: Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.61-84.
- 9 Sanders, in *Celluloid Skyline*, describes a contemporary hybrid method of overlaying special effects onto genuine locations using the example of *Men in Black* which features aliens collaged onto the streets of New York City to capture the audience's attention while lending the story credibility through the depiction of a genuine locale (p.437-439).
- 10 David Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema: From Wilderness to Wasteland*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p.1, 11-13.
- 11 The idea to focus on genre as a framing device was sparked by a reading on fantasy and sci-fi films: Christina, Tiánna, and Mélisa Kennedy, "Science Fiction/Fantasy Films, Fairy Tales and Control: Landscape Stereotypes on a Wilderness to Ultra-urban Continuum," in *Cinema and Landscape*, eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner. (Chicago: Intellect, 2010), p.281-296.

The conclusions drawn were developed in part through select readings on the genres of drama, sci-fi and fantasy in: John Sanders, *The Film Genre Book*. (Leighton Buzzard, UK: Auteur, 2009).
- 12 While many types of non-fiction films exist to document a realistic portrait of the landscape, including documentary films, a large majority of fictional films manipulate locations to support a narrative. Attracted by the dramatic storylines, we are less conscious of the effects of these constructed worlds on our perceptions. It is rather ironic that most people consider movies as an escape from reality yet cinema has the capacity to subconsciously shape the ways we perceive the world around us more so than any other medium, in my opinion.
- 13 Siegfried Kracauer, "The Establishment of Physical Existence," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.322-325.

Rudolf Arnheim, "Film and Reality," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.303-313.

André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.41-53.

André Bazin, "De Sica: Metteur-en-Scène," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy and

Marshall Cohen, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.174-182.

Several notable essays in film theory have influenced my thoughts on reality and constructed worlds. Kracauer's "The Establishment of Physical Existence" discusses the role of film in apprehending the material world to reveal its hidden truths. In contrast, "Film and Reality" by Arnheim discusses cinema as a creative medium which seeks to transform reality in an artistic expression, while Bazin's "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema" examines specific techniques including the use of deep focus, a composition with greater depth which is considered to be more realistic due to its continuity in time and space, versus montage techniques, which entails "chopping the world up into little fragments" to convey a particular vision. While each of these essays represent a particular stance with regard to film and its relationship to reality, resulting in a veritable theory battle in my sketchbook notes, each of these writers recognize the fact that film should not simply duplicate reality. Described by Bazin as the concept of the 'aesthetic paradox' in "De Sica: Metteur-en-Scène", although the motion picture camera is particularly suitable for simply capturing reality, films must manipulate and re-present the physical world in some way in order to be considered truly cinematic.

14 A detailed discussion of the relationship between planar surfaces and the illusion of spatial volumes in cinema can be found in: Arnheim, "Film and Reality."

15 Martin Lefebvre, "Between Setting and Landscape in Cinema," in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre. (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.19-59.

Lefebvre eloquently describes this distinction: "Setting may be precise and highly detailed or it may remain rather vague and more or less undetermined. In either case, it still serves the same discursive function: it is the place where the action or events occur" (p.21) while "landscape is, in a certain sense, the inverse of setting, that it is an 'anti-setting' of sorts" (p.22) In contemplating setting during establishing shots, transitions and *temps morts*, any part of a film which is not dedicated to advancing the primary narrative, the background can become an autonomous space, a subject, and effectively a landscape (p.24, 29)

16 The theoretical readings which emphasized this notion of intentionality and the role of the director included:

Andrew Sarris, "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, eds. Leo Braudy

and Marshall Cohen, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.174-182.

William Rothman, "Shadow of a Doubt," in *Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p.174-244.

Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema*, p.19.

Lefebvre, "Between Setting and Landscape in the Cinema," p.19-59.

17 *Mise-en-scène* is a cinematic term which refers to all the designed elements in front of the camera including lighting, sets, props and costumes worn by the actors.

18 Karen Wilson-Baptist, "Solve it by Drawing: Drawing as Design Inquiry," (unpublished lecture from Research Methods in Landscape Architecture (LARC 7420), University of Manitoba, January 25, 2010).

This emphasis on the drawing process was inspired by this lecture on drawing as research, which states: "Through the act of drawing we are not only left a trace of the physical act but the trace of the thinking process, as images or marks are made manifest, and evidently expose decisions, indecisions and indiscretions of this thinking 'out loud'."

19 Terry Rosenberg, "New Beginnings and Monstrous Births: Notes Towards an Appreciation of Ideational Drawing," in *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research*, ed. Steve Garner. (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2008), p.109-124.

Wilson-Baptist, "Solve it by Drawing."

This reflection upon the drawing process emerged from Wilson-Baptist's lecture as well as Rosenberg's essay, and prompted the realization that this medium is particularly suitable for capturing, as well as affecting, change, in contrast with various other types of media such as photography.

20 Wilson-Baptist, "Solve it by Drawing."

This creative empowerment was inspired by Wilson-Baptist's description of drawing as an emancipatory device.

21 Wilson-Baptist, "Solve it by Drawing."

A discussion of different drawing types as well as their intended function is presented in this lecture, and inspired the use of drawing in this project.

22 Oddly enough, the first manifestation of Hitchcock's pervasive influence emerged through my apparel. It was a strange coincidence, during a committee meeting in March 2011, that my internal advisor Marcy noticed a pair of socks that I was wearing which were covered in silhouettes of birds on a telephone wire. From this, she suggested that perhaps I might focus on Hitchcock to limit the scope of the project.

23 John Russell Taylor, *Hitch: The Life and Times of Alfred Hitchcock*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p.19.

Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*. (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2000), p.12.

François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p.269.

Charlotte Chandler, *It's Only a Movie: Alfred Hitchcock, A Personal Biography*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), p.14.

While Taylor described Hitchcock as "the most sophisticated of film-makers, the most totally in control of his means and his ends" (p.19), Krohn discusses his perfectionism and almost obsessive attention to detail which characterized his working method. Hitchcock's comment on *Psycho* and its emotional impact on the audience can be found in Truffaut's book-length interview with the director.

In Chandler's recent biography, a quote from Hitchcock describes the significance of this effect on the viewer: "Emotions are universal, and art is emotion. Therefore, putting film together and making it have an effect on an audience is for me the main function of film. Otherwise, it is just a record of events" (p.14).

24 Taylor, *Hitch*, p.25-26.

25 Ibid., p.27, 31.

26 Ibid., p.19, 28.

Taylor also posits that Hitchcock's childhood traumas were the source of this director's desire to manipulate the audience as an attempt to gain control over their emotional reactions.

27 Chandler, *It's Only a Movie*, p.35.

While the 'jail cell' experience was undoubtedly traumatic for such a young child, Chandler also recounts Hitchcock's experiences in Jesuit school as having a strong impact on his career as a director. In this system, discipline was delivered at the end of the day rather than immediately after a transgression took place: "Hitchcock speculated that having this fear of punishment always hanging over him may have contributed to his 'ticking bomb' theory of suspense in cinema, that it wasn't the explosion, but the threat of the explosion that created the suspense" (p.35).

28 Donald Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*. (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1983), p.16.

Patrick McGilligan, *Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness and Light*. (New York: ReganBooks, 2003).

Gary Leva, *The Master's Touch: Hitchcock's Signature Style, Film*. (Glendale, CA: Leva FilmWorks, 2009).

Spoto and McGilligan both question the extent to which this particular account was fabricated based on Hitchcock's tendencies towards showmanship and self-promotion, while Leva's documentary attributes the director's paranoid tendencies, his lifelong distrust of the police, and his fear of false imprisonment to this incident.

29 Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius*, p.35-37.

30 McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.15-17.

McGilligan cites Hitchcock's impressions of the *phantom ride* films: "When Hitchcock recollected 'A Ride on a Runaway Train', he liked to throw in this Hitchcockian detail: audience members became so excited watching the thrill film that they peed themselves. Theater employees used to count the seats afterward, betting on how many wet seats they'd find. 'The aim is', Hitchcock explained years later, describing his hopes for *Psycho* and *The Birds*, 'there's not a dry seat in the house' " (p.16).

31 Taylor, *Hitch*, p.39.

While films in this era were still silent, hand-lettered title cards with a graphic flourish or small illustration were used to describe the narrative action occurring in the film as well as

supply and qualify the dialogue of the characters. As a result, they were “quite elaborate, and also tended to be numerous” in British cinema of this epoch (p.39).

32 Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius*, p.55.

Scott Curtis, “The Last World: Images in Hitchcock’s Working Method,” in *CASTING A SHADOW: CREATING THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK FILM*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.20.

McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.51.

Spoto attributes this ‘jack-of-all-trades’ approach towards film as a result of Hitchcock’s “intense devotion to a very modest job and his insistence on learning everything there was to learn about film. When the studio executives or film directors ran into trouble with some part of a project, or if they required additional help in writing a scene or designing a costume or a set, Hitchcock was always at the ready with bright suggestions and an alacrity to try his hand at a new assignment” (p.55). While Curtis states that “Hitchcock...started his career as an art director” (p.20), McGilligan observes that his early set designs often included suggested camera angles for the director to follow when shooting scenes.

33 Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius*, p.66, 70.

McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.62-63, 68.

Spoto credits the “odd angles and dark, slanting shadows”, extreme close-ups and atmosphere of German expressionist cinema, “designed [in the studio] to create a fantasy world more powerful than the real life of everyday” (p.66), as providing the inspiration for the visual emphasis on storytelling characteristic of Hitchcock’s work as well as contributing significantly to the development of this director’s signature style.

In 1924, McGilligan describes, Hitchcock visited Berlin to design the sets for *The Blackguard*, a co-production between the British company Gainsborough Pictures and Universum Film Akitengesellschaft (UFA). Observing the work of the famous director F.W. Murnau in an adjacent soundstage, young Hitchcock carefully studied the mise-en-scène, effectively learning an essential lesson from Murnau: “ ‘What you see on the set does not matter. All that matters is what you see on the screen’ ” (p.63). Subsequently, Hitchcock applied this knowledge of lighting and forced perspective to create effective illusions in his subsequent projects as an art director as well as the feature films he directed later on in his career.

34 Curtis, “The Last Word,” p.15-17.

In this essay, Curtis quotes a rather interesting remark from Hitchcock: “ ‘I wish I didn’t have to shoot the picture. When I’ve gone through the script and created the picture on paper, for me the creative job is done and the rest is just a bore’ ” (p.15).

35 Will Schmenner, “Creating the Alfred Hitchcock Film: An Introduction,” in *CASTING A SHADOW: CREATING THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK FILM*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.4, 8, 11.

McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.55.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.12-13.

Curtis, “The Last Word,” p.17, 22-23.

Schmenner states that “Hitchcock planned, perhaps because he was compelled by artistic inspiration, but also out of necessity. Because he was contractually obliged to film the scenario, the only means he had for controlling the quality of the film was meticulous preparation” (p.4). However, this author continues on to suggest that Hitchcock’s tendency towards self-promotion tended to exaggerate this claim of complete creative authority. While McGilligan declares that “storyboarding – sketching all the scenes in advance of filming – became standard policy” in Hitchcock’s filmmaking process (p.55), Krohn implies that the use of storyboard as a blueprint for an entire film is simply a myth. Curtis points out that often times these storyboard drawings differ substantially from the film since they were created post-production, with “the luxury of time” (p.22), for use as glossy publicity materials.

After refuting the ‘storyboards-as-blueprints’ myth, Schmenner describes the importance of drawing in establishing and clarifying the director’s initial vision throughout production: “Hitchcock’s filmmaking process – starting with an ideas and working toward a finished film – required countless production sketches, drafts of scripts, storyboards, shot lists, and camera angle diagrams.” (p.11). Curtis elaborates on Hitchcock’s process: “Some visualization takes place at the spur of the moment, even on the set or during production” (p.22), and “the act of sketching is itself a way of thinking in images and solving problems” (p.23).

36 David Alan Robertson, “Preface: Casting Alfred Hitchcock – An Art Historical Perspective,” in *CASTING A SHADOW: CREATING THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK FILM*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.ix.

McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.50.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.10.

Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius*, p.68.

Curtis, "The Last Word," p.18-22.

Although Robertson alleges that the use of drawing emerged from Hitchcock's background in drafting, McGilligan states that Hitchcock was not an accomplished artist and therefore often hired professionals to create the storyboard illustrations for/from his films. Despite the fact that his drawing abilities were less refined, Krohn states that "he did not hesitate to use a pencil to communicate his visual ideas to his collaborators" (p.10), a strategy which Spoto suggests was developed in Berlin to instruct the German-speaking crew on how to build the sets that Hitchcock designed.

Curtis describes the role of Hitchcock's sketches throughout the production process: "Hitchcock might be drawing out the action dictated by the script as a way of capturing the corresponding image in his head. But these drawings could also function as a way of comparing the directions contained within the script with his own experience and vision of how it would play out in front of the camera" (p.22). In addition to clarifying this creative vision, Curtis continues on to discuss the other functions of Hitchcock's drawings: to communicate the atmosphere of a film and enable collaboration, to establish specific challenges in camera placement and special effects, thereby assisting in production and editing, and to promote the film itself. In particular, production design drawings, rather than storyboards, described the style and construction of a particular set and were often generated as impromptu sketches by the director to convey the desired mood and significant characteristics of the mise-en-scène.

37 Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius*, p.33.

38 Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius*, p.13.

Leva, *The Master's Touch*.

39 Natali, "The Course of the Empire," p.115.

Natali contests that, as an immigrant, Hitchcock saw the United States as "a place of traumatic and nightmarish settings" (p.115) and recognized its innate potential to provide befitting backdrops for his uncanny tales.

40 McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.34.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.15.

Steven Jacobs, "Sightseeing Fright: Alfred Hitchcock's Monuments and Museums," in *The Journal of Architecture* 11, no.5 (2006), p.593.

McGilligan declares that Hitchcock's films "aimed for simplicity and clarity – even clichés – on the surface, but with contrast and counterpoint undermining the clichés, and hidden depths of detail and sophistication" (p.34). While the director took great measures to establish this sense of utter realism, rather than utilize sets which were abstracted versions of reality, Krohn describes Hitchcock's insistence upon the extensive use of reference materials in the production design (p.15). The comment on establishing a misleading mundanity for the viewer can be found in Jacob's article, which also discusses the director's extensive use of well-known locations throughout his American films.

41 McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.24.

Chandler, *It's Only a Movie*, p.5.

McGilligan credits Hitchcock with the remark that "films should be stronger than reason" (p.24), while in Chandler's book, the director is quoted as saying: "I don't think many people actually want reality, whether it's in the theater or in films. It must only look real, because reality's something none of us can stand for too long" (p.5).

42 An example that immediately comes to mind is the final scene of *Psycho* which takes place in the cellar of the Bates house, a dark, creepy basement which relates to a recurring nightmare image of mine in which I am chased down a set of narrow, rickety stairs into a dead end room, creating a particular dislike of staircases in my everyday world.

43 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.15.

McGilligan, *A Life in Darkness and Light*, p.9.

Robert Boyle initially coined the term 'Hitchcock realism', which refers to a "fanatical attention to naturalistic detail" (Krohn, p.15), essentially the taking place of Hitchcock's fantastic narratives within a realistic setting.

44 Throughout the course of this project, Hitchcock and his films began to reappear within key sources, namely:

Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*.

Daniel Doz, "The City at Night: A Topological Cinematic Labyrinth" (presentation, Atmosphere 2011: Mediated Cities, Winnipeg, MB, February 3-5, 2011).

In his discussion of the mythic image of New York City, Sanders uses *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest*, *Rope* and *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* to illustrate the qualities and key features of the city which arise in our minds as a result of watching these features, along with other films. Doz's presentation analyzed *Dial M for Murder*, *Rear Window*, *The Birds* and *Psycho* in his discussion on the methods in which the camera manipulates architectural spaces on film to affect our reading of urban spaces during the night. While both of these explorations continually referred to case studies from Hitchcock's filmography, it is clear that the imagery in these films is equally as striking to other authors as I have found it be in my personal viewing experiences.

45 Films which take place in New York include: *Rear Window*, *Rope*, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, and *The Wrong Man*. Features which alternate between the city and the countryside are: *North by Northwest*, *Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, and *The Birds*.

46 Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema*, p.144.

47 Tom Gunning, "In and Out of the Frame: Paintings in Hitchcock," in *Castling a Shadow: Creating the Alfred Hitchcock Film*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.42.

48 Schmenner, "Creating the Alfred Hitchcock Film," p.7.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.16.

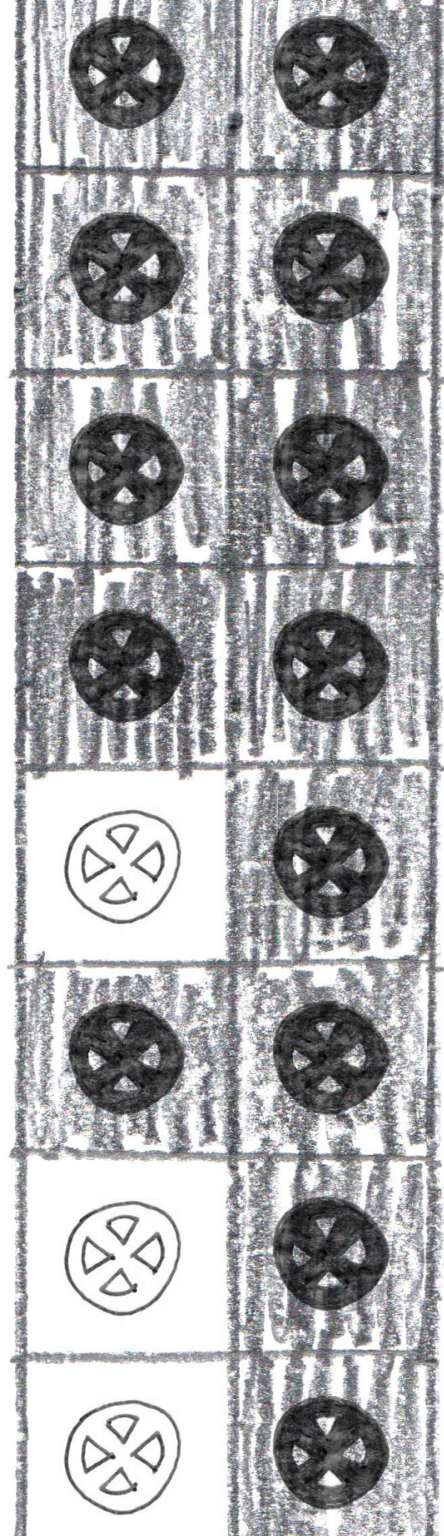
Chandler, *It's Only a Movie*, p.13.

Schmenner states: "The writers at *Cahiers du cinéma* maintained that 'mise-en-scène' was where one would primarily find the director's voice" (p.7). Krohn elaborates that through a detailed examination of the production design, it would be possible to clearly identify and understand the original vision and the signature of the film director.

In Chandler, Hitchcock is cited to have remarked: "To interview me, you would have to interview my films" (p.13), which is essentially the task I have chosen to undertake within this project and subsequently apply these responses to the landscape.

49 Curtis, "The Last Word," p.22-25.

As Curtis describes in his essay, the process of creating the Hitchcock film was also a lengthy endeavour bound up in a complex exchange between images and text: "Talking, writing, and drawing are all parts of the process of generating visual ideas. The visualization process almost demands the alternation of word and image. On one hand, the ambiguous image sometimes requires words to stabilize its meaning. On the other hand, words cannot compete with the efficiency of the image in conveying information quickly and precisely. This back-and-forth between images and words is inherently collaborative, since Hitchcock cannot describe in words *everything* that goes into an image, even one as schematic as a storyboard" (p.23). He continues on to state that "there is always an interplay between the two [image and text]; in the gap between them revision and collaboration take place" (p.25). I would add to this remark that in my own experience, new ideas and potentials also tend to emerge through crossing and re-crossing this gap.



Film Selection & Emergent Landscape Themes

With the theoretical framework for this project defined, the following stage was to select three of Hitchcock's films for further analysis. Since my initial thoughts on cinema were based upon the consideration of movies as an escape, for myself as well as general audiences, it was important to choose popular features from Hitchcock's filmography, major works that are sufficiently mainstream to constitute a form of popular entertainment, yet possess a deeper meaning to make this investigation pertinent and worthwhile.

Figure 2.1 Film Selection Diagram

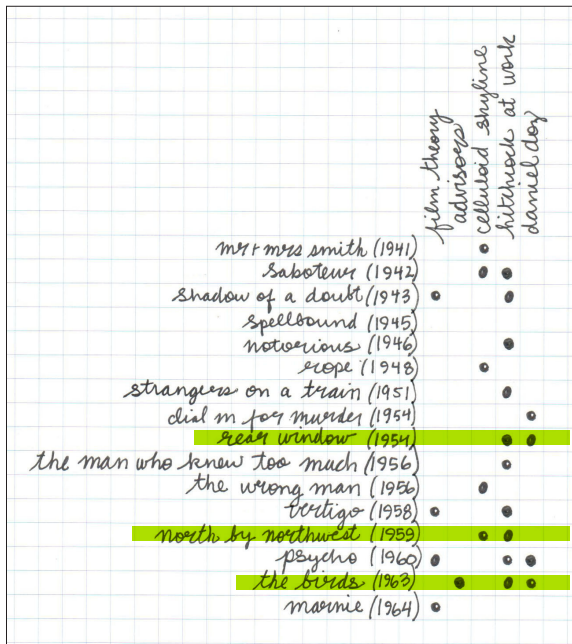


Figure 2.2 Film Selection Chart



Figure 2.3 Film Notes

NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

During my research, I was introduced to a book entitled *Hitchcock at Work* which examines the technical aspects of Hitchcock's Hollywood productions in order to understand the significance of these films.¹ From the 31 movies described in this volume, I shortlisted 16 features to view based on additional criteria derived from several sources (Figures 2.1 + 2.2).² Beginning in spring 2011, I watched each film carefully and took meticulous notes on the atmosphere, the mise-en-scène, the settings, my emotional reaction and certain relevant details regarding the characters and plot (Figure 2.3). Through the consideration of these films, I was able to develop a sense of Hitchcock's characteristic motifs and signature style which no doubt unconsciously informed this project. In the end, I eventually selected three films, namely: *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest* and *The Birds*. This chapter introduces these three features: beginning with a plot synopsis, these sections relate the particular attraction that each film held for this project as well as provide a brief description of select technical aspects of the production design and certain special effects. After this introduction to the features, I explain the particular method of analysis applied to the films, thereby setting the stage for the detailed investigations in Chapters 3, 5 and 6.

REAR WINDOW / STUDIO WINDOWS

Synopsis:

In Rear Window, an action photographer L.B. Jeffries (Jimmy Stewart) is laid up in his one-bedroom Greenwich Village apartment with a broken leg obtained through one of his assignments and obsessively watches the activities of his neighbours during a heat wave. Despite the nay-sayings of his nurse Stella (Thelma Ritter), his girlfriend Lisa (Grace Kelly), and his old friend police detective Thomas Doyle (Wendall Corey), Jeff becomes convinced he has witnessed a murder take place across the courtyard from his rear window perch.

The first film selected for this project was *Rear Window*, which was chosen just prior to my intermediate presentation in April.³ My earliest direct encounter with this movie occurred when I read the chapter in *Celluloid Skyline* which discusses this production.⁴ While I was initially attracted to this film due to its location, I was also fascinated by the discussion of voyeurism in relation to the architecture of the setting.⁵ In the text, Sanders refers to the different narratives unfolding in the various windows of the facing building as alternative futures for Jeff and his marriage-minded girlfriend Lisa, much like television screens on different channels, which intrigued me into discovering this film and experiencing these stories firsthand.⁶ The author also introduces the notion of perceived privacy, whereby the different inhabitants surrounding the courtyard go about their daily routines with an air of unselfconsciousness since they assume that no one is watching.⁷ It is this notion, in response to Jeff's ludicrous suspicion that one of his neighbours has committed a murder, which prompts a particularly curious remark from Lisa: "Oh, Jeff, do you think that a murderer would let you see all that, that he wouldn't pull the shades down and hide behind them?"⁸ To me, this notion of watching between windows of private spaces within an urban setting was very compelling since it begs the question of how we as designers negotiate these complex relationships within dense areas, since our decisions shape the qualities of these spaces, including their privacy, and ultimately influence the manner in which people act within these environments.

While *Rear Window* was shot entirely on a massive, elaborate set built on a Hollywood soundstage located a coast away from the location in which the narrative is set, I found it to be extremely convincing with the look and feel of being filmed in an authentic Greenwich Village courtyard (Figures 2.4 – 2.6).⁹

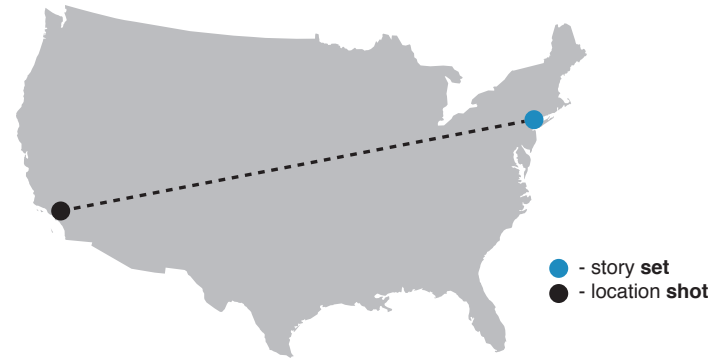


Figure 2.4 Diagram of Location & Setting in *Rear Window*



Figure 2.5 Courtyard, *Rear Window* (Above)

Figure 2.6 Courtyard, Paramount Studios (Below)



Figure 2.7 Production Section of Courtyard

The story behind the construction of the set is fascinating in itself: to achieve the necessary heights for the surrounding buildings, Hitchcock's crew had to seek permission from Paramount Studios to knock out the bottom two furniture storage floors of a soundstage building in order to accommodate the six stories of the surrounding buildings (Figure 2.7).¹⁰ While this film is a prime example of virtuoso set design, challenging the configuration of the studio space itself, it also comprises elements typical of Hitchcock's cinema including a very visual storytelling, an occasional dash of humour and the use of subjective camera work (Figure 2.8).¹¹ For these reasons, as well as the simple fact that I was just plain enthralled by this production, I chose this film for further analysis.



Figure 2.8 Use of a Crane-Mounted Camera



Figure 2.9 Publicity Still of Jimmy Stewart (Left) / Figure 2.10 Working in the JAR Studio (Right)

As I continued to read, re-watch and think about this movie, I began to reconsider the space in which I worked on a regular basis. In preparation to complete this document, I had read a book which offered some advice along the lines of gluing oneself to one's chair in order to write more productively.¹² While this tip was provided in a jesting manner, I did take this suggestion seriously and endeavoured to stay put while I worked. As it so happens I found myself stuck in a situation similar to the broken-legged protagonist L.B. Jeffries: confined to one spot, watching the world go by in the windows around me (Figures 2.9 + 2.10).¹³

While working on my practicum in the upstairs studio space of the John A. Russell Building, I would watch the events happening outside on the ground below and it would remind me that life goes on, much to my enjoyment or chagrin, depending on my progress on that particular day (Figures 2.11 – 2.24, overleaf). While this studio is incredibly open due to its lack of walls and dual ribbon of windows running along the external walls, these spaces, which I had occupied for a substantial amount of time during both my graduate and undergraduate degrees over the past seven years, also border onto an open courtyard which is bound on all four sides by floor to ceiling glazing.

2.11



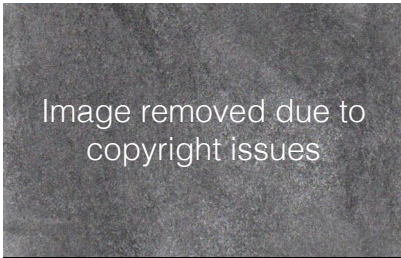
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2.16

Figures 2.11, 2.13 + 2.15
Film Stills, *Rear Window*

Figures 2.12, 2.14 + 2.16
Studio Views, JAR Building

Opposite:
Figures 2.17, 2.19, 2.21 + 2.23
Film Stills, *Rear Window*

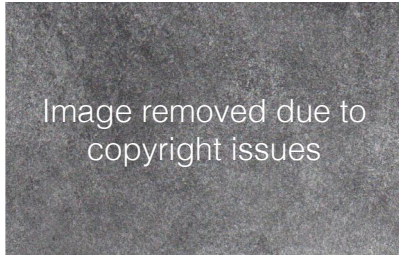
Figures 2.18, 2.20, 2.22 + 2.24
Courtyard Views, JAR Building

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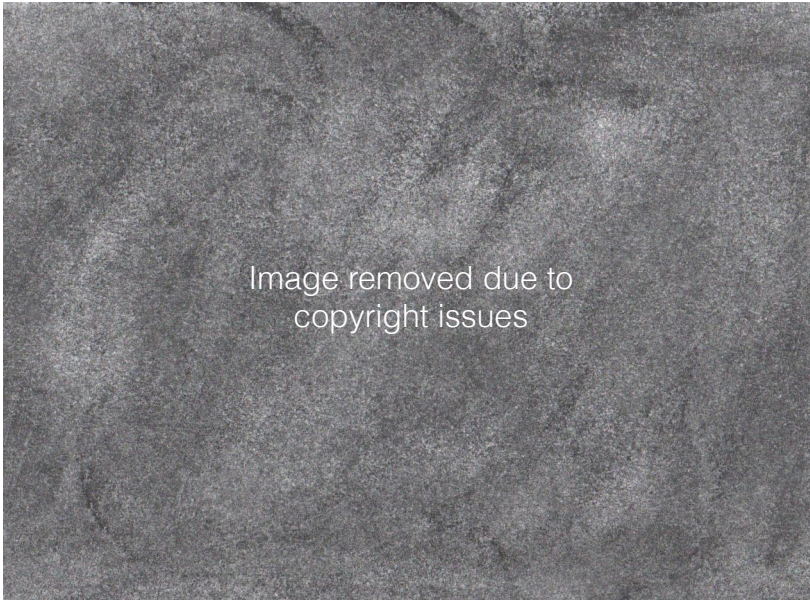


Figure 2.25 Publicity Still of Jimmy Stewart (Left) / Figure 2.26 Watching the Courtyard (Right)

As a result of this configuration, the sensation of walking alongside these inner spaces feels very exposed: in addition to watching people walking around in the parking lot, courtyard, offices or opposite studio space there is also the realization that I myself can be seen from any of these locations (Figures 2.25 + 2.26). Pausing to consider this notion, I began to feel rather uneasy about this situation. Having formerly occupied these spaces on a daily basis where deadlines took precedence over such ponderings, I had previously taken this exposure for granted and had become used to this state of being as 'ordinary'...in other words, I used to be used to it. This condition of becoming used to it, that is, to be

in close proximity with others but also to be unaware of their existence, to perform one's daily activities unselfconsciously, to co-exist as a community without a second thought evokes "sympatry": a condition which Sanders identifies in *Rear Window* whereby diverse groups engaged in different pursuits can peacefully co-exist in connected spaces.¹⁴ Although this was certainly an interesting concept to consider while reading this book, this notion became particularly intriguing after watching the film, which essentially re-awakened me to these same qualities within my own everyday surroundings. I sought to pursue these ideas further, and the results of this exploration are included in the following chapter.

NORTH BY NORTHWEST & THE PRAIRIE CONDITION

Synopsis:

Mayhem ensues when big time New York City advertising executive Roger O. Thornhill (Cary Grant) is mistaken for spy George Kaplan in the Oak Room of the Plaza Hotel. Whisked away by a pair of henchmen to a suburban estate and threatened by the villain (James Mason), Thornhill is then chased halfway across the nation by the police as the presumed murderer of a prominent diplomat as he attempts to unravel the nefarious plot against him. En route to Chicago by train, Thornhill encounters kindred spirit Eve Kendall (Eva Marie Saint) who hides him from the detectives. After a tight brush with death in a Midwest cornfield, Thornhill discovers the truth (with some help from Washington), and rushes to Rapid City, South Dakota to stop the sinister Vandamme from fleeing the country while rescuing Eve and an artifact containing precious national secrets.

Midway through the list of films I had compiled, and long after deciding upon *Rear Window*, Richard and I had a discussion in mid-June about the movies I had recently watched, namely *Strangers on a Train*, *Rope*, *Vertigo*, and *North by Northwest*, as potential selections for this project. *Rope*, which takes place in an apartment and relates thematically to *Rear Window*, was decidedly too limited; the plot unfolds solely within the interior spaces, and the sole appearance of the landscape occurs at the beginning of the film with a brief shot of a lonely streetscape sparsely populated by passers-by.¹⁵ Although *Strangers on a Train* included a variety of interesting settings both indoor and outdoor, including an amusement park and both the Lincoln and Washington memorials in Washington, DC, it was considerably less atmospheric in comparison to both

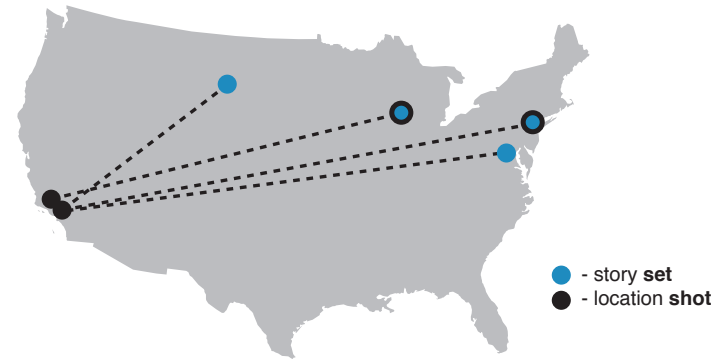
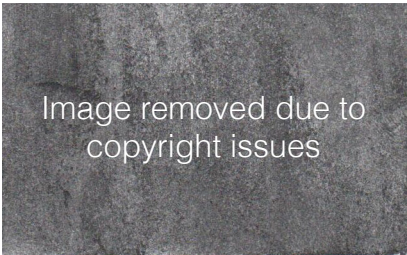
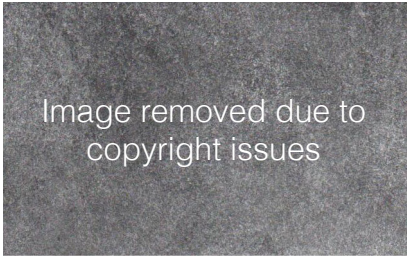


Figure 2.27 Diagram of Location & Setting in *North by Northwest*

Vertigo and *North by Northwest*. While the melancholic settings of the redwood forest and the Mission Dolores in *Vertigo*, had affected me deeply, it was the diverse locales, the palpable suspense and the driving emotion of *North by Northwest* which had me particularly exhilarated. With settings ranging from the United Nations building in midtown Manhattan to a Midwest cornfield to a sinister villa located on the back slope of Mount Rushmore, the sheer number of locations to which the story travels during the trans-national chase in this film provides an interesting contrast to the discussion of *Rear Window*, whose narrative essentially unfolds from a single room.

According to writer Ernest Lehman, the initial script for *North by Northwest* emerged as a narrative linking specific locations for which Hitchcock had envisioned particular narratives, namely “a murder at the United Nations and...a chase across the face of Mount Rushmore.”¹⁶ Influenced by the director’s penchant for realism, Lehman embarked on a research journey to experience these locales firsthand prior to preparing a draft.¹⁷ After a few struggles to connect the disparate scenes envisioned by Hitchcock, Lehman completed

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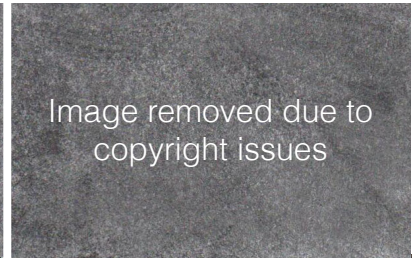
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2.34



2.35

Opposite:
 Figures 2.28, 2.30, 2.32 + 2.34
 Film Stills, *North by Northwest*

Figure 2.29
 Filming, Madison Avenue, NYC

Figures 2.31^I + 2.33^{II}
 Street Views, NYC

Figure 2.35^{III}
 Grand Central Station, NYC

Figure 2.36
 Film Still, *North by Northwest*

Figure 2.37^{IV}
 Old Westbury Garden

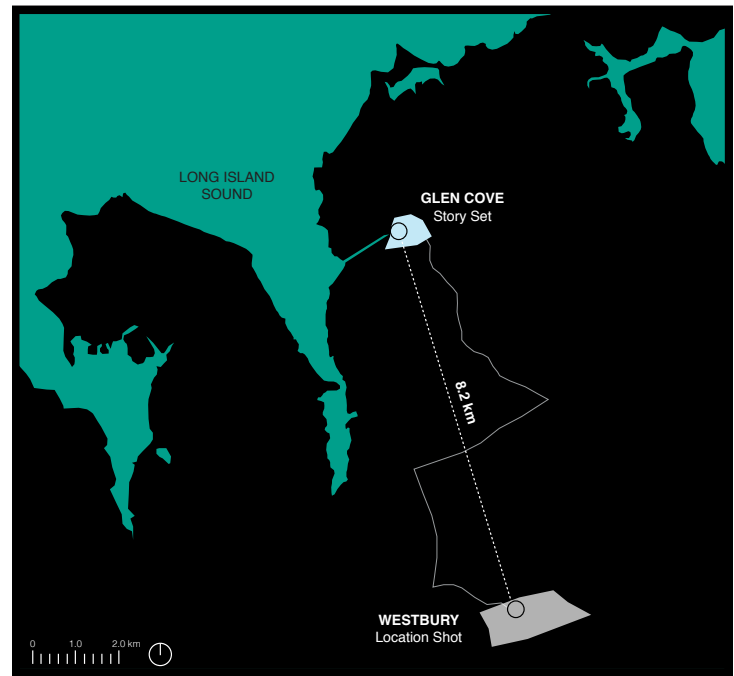


Figure 2.38 Diagram of Location & Setting in *North by Northwest*:
 Townsend Estate Scenes

the script, which features a fast-paced narrative moving between a great variety of locales.¹⁸ Creating these settings on film was a complex collage of real and constructed places shot in numerous locations and assembled in the editing rooms of MGM studios (Figure 2.27). While many locations exist in reality as they are portrayed in the film, including Madison Avenue, the Plaza Hotel, the UN General Assembly Building and Grand Central Station in New York City, among others, there are also locations which have been slightly massaged (Figures 2.28 – 2.35).¹⁹ The Townsend mansion set in Glen Cove within the film is actually situated further inland on Long Island at a famous estate called the Old Westbury Gardens (Figures 2.36 – 2.38).²⁰

I. *Plaza 3*, © R. Dian Durant, All Rights Reserved
 II. *UN 1*, © R. Dian Durant, All Rights Reserved
 III. *Grand Central Station*, Mike Fleming, CC BY 2.0 License
 IV. *Old Westbury Garden 4*, Gryffindor,
 GNU FDL CC BY-SA 3.0/2.5/2.0/1.0 License

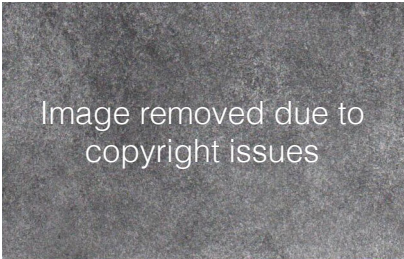


Figure 2.39 Film Still, *North by Northwest* (Left) / Figure 2.40 Production Still of Forest Set (Right)

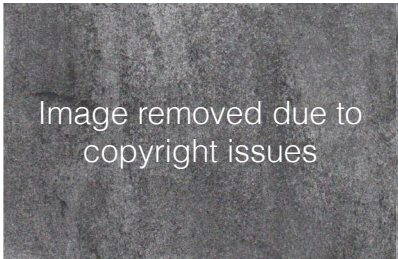
Furthermore, certain scenes are completely fabricated within the studio using a variety of technical effects (Figures 2.39 + 2.40).²¹ In particular, the stunning sets created by production designer Robert Boyle were used for the scenes in Vandamme's modern villa, which is inspired by the designs of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and the Mount Rushmore observatory (Figures 2.41 + 2.42).²² The chase sequence upon the monument itself was also recreated in the studio on a set comprising concrete mountains and painted backdrops (Figures

2.43 – 2.45).²³ Although this film can be considered relatively 'authentic' in terms of its portrayal of genuine settings, it is also rather fantastic in the types of constructions it incorporates, such as its ambitious attempt to remake the iconic national monument, Mount Rushmore.²⁴ However, regardless of whether the setting is based on a real location or created 'from scratch' in the studio, each landscape employed by Hitchcock in this film has been manipulated into "a slightly paranoid vision" for the benefit of advancing the narrative.²⁵

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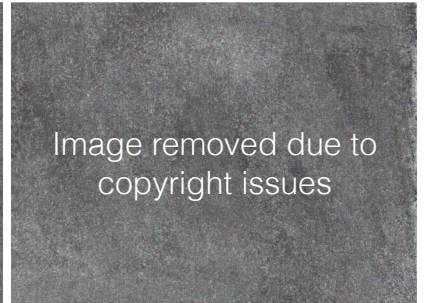


Top:
Figures 2.41, 2.42 + 2.43
Film Stills, *North by Northwest*

Bottom:
Figures 2.44 + 2.45
Production Photos, Mount Rushmore Set



2.44



2.45



Figure 2.46 Film Still, *North by Northwest*

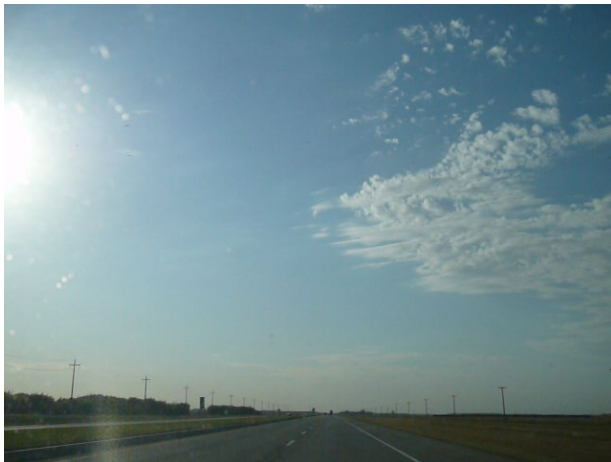


Figure 2.47 View along the Perimeter Highway

Throughout this bombardment of different locales, both genuine and fabricated, it was the Prairie Stop scene which was particularly compelling to me.²⁶ Located halfway through the movie, between the intensely vertical scenes of New York City with its skyscrapers and the towering presidents of Mount Rushmore, this sprawling, horizontal condition stuck out like a sinister anomaly, despite the fact that this landscape is one to which I most strongly relate as a lifelong inhabitant of the Canadian Prairies (Figures 2.46 + 2.47). To discover the root of its power, I began to research this scene and quickly discovered that this particular sequence represents the greatest exaggeration of locale in the entire film. While the fields through which Thornhill runs to evade the attacking crop duster are described in

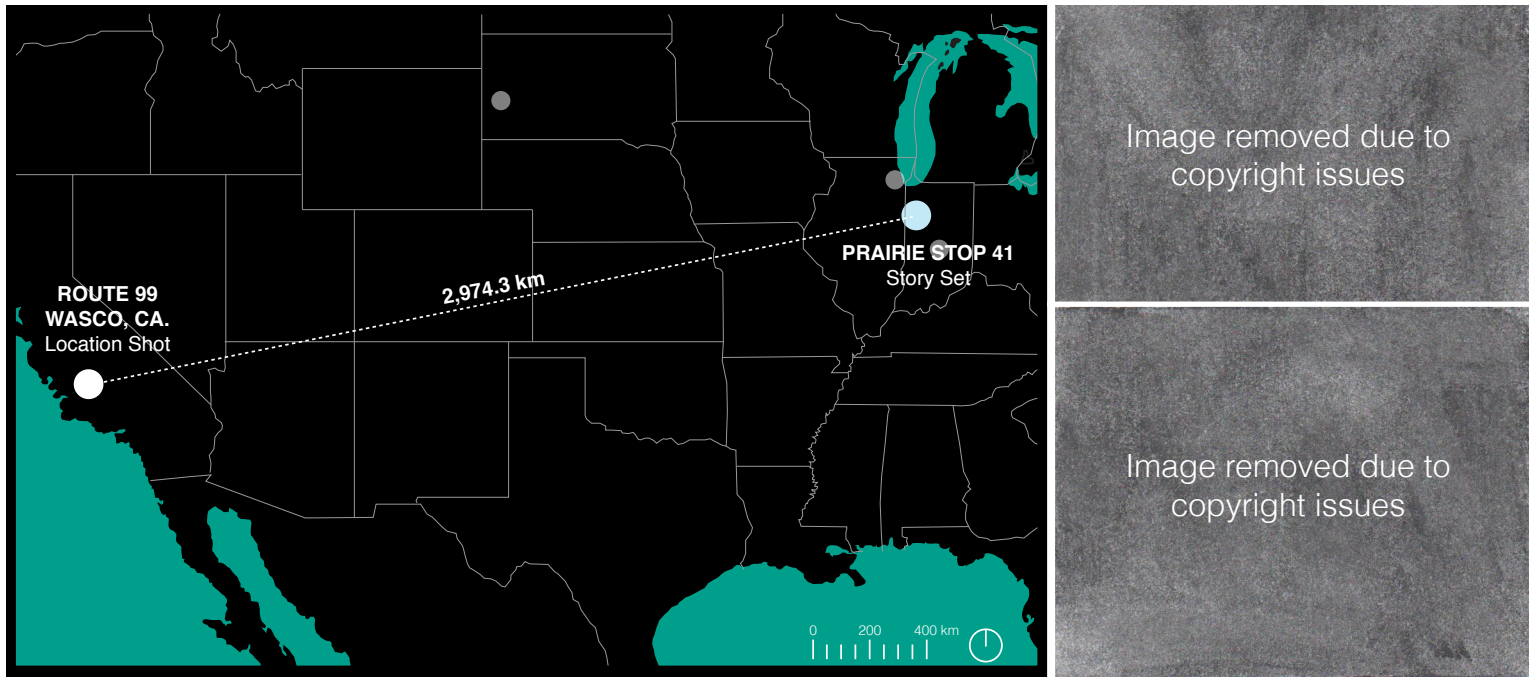


Figure 2.48 Diagram of Location & Setting in *North by Northwest*: Prairie Stop Sequence (Left)

Figure 2.49 Film Still, *North by Northwest* (Top Right) / Figure 2.50 Production Still of Prairie Stop Set (Bottom Right)

2.50

the film as midway between Chicago and Indianapolis, this location is actually situated across the country, just outside of Wasco, California (Figures 2.48 + 2.49).²⁷ While much of this sequence was captured at this West Coast location, this scene is actually a collage which includes additional elements, namely special effects and studio shots incorporated into the final cut.²⁸ Specifically, the part when the plane dives at Thornhill was constructed on a soundstage using a simple set

with rear projection (Figure 2.50).²⁹ Despite the fact that my research deconstructed this imagery into a series of technical processes, my initial attraction to this scene, as well as my overall excitement toward this film, remains undiminished.³⁰ Due to the persistent atmosphere of *North by Northwest*, its compelling prairie scene which relates directly to my everyday landscapes, and its status as “the ultimate Hitchcock movie,” I decided to include this film in my analyses.³¹

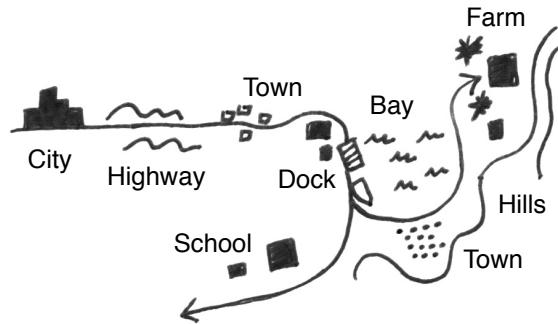


Figure 2.51 Sketch of Geography, *The Birds*



Figure 2.52 Film Still, *The Birds*

THE BIRDS: CREATIVE COASTAL GEOGRAPHY

Synopsis:

When Melanie Daniels (Tippi Hedren) meets Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor) in a San Francisco pet shop, sparks fly between the rich socialite and the straightlaced lawyer despite superficial tensions. Melanie tracks Mitch to Bodega Bay, a small town north on the California Coast and drives up with a pair of lovebirds: a birthday present for his sister Cathy (Veronica Cartwright). After a gull swoops down and pecks Melanie while travelling across the bay by rowboat, chaos erupts in this sleepy town as bird attacks become increasingly frequent and more severe. During one of these strikes, Melanie and teacher Annie Hayworth (Suzanne Pleshette) rescue the local children from the town school. Melanie returns to the Brenner farm with Mitch, Cathy and their mother Lydia (Jessica Tandy), only for the house to become the target of the most serious bird attack yet. As the birds begin to collect, Melanie and the Brenner family are forced to evacuate the home and leave town, perhaps forever.

As I continued through my list of films in order to find my third selection, I realized that it was important to choose a work equal in stature to the previous two masterpieces and therefore my selection was much more limited. While *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The Wrong Man* were exciting, suspenseful films with expressive settings which reflected the dramatic tensions of their respective narratives - namely Morocco and New York City respectively - these two movies did not seem on par with *Rear Window* and *North by Northwest*.³² *Psycho*, a film which I had seen numerous times prior to this project, would have been a more appropriate choice, however my impressions of suspense were mainly concentrated around the architectural conditions of the Bates house.³³ After I finished watching my select Hitchcock filmography in August, I finally decided upon *The Birds* to round out my roster of selections.



Figure 2.53 Film Still, *The Birds*

While I had never seen *The Birds* prior to this project, this film had been given a huge stigma in my mind due to the childhood experiences described by my mother, Marilyn. Having seen this movie during her younger years, my mother became so frightened that she still shudders at the mere mention of this film several decades later. Cringing, she recalled the “vicious and horrible” behaviour of the birds chasing the children through the town, and remains particularly upset by the shot of the smashed eyeglasses.³⁴ It is simply amazing to me that a movie retains the power to deeply and persistently haunt a person after many years have passed. For this reason, the film held a certain mystique which I was curious about uncovering and I selected this production immediately after my initial viewing.

After watching and re-watching *The Birds*, I was primarily struck by the fact that it was shot on in a real identifiable location as well as the clear geography

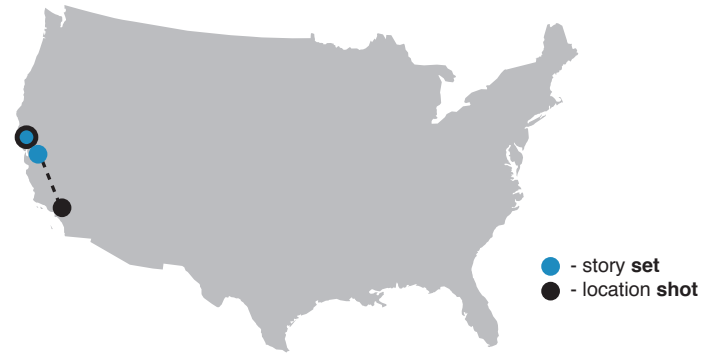


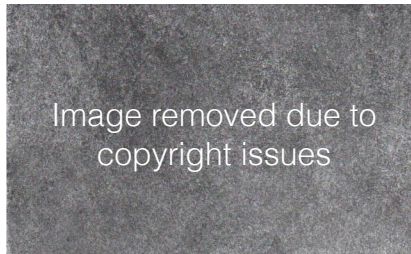
Figure 2.54 Diagram of Location & Setting in *The Birds*

which transpires as Melanie drives to Bodega Bay from San Francisco (Figure 2.51). As she is directed “up the coast” to reach Mitch, a clear dichotomy between big city and small town emerges along the route she drives through the rolling hills of the coastal highway (Figures 2.52 + 2.53).³⁵ Furthermore, as she reaches the seaside community of Bodega Bay, she receives further directions from the shopkeeper and crosses the bay in a small boat to reach the Brenner farm.³⁶ Through these verbal instructions as well as the sequence of images in the film, the identified morphology and topography of this place seems to be beyond question.

Researching the production of this film, I was quite surprised to learn that while Bodega Bay is portrayed as such a genuine locale on film, it is actually a Californian collage: a combination of location shots from the Bay Area edited together with studio footage, as well as innovative special effects techniques (Figure 2.54).³⁷



2.56

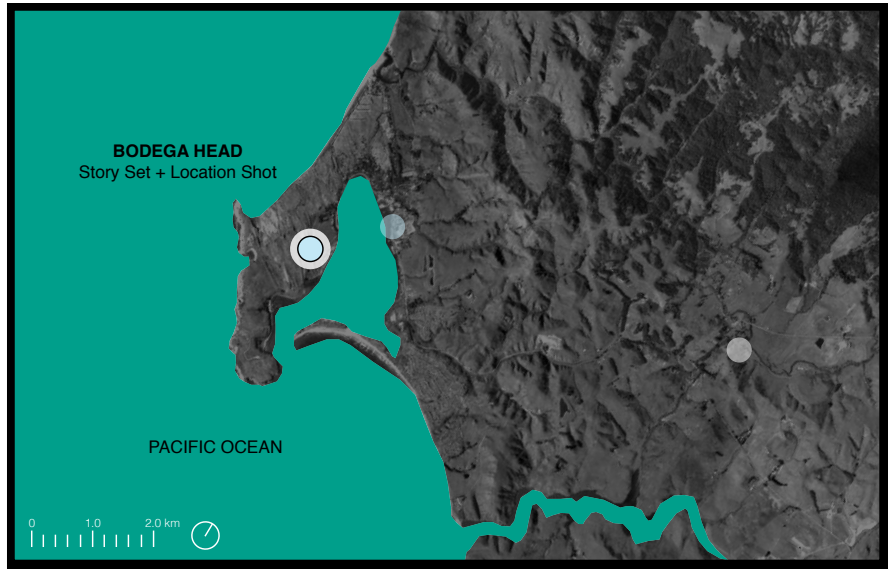


2.57

Figure 2.55 Diagram of Location & Setting in *The Birds*: Arrival at Bodega Bay Sequence (Left)

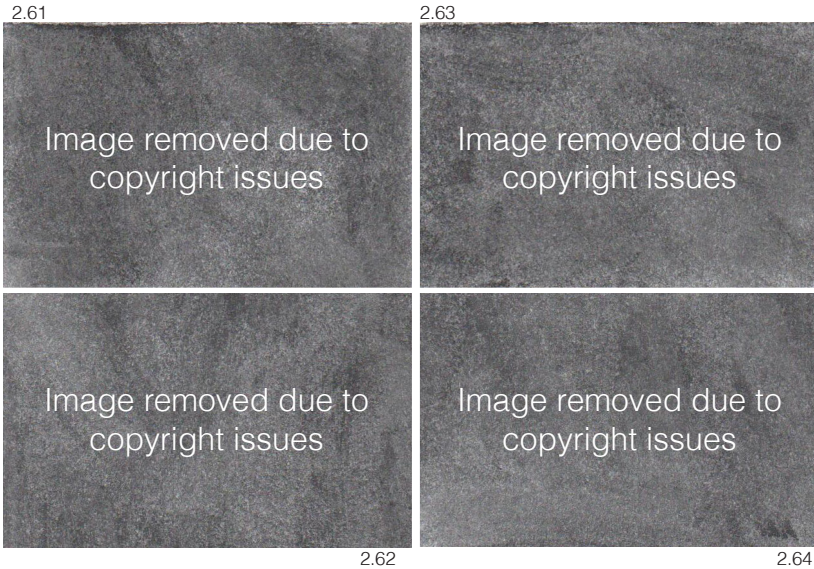
Figure 2.56 Film Still, *The Birds* (Top Right) / Figure 2.57 Production Still of Bodega Bay Set (Bottom Right)

2.58



2.59

Figure 2.58 Film Still, *The Birds* (Top Right) / Figure 2.59 Production Still of Brenner Farm Location (Bottom Right)
Figure 2.60 Diagram of Location & Setting in *The Birds*: Arrival at the Brenner Farm Sequence (Left)



Top:
 Figures 2.61 + 2.63
 Film Stills, *The Birds*

Bottom:
 Figures 2.62 + 2.64
 Production Techniques: Travelling Mattes & Scenic Paintings

While certain locales are shifted in the film, such as the town school and Annie's house which are actually located several miles inland rather than near the coast (Figures 2.55 – 2.57), other genuine locations were physically altered especially for the movie, namely the Brenner Farm on Bodega Head which was reconstructed solely for this production (Figures 2.58 – 2.60).³⁸ While Hitchcock utilized locations to add the appeal of authenticity to his pictures, he intensely disliked filming on-site and often combined this footage with shots from the studio to achieve the best of both worlds.³⁹ Special effects and editing techniques were employed extensively in this film to combine these interior and exterior fragments, including the use of travelling mattes and scenic paintings (Figures 2.61 – 2.64).⁴⁰ Through the application of these methods, the scale and depth of the bay, which were previously presented in such a straightforward manner, become questionable due to the fact that the image is revealed as a composite constructed upon a flat, two-dimensional background, rather than an actual locale.⁴¹ Despite learning the 'truth' behind these carefully composed cinematic images, the world within this film retains its vividness: it is certainly made no less 'real' in my mind after the discovery of these techniques. While this expertise could have ensured the production of this film anywhere in the world, the script for this film was specifically written around the moody northern California landscape to which Hitchcock was particularly attracted.⁴² While it is ironic that this director paints so clear a portrait of a place which is in actuality an assemblage of diverse locations edited to become one place on film and in our minds, Bodega Bay in *The Birds* constitutes a 'creative geography', a term used to designate a place manipulated in cinema for artistic effect, to convey a latent atmosphere as much as to drive a particular narrative.⁴³

2.65



2.67



2.66



2.68

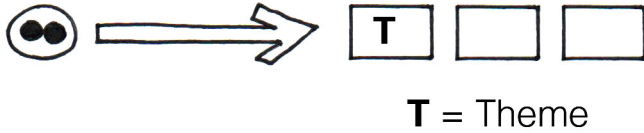


Figures 2.65, 2.67 + 2.69 Film Stills, *The Birds* (Top Left / Top Middle / Right)
 Figure 2.66 Production Still of Brenner House Set (Bottom Left) / Figure 2.68 Production Still of Bodega Bay Set (Bottom Middle)

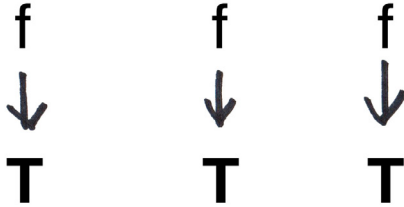
While the tone of this film and the actual landscapes in which it was shot are inextricably linked, *The Birds* comprises an abundance of exterior scenes which also explore a series of interactions between humans and non-humans. Despite the fact that this situation goes horribly awry, as the bird assaults eventually drive the people out of town, this movie still reminds me of the ecological network of relationships in our world between human beings and animals, and in my opinion serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of unthinkingly abusing our surrounding environments.⁴⁴ The confrontational encounters whereby these creatures attack the human characters in the film were orchestrated using trained, mechanical and stuffed birds, as well as the layering of additional footage of flying birds overtop the interior and exterior landscapes of the film through the usage of traveling mattes.⁴⁵ While the human actors were initially shot reacting to nothing

in several scenes, including the initial infiltration of the Brenner home and the ambush on the school, the application of these ancillary layers of attacking birds translates these reactions from ridiculous pantomime into fearful cowering, thereby transforming these formerly comfortable places into settings of persecution and fear (Figures 2.65 – 2.68).⁴⁶ Similarly, in the final scene, the pastoral countryside introduced at the beginning of the film is transformed into a chilling, post-apocalyptic landscape through the superimposition of the birds. Although this shot was the most technically challenging to produce, it certainly constitutes the most haunting imagery in this picture and captures the dystopian tone of the entire narrative (Figure 2.69).⁴⁷ It is this powerful atmosphere of the cinematic imagery, along with the creative coastal geography of Bodega Bay constructed through cutting-edge special effects, which drove my exploration of this film.⁴⁸

2.70



2.71



f = Film T = Theme

Figures 2.70 + 2.71 Emergence of Themes (Top / Bottom)

ANALYTICAL MATRICES & LANDSCAPE THEMES

Matrix Creation & Theme Development

Continually re-watching these films and studying the various motifs, characters, settings and locations, I began to notice a condition emerging in each production, that is a major concept to which I could distill the essence of each movie (Figures 2.70 + 2.71). To analyze this triad of productions, thereby developing these themes even further, I generated a set of matrices through intensive viewing and digital screenshot capture on my computer to present an overview of the

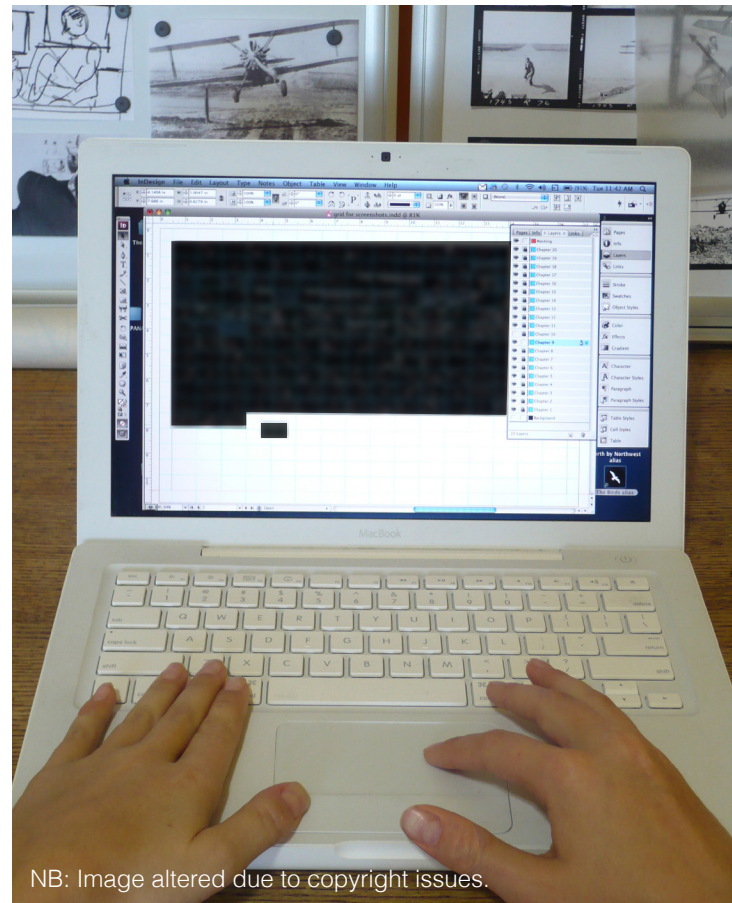


Figure 2.72 Generation of Matrices

mise-en-scène within each film (Figures 2.72 – 2.77).⁴⁹ From these graphics arose a trio of themes: *Seamless*, *Pursuit* and *Veneer*. While these themes each emerged from and relate directly to a specific film, I also realized that these ideas could apply to all of the films, linking these diverse productions with one another as well as returning these cinematic experiences to the landscape (Figures 2.78 – 2.81).

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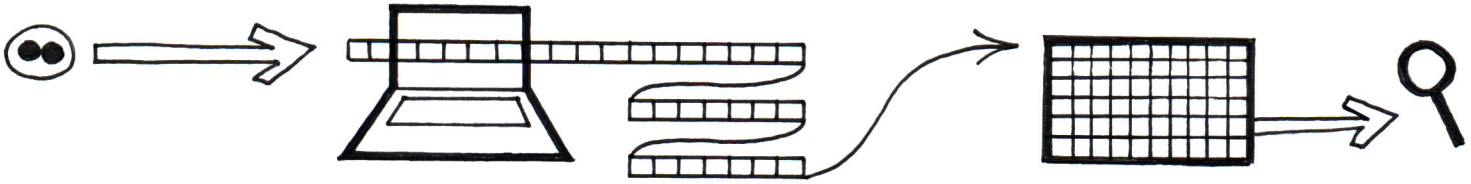
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2.76

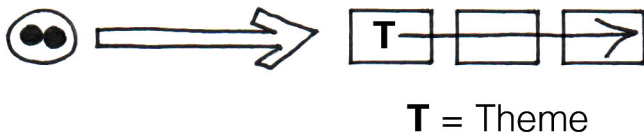
Figure 2.74 Matrix Detail, *Rear Window* (Top Left)
Figure 2.75 Matrix Detail, *North by Northwest* (Top Right)
Figure 2.76 Matrix Detail, *The Birds* (Bottom Left)

Opposite:
Figure 2.77 Analytical Process (Top)
Figures 2.78 + 2.79 Manifestation of Themes
(Middle Left / Bottom Left)
Figures 2.80 + 2.81 Application of Themes
(Middle Right / Bottom Right)

2.77

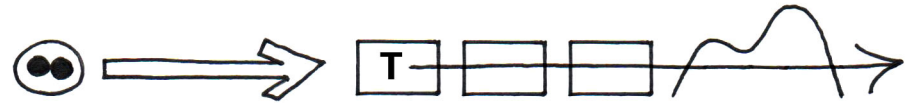


2.78



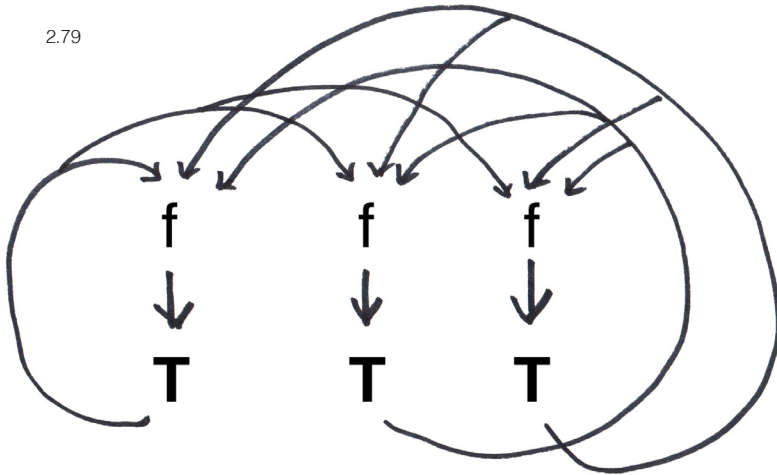
T = Theme

2.80



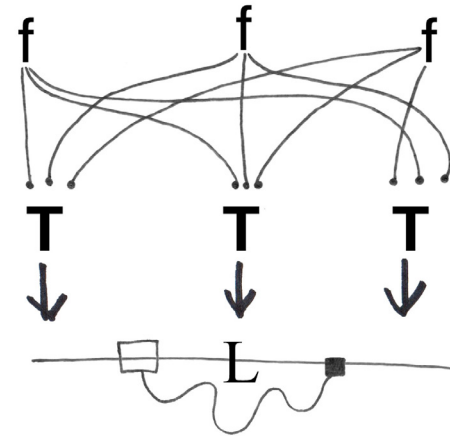
T = Theme

2.79

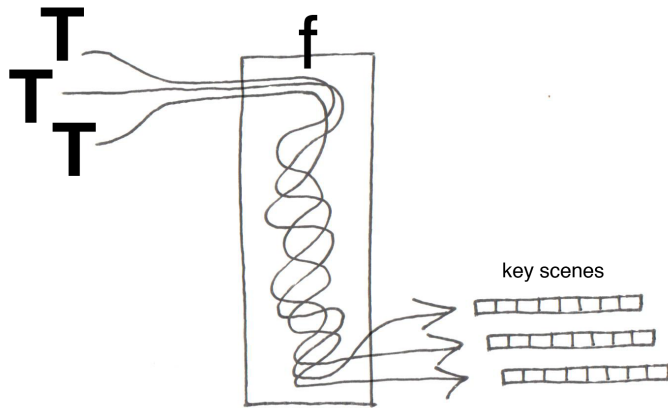


f = Film **T** = Theme

2.81

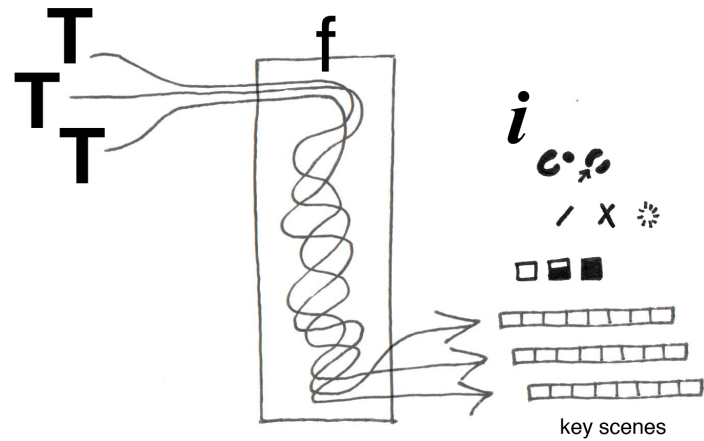


f = Film **T** = Theme **L** = Landscape



f = Film **T** = Theme

Figure 2.82 Drawing Out Key Scenes Through Matrices



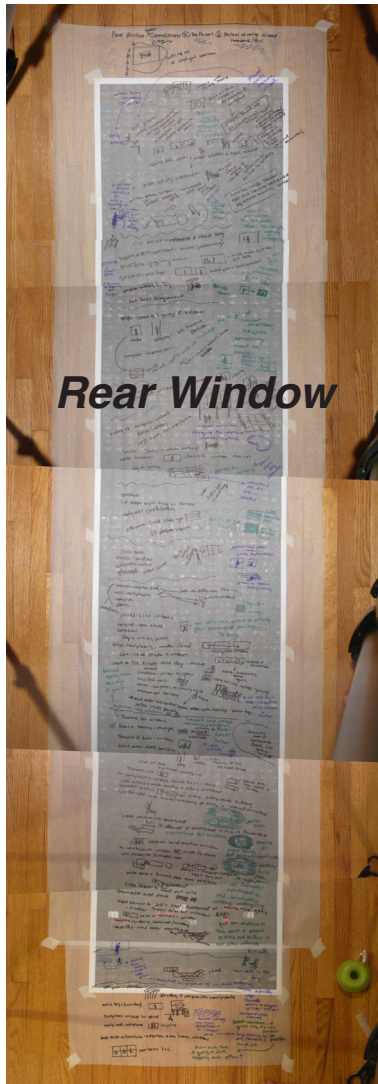
f = Film **T** = Theme **i** = Ideograms

Figure 2.83 Drawing Out Sub-Concepts: Cine-Cipher

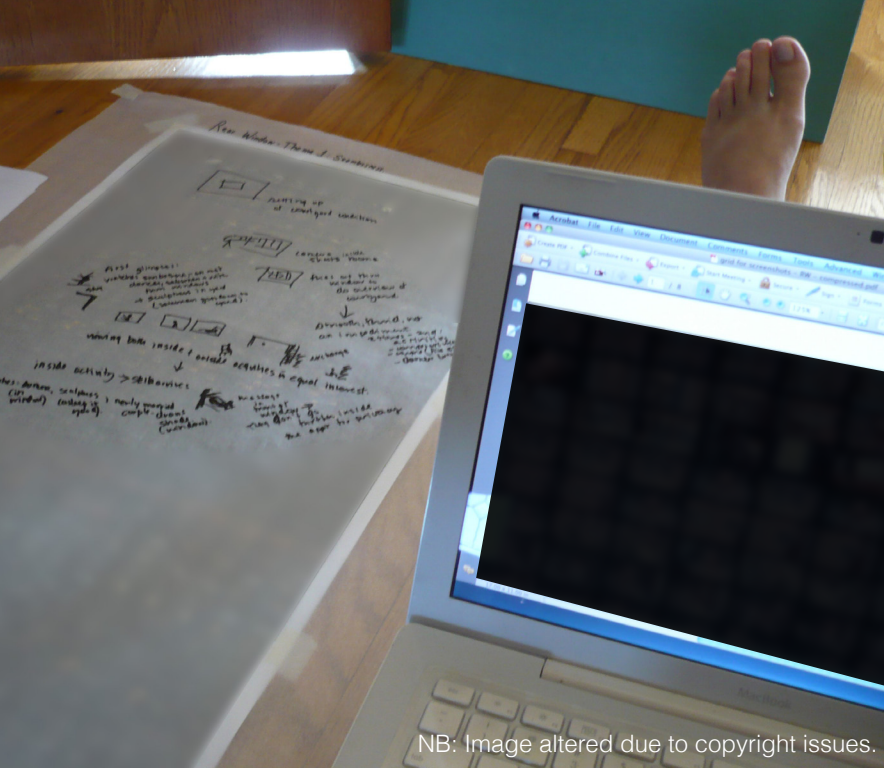
Drawing Out Scenes: Ideograms & Sub-Concepts

In order to fully develop these concepts and pull out key scenes which clearly manifest these themes, I began working through the matrices by sketching on top of these graphics (Figure 2.82). Considering each film separately, I drew out small, annotated sketches based on my impressions of atmosphere, mise-en-scène and setting in relation to the three principal themes (Figures 2.83 – 2.89). Focusing within particular scenes, I developed ideograms to describe the specific way that each condition is played out in the landscape, effectively developing a number of sub-concepts which relate to various methods of reading landscapes (Figure 2.90).⁵⁰

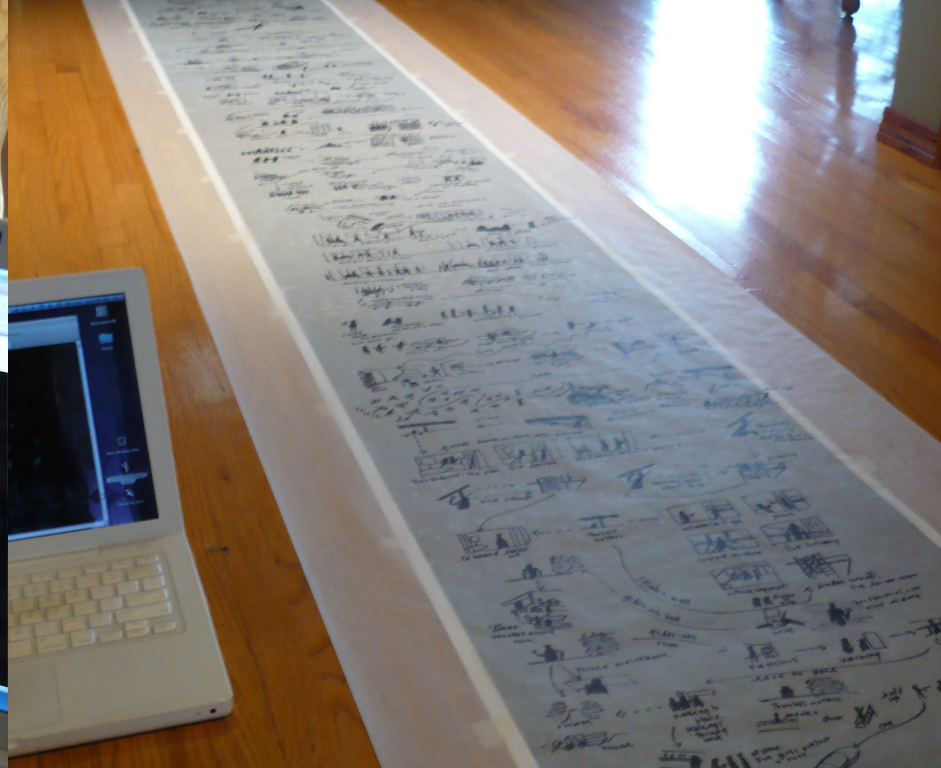
The remainder of this document is dedicated to a detailed examination of the manifestation of these themes within the films themselves. Inspired by the uncanny connection I experienced between *Rear Window* and the JAR Building, I intended to correlate each of the three themes and films to real life places and present these explorations in a series of composite images which conclude Chapters 3, 5 and 6, as well as appear in the final consolidation of this work, Chapter 7, which applies these concepts a series of contemporary projects within the discipline of landscape architecture.



Figures 2.84, 2.85 + 2.86 Cine-Cipher Sketching Process (Left / Middle / Right)



NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

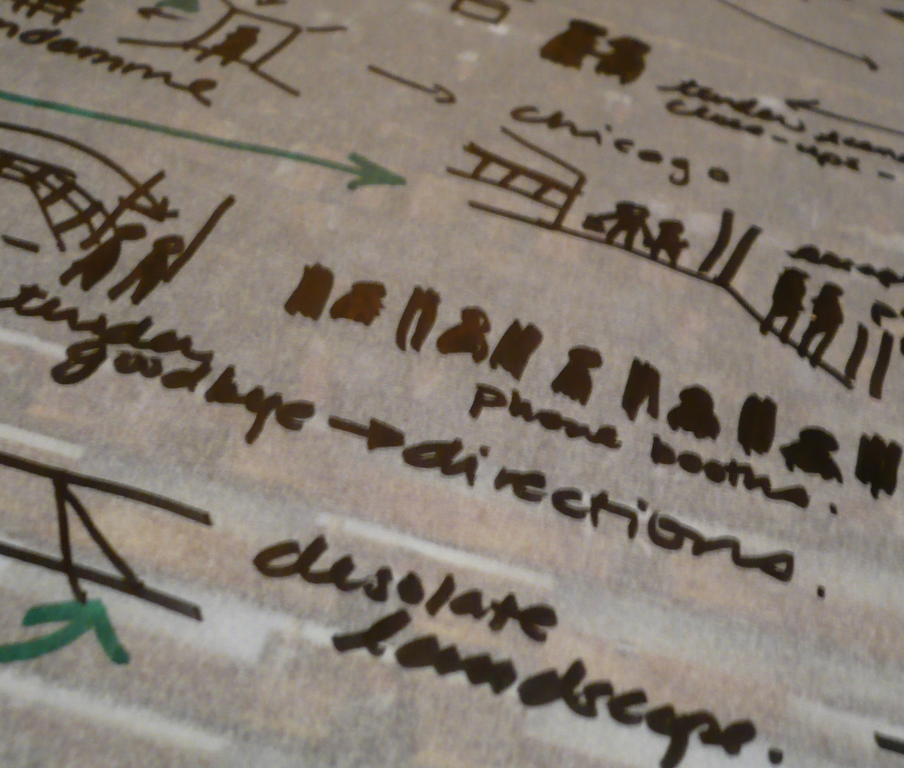


2.87 2.88
2.89



Figure 2.87 Cine-Cipher Sketching Detail, *Rear Window* (Top Left)
 Figure 2.88 Cine-Cipher Sketching Detail,
North by Northwest (Top Right)
 Figure 2.89 Cine-Cipher Sketching Detail, *The Birds* (Bottom Left)

Opposite:
 Figure 2.90 Cine-Cipher Sketching, *North by Northwest* (Top)
 Figure 2.91 Sketch Rolls (Bottom)



2.90

NOTES

- 1 Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*. (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p.16.
- 2 James Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

Daniel Doz, "The City at Night: A Topological Cinematic Labyrinth" (presentation, Atmosphere 2011: Mediated Cities, Winnipeg, MB, February 3-5, 2011).

This additional criteria includes: works which were discussed in a film theory course, features which my advisors had introduced during our meetings, productions which were included in the book *Celluloid Skyline* (which had profoundly influenced my thoughts on cinema) as well as films which were analyzed in Daniel Doz's lecture.

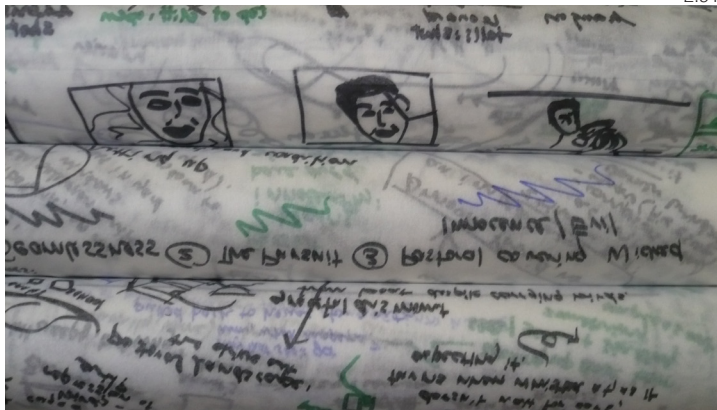
- 3 In fact, the selection of this film also predates my decision to focus solely on Hitchcock's work as well as the compilation of the list of films by this director which I intended to watch.
- 4 "Rear Window," *Wikipedia*, updated 18 November 2011, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rear_Window.

Prior to reading this chapter, I had heard of this movie solely through the multitude of pop culture references based on or influenced by this seminal work. Several movies and television programs directly play off *Rear Window's* concept of watching the neighbours and explore the same dilemmas which arise when questionable activity occurs, namely a suspected murder. A few examples which immediately come to mind are *Disturbia*, a recent film in which the protagonist is confined to his suburban home under house arrest, as well as a particular episode of *The Simpsons* entitled "Bart of Darkness" in which the title character also suffers from a broken leg and surveys the neighbourhood from a second-story window using a telescope ("*Rear Window*," *Wikipedia*.)

See also: Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.228-241.

- 5 Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.228

While my original practicum proposal sought to concentrate on films set or shot in New York City, I was naturally attracted to the richness and vibrancy of the urban environment portrayed in this production, which is described by Sanders as "perhaps the most sophisticated and complex exploration of the movie city ever created."



2.91

6 Ibid., p.234.

7 Ibid., p.233.

8 Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Quoted in Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.235.

9 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.134, 141-142.

Krohn describes this complex set: "In his pursuit of perfection, it was in *Rear Window*, filmed entirely on a sound-stage...that Hitchcock finally felt he had eliminated the 'chaos factor' from his mise en scene" (p.134). The author continues on to add that the "set, which combined the living room of Jeff's apartment and the courtyard it looked out on, was 38 feet (11.5 meters) wide, 185 feet (56 meters) long and 40 feet (12 meters) high. This elaborate set also contained "thirty-one apartments, of which twelve were fully furnished...[and] equipped with water and electricity" (p.141). The construction of "the Greenwich Village set cost about \$100,000 to build, including the 1,000 giant arc-lights that took the place of the sun...[which comprised] almost every piece of lighting equipment on the Paramount lot" (p.142).

More than likely, this set was utterly convincing due to the extensive research which was done prior to its construction: "Production designer Mac Johnson sent production manager 'Doc' Erickson to New York to photograph three Greenwich Village courtyards at various times of day to provide a guide that he could use when he painted the set" (p.141).

10 Laurent Bouzereau, 'Rear Window' *Ethics: Remembering and Restoring a Hitchcock Classic*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 2000).

In Bouzereau's film, the assistant director of *Rear Window*, Herbert Coleman, describes the manner in which Jeff's second story apartment sat at the level of the original stage, whereas the courtyard itself was constructed within the newly excavated area below.

11 Bouzereau, 'Rear Window' *Ethics*.

Filmmakers Curtis Hanson and Peter Bogdanovich list these characteristic elements in the beginning of 'Rear Window' *Ethics*. Hanson states: "if one were to ask, what are the movies

of Alfred Hitchcock like, somebody who knew nothing about movies, you could show them *Rear Window* and in a sense touch on everything Hitchcock. You would immediately see his technical brilliance, you would see his ability to tell a story in a uniquely captivating way...you certainly have his humour...and thematically you deal with voyeurism, you deal with guilt, you deal with relationships, you deal with sexuality. It's all there in *Rear Window*."

12 Joan Bolker, *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), p.32.

Bolker includes this amusing anecdote in the beginning of her chapter on writing: "When I worked at Harvard's Writing Center, we joked that the single most useful piece of equipment for a writer was a bucket of glue. First you spread some on your chair, and then you sit down."

13 Tom Gunning, "In and Out of the Frame: Paintings in Hitchcock," in *CASTING A SHADOW: CREATING THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK FILM*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.32, 39.

It was brought to my attention through my final presentation as well as my research that this identification with the protagonists in each of the three films I have chosen to focus on has stirred an "impulse towards unconscious mimicry" (p.39). While Gunning's essay refers to the "imitation of painting by a human figure" (p.32), I would extend his definition of the traditional tableau vivant to include the scenes I have re-created through my own research in an attempt to enter and embody Hitchcock's work to achieve a heightened awareness of its meanings.

14 Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.239.

15 Jean Domarchi and Jean Douchet, "An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.184.

While I did enjoy watching *Rope*, as well as reading about Hitchcock's long takes in this film which he intended to promote a sense of realism, both Richard and I vetoed this film in favour of a selection with a greater manifestation of landscape.

16 Ernest Lehman, "Commentary by Screenwriter Ernest Lehman," Disc 1, *North by Northwest*, 50th Anniversary Edition, DVD, Directed

by Alfred Hitchcock. (New York: Turner Entertainment Co., 2009). Quoted from Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.204.

Domarchi et al., "An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock," p.180.

Interviewed by Domarchi and Douchet, Hitchcock remarked that certain locations or scenarios "must be in the film" based on the prerogative of the director (p.180), which informed the development of the scripts for many of his films, not just *North by Northwest*.

17 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.210.

Ernest Lehman, *North by Northwest*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), p.ix.

Hitchcock, Krohn states, "preferred 'realistic nightmares' – at least when the realism didn't get in the way of his imagination" (p.210), a fact which undoubtedly influenced Lehman to travel across the country for this project. In his preface to the paperback version of the script, he states: "I headed east on a much-needed research trip: the adventures of Roger Thornhill, a.k.a. George Kaplan...First stop, New York City – the Plaza Hotel. Where to stage a kidnapping? Then to the United Nations. Where to commit murder? Then to Glen Cove, Long Island, where I persuaded a cooperative judge to put me through the experience of being arrested for drunk driving. I took the *Twentieth Century Limited* to Chicago (but never met an 'Eve'), explored the Ambassador East Hotel, covered a Chicago auction, trained to Rapid City, South Dakota, stayed at the Sheraton Johnson Hotel, hired a forest ranger on his weekend off, and started climbing one of the faces of Mount Rushmore" (p.ix).

18 Lehman, "Commentary."

19 Lehman, "Commentary."

Peter Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock: The Making of North by Northwest*, Film. (West Hollywood, CA: Fitzfilm, 2000).

Lehman introduces an interesting anecdote of capturing the exterior shots of the UN building: while Hitchcock was not permitted to shoot in this location for security reasons, the crew hid the camera inside of a carpet cleaning truck in order to obtain this forbidden footage. Thus, all the people in this scene are real passers-by and the security guards stationed on the steps are genuine, not actors.

20 "North by Northwest Film Locations," *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations*, updated 7 September 2011, <http://www.movie-locations.com/movies/n/NorthByNorthwest.html>

Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock*.

In Fitzgerald's documentary, Robert Boyle, the production designer for *North by Northwest*, describes the selection of the Old Westbury Gardens for its "fantastic grounds with a long driveway."

21 Lehman, "Commentary."

Lehman describes two examples which relate to the aforementioned scenes: the coastal highway sequence which follows the drama at the Townsend estate was created using process footage shot in the studio back lot combined with a scenic painting in the background, while the grand lobby of the UN building comprised an elaborate matte shot. These special effects are described in further detail in the following section on *The Birds*, which employed similar techniques but to a greater extent.

22 "North by Northwest Film Locations," *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations*.

Lehman, *North by Northwest*, p.ix.

According to Lehman, one of the major reasons that Vandamme's villa was constructed on a soundstage as opposed to using the genuine location of Mount Rushmore was that the leeward slopes of this landform were much too steep to accommodate the house as well as the events of the plot.

23 Lehman, "Commentary."

Domarchi et al., "An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock," p.178.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.211.

In his DVD commentary, Lehman explains the issues which arose with the National Parks Service in attempting to use Mount Rushmore as a location within the film: "Little did I realize that when the proper government agency found out that we were planning to stage killings on the faces of the national monument, they prohibited Hitch from shooting at Mount Rushmore and the entire monument had to be built at MGM. He was very upset at first, but what could he do? He did have one long shot of the real monument as seen from a distance, and

the rest of it was Bob Boyle's brilliant, brilliant work. It just was remarkable how he created pieces of the monument and made you feel you were actually there."

Hitchcock describes to Domarchi and Douchet the construction of this scene: "In the case of Mount Rushmore, I managed to strike a compromise with the authorities. They didn't want any gunshots or violent scenes on the monument or with the monument in the background. I said 'very well' and I honored the terms of our agreement. I showed the heroes on the rocks *beside* the monument. You may have noticed there is no violence on the monument. I kept my promise." (p.178). While nothing was shot *on* the monument itself, the special effects used provided such a convincing illusion that reportedly the authorities were still upset that "the public will still think it was shot there" (p.178).

24 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.211.

Krohn reveals that the Mount Rushmore scene "called for twenty-six matte shots and required two conferences" with cameraman Robert Burks and production designer Robert Boyle, a rather extensive undertaking in comparison to other scenes within this film.

25 James Naremore, "Spies and Lovers" in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 18.

26 Lehman, *North by Northwest*, p.ix.

Lehman describes this scene as initially based on a vision of Hitchcock's: " 'I always wanted to do a scene...where our hero is standing all alone in a wide open space and there's nobody and nothing else in sight for three hundred and sixty degrees around, as far as the eye can see...and then along comes a tornado. No place to run' " (p.ix). While orchestrating a tornado was determined to be a rather farfetched idea, both men worked together to develop this captivating scene as it exists in the film.

27 "North by Northwest Film Locations," *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations*.

Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.210, 213.

Within the film, Eve describes these directions to Thornhill in the

lobby of Chicago's La Salle Street station:

EVE: You're to take the Greyhound bus that leaves Chicago for Indianapolis at two and ask the driver to let you off at the Prairie Stop on Highway 41.

THORNHILL: Prairie Stop...Highway 41...

EVE: About a hour-and-a-half's drive from Chicago.

While the location in which this scene was shot constitutes an actual place, even if it is not represented as California within the film, the landscape itself was also physically altered prior for its inclusion in the film. Krohn states that the crop in which Thornhill takes shelter was initially conceived as a wheat field in Lehman's first draft, and subsequently changed to corn for increased realism, was planted especially for this scene for a total cost of \$5,200, which included rental fees for the property.

28 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.213.

Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock*.

While Krohn's chapter on *North by Northwest* describe the use of "only one matte" for this scene (p.213), Robert Boyle, in Fitzgerald's documentary, reveals that the entire horizon was manipulated in the establishing shot to remove the distracting view of a nearby town, and provide illusion of expansive space originally envisioned by Hitchcock.

29 Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock*.

This process is described by the narrator, Eva Marie Saint, in Fitzgerald's documentary: footage of the landscape recorded on location was projected onto a screen behind the set upon which Cary Grant acted out this scene.

30 Robin Wood, "North by Northwest," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.206.

Wood expresses this notion rather eloquently: "the sequence retains its magic however many times one sees the film – even after one knows, shot by shot, what comes next."

31 Leva, Gary. *North by Northwest: One for the Ages*, Film. Glendale, CA: Leva FilmWorks, 2009.

Within this documentary, filmmaker Curtis Hanson describes *North by Northwest* as the epitome of Hitchcock's films, a veritable anthology of his characteristic themes and motifs.

32 Domarchi et al., "An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock," p.181.

In response to a question by Domarchi and Douchet, Hitchcock reveals that although "everything in *The Wrong Man* is true," he personally considered this picture to be an utter failure. While I do not agree with this remark, it is nevertheless difficult to place my confidence in a film which has been completely written off by its maker.

33 Even as I type this document, I am confronted with particular visions from this movie, namely the creepy scene in the basement of the Bates mansion whereby Norman (Anthony Perkins) dressed as his mother rushes down the stairs to stab Lila Crane (Vera Miles), who is searching for her missing sister Marion (Janet Leigh). While I have been extremely traumatized by this film, especially in my aversion to stairs, I realize that had I chosen to focus on this film, I would have fixated on the exceedingly atmospheric interior scenes at the expense of the exterior landscapes in the film which offered much less of a lasting impression.

34 This quote arose from a discussion I had with my mother about my practicum film selections. To this day, she insists that the eyes of the children were pecked out in this scene. Although this recollection is not true according to the narrative of the film, it is certainly testament to the power of cinematic imagery.

35 Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film. (Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

In the film, Melanie attempts to drop off a pair of lovebirds at Mitch's apartment. A neighbour notices her in the hallway and offers her these directions to reach Mitch in Bodega Bay:

NEIGHBOUR: Miss? Is that for Mitch Brenner?

MELANIE: Yes?

NEIGHBOUR: Well, he's not home.

MELANIE: Oh, that's all right.

NEIGHBOUR: He won't be back until Monday, I mean if those birds are for him.

MELANIE: Monday?

NEIGHBOUR: Yes. I don't think you should leave them in the hall, do you?

MELANIE: Well...where did he go?

NEIGHBOUR: Bodega Bay. He goes there every weekend.

MELANIE: Bodega Bay...where's that?

NEIGHBOUR: Up the coast, about 60 miles north of here.

MELANIE: 60 miles...oh...

NEIGHBOUR: It's an hour and a half by freeway, or 2 hours if you take the coast highway.

MELANIE: Oh.

NEIGHBOUR: I'd look after them myself but I'm going away too. I'm awfully sorry.

36 Ibid.

In the local general store, Melanie is directed quite clearly across the bay in her initial inquiries to locate Mitch's home in Bodega Bay:

MELANIE: I'm looking for a man named Mitchell Brenner.

SHOPKEEPER: Ya.

MELANIE: Do you know him?

SHOPKEEPER: Ya.

MELANIE: Where does he live?

SHOPKEEPER: Right here, Bodega Bay.

MELANIE: Oh, yes...I know. But where?

SHOPKEEPER: Right across the bay there.

MELANIE: Where?

Both characters exit the general store and stand on the front step, facing the bay.

SHOPKEEPER: Now, see where I'm pointin'? (*Points towards bay*)

MELANIE: Yes.

SHOPKEEPER: See them two big trees across there?

MELANIE: You mean on the other side of the bay?

Yes...

SHOPKEEPER: And the white house?

MELANIE: Yes.

SHOPKEEPER: That's where the Brenners live.

37 Laurent Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*, Film. (Culver City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2000).

In this documentary, production designer Robert Boyle states that "we had to get all of these various pieces and put them together to make one small community out of it." It is revealed that a total of 371 trick shots were used to assemble these diverse components and create the composite cinematic imagery seen in the final film.

38 Ibid.

Boyle continues on to explain that since the existing house on Bodega Head was much too old and dilapidated for use in the movie, it was torn down and rebuilt from the foundation. The red

barn, evident in Melanie's initial views of the Brenner farm from the boat in the middle of the bay, did not exist initially and was added to this composition for a pastoral effect.

39 Ibid.

Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell recounts that her father, Alfred Hitchcock, hated location filming due to the difficulty of controlling the light and ambient noise. She states: "if ever he could get away without location, he would."

40 Ibid.

Scott Curtis, "The Last Word: Images in Hitchcock's Working Method," in *Castings a Shadow: Creating the Alfred Hitchcock Film*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.26.

In Bouzereau's documentary, Bill Taylor describes the sodium process travelling mattes used throughout *The Birds*: while foreground action was shot on a special type of film in the studio against a screen illuminated by yellow light, background footage from the site itself was recorded separately on another type of film. Essentially, both filmstrips were combined later in a specialized optical printer to create the final imagery. The sodium process of travelling mattes offered the highest quality of photographic composite available at the time, although nowadays Robert Boyle notes that: "these problems would be solved by a computer."

In his essay, Curtis offers this description of scenic paintings: "in this effect, a portion of the setting is filmed (in this case, the house and paths in the foreground) and a matte – cut exactly to fit the rest of the picture – is placed over the other part of the setting to create a blank space on the film. This space will be filled in during post production by superimposing a painting (or another photograph) that has been drawn to fit the matte exactly. In this way, filmmakers do not have to settle for locations as they are – they can create their own." (p.26). Albert Whitlock is identified in Bouzereau's film as the artist responsible for the scenic paintings in *The Birds*.

41 This statement applies more to the use of scenic paintings than the travelling matte technique.

42 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.240.

Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.
Krohn's chapter on this film describes the basis of this narrative

in a short story by Daphne du Maurier's story, also entitled "The Birds", "which describes an epidemic of bird attacks on humans from the point of view of a Cornish farmer" (p.240). Shifted to northern California, a landscape described by Boyle in Bouzereau's documentary as "a moody, strange area, both forbidding and foreboding...[with] a kind of a mystical quality," the film retains the original mood of du Maurier's story largely due to the bleak and unpredictable weather prevalent in early March, when filming of this production began. While Boyle comments that Hitchcock perhaps selected this locale due to its similarities with England, Krohn states that he ultimately "regretted the decision to film in bad weather" (p.240).

43 François Penz, "From Topographical Coherence to Creative Geography: Rohmer's *The Aviator's Wife* and Rivette's *Pont du Nord*," in *Cities in Transition: The Moving Image and the Modern Metropolis*, eds. Andrew Webber and Emma Wilson. (London: Wallflower Press, 2008), p.123.

Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

Penz introduces the topic of 'creative geography' through describing an experiment by Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov, namely "the arbitrary combination of various scenes of action into a single composition" (p.123). The author continues on to define 'creative geography' as the combination of several locations into one cinematic space, rather than describing the city on film with empirical exactitude. He adds that this concept becomes applicable when a director is working in a foreign place and chooses to set a narrative in iconic or otherwise memorable locations, or when a director from a particular place chooses to show certain aspect of a locale to convey its essence. While Hitchcock immigrated from England to the United States, he is undoubtedly in the former category, however, I believe that his composition of Bodega Bay in *The Birds* truly reflects the moody, changing qualities of this landscape as described by production designer Robert Boyle in Bouzereau's documentary (see Note 42).

44 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.240.

According to Krohn, this is exactly what Hitchcock intended to do: "Clearly, Hitchcock wanted to make a film in which Nature declares war on the human race."

45 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

Bouzereau's documentary describes the various methods employed to control the trained birds on the set of this film, from

using magnets to secure these creatures to the building roofs, to placing birdseed in the hair of the actors to encourage the birds to divebomb, particularly in the childrens' birthday party scene near the beginning of the story. Production designer Robert Boyle notes that the action footage of the birds was largely shot in the garbage dumps of San Francisco during the months of pre-production.

The traveling matte process discussed in Note 40 applies to these cases.

46 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.238.

Describing the production of these scenes, *All About the Birds* also discusses the manner in which the human actors were shot acting on the set while the chaotic footage of the birds flying about was added post-production. In each case, the birds do not occupy the same space as the people, but rather their presence is layered overtop of the film later on as a special effect.

This documentary details the first take of the attack in the Brenner living room, in which this scene was attempted using live birds on the set. While these creatures did not react with sufficient frenzy within the confined space of the soundstage Hitchcock therefore decided to add the birds using traveling mattes. As a result, the actors were compelled to respond to invisible assailants while, Krohn states, "a drummer played on the sidelines to give them something to react to" (p.238).

In relation to the attack at the school, Bouzereau's film recounts that much of the action was shot on a Hollywood soundstage in which the actors ran upon a treadmill in front of a sodium screen. In this case, much of the background footage as well as the bird assailants, was matted in during post-production. Similarly, the aerial shot during the massive fiery strike on the town as well as the scene in the telephone booth were created using a combination of live action with scenic paintings, using a complex glass shot for the former: while the footage was shot through a glass plate painted black in certain areas. Robert Boyle describes the use of rotoscoping, hand-drawn travelling mattes, to superimpose the birds into these compositions after shooting had concluded.

47 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

In an audio interview with Peter Bogdanovich included in this film, Hitchcock describes the composition of this scene from 32

separate pieces of film: "First of all, we had a limited number of gulls allowed. Therefore, the foreground was shot in three panel sections, left to right, up to the birds on the rail. The few gulls we had was in the first third, and then we reshot them from the middle third, same gulls, and the right-hand third, gulls again. Then, just above the heads of the crows was a long, slender middle section, where the gulls were spread again. Then the car going down the driveway, the car only, with the birds each side of it was another piece of film. Then there was the sky, that was another piece of film." Robert Boyle adds that this shot also incorporates a matte of a scenic painting done by Albert Whitlock.

48 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.238-239.

In Bouzereau's documentary, Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell explains that this film was one of the hardest pictures for her father to make due to the various technical challenges presented by the narrative throughout the production process. Krohn reports that the "risk and experimentation" undertaken by Hitchcock and his crew made this work such a groundbreaking creation (p.238).

49 In this sense, these grids of frames served the function of a site plan: they enabled me to see the entire film at once in order to ascertain a certain set of existing conditions.

50 This sub-categorization was indirectly inspired by:

Christina Kennedy, Tiánna Kennedy, and Mélisa Kennedy, "Science Fiction/Fantasy Films, Fairy Tales and Control: Landscape Stereotypes on a Wilderness to Ultra-urban Continuum," in *Cinema and Landscape*, eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner. (Chicago: Intellect, 2010), 281-296.

Vicente Guallart, *Geo Logics: Geography Information Architecture*. (New York: Actar, 2008).

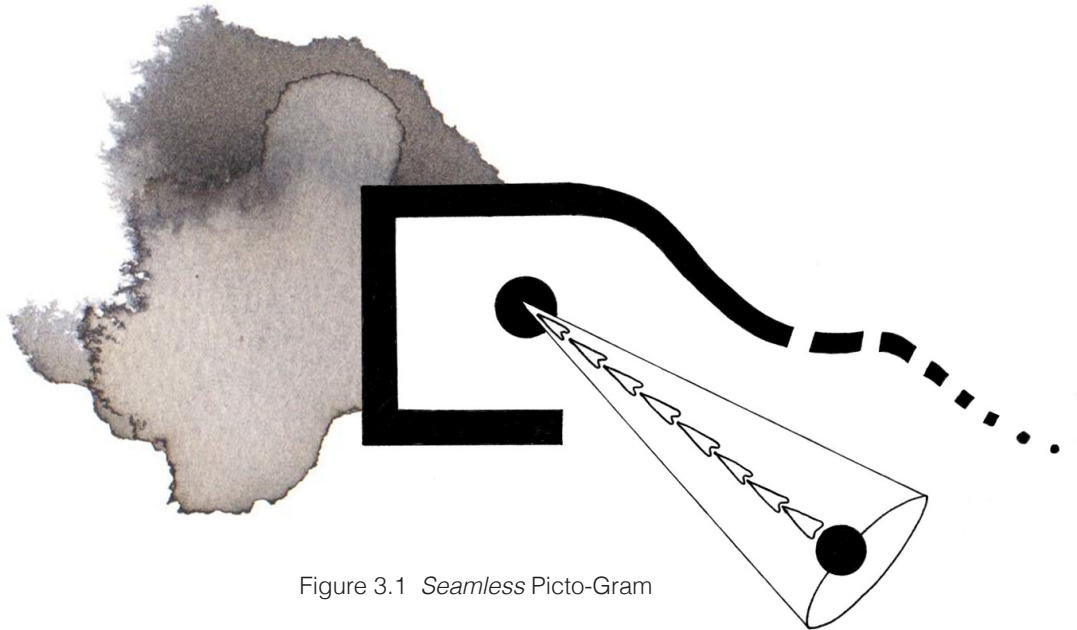


Figure 3.1 *Seamless* Picto-Gram

Theme 1: Seamless

The first theme entitled *Seamless* emerged from *Rear Window* and its inherent seamlessness between inside and outside through Jeff's watching of activities in the courtyard and through facing windows. While lines in traditional drawings always seem to emphasize the building envelope, ie: the thickness of cut lines in a section or walls in a plan, the power of the voyeur's gaze dissolves this boundary between interior and exterior spaces.



detective above - looking up to window in front
of which the entire action just took place

thermometer

composer L.H. - listening to record.

painters in apt - LARS'

putting puppy in basket

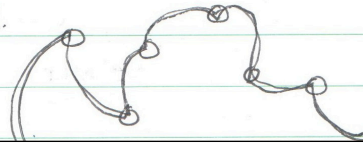
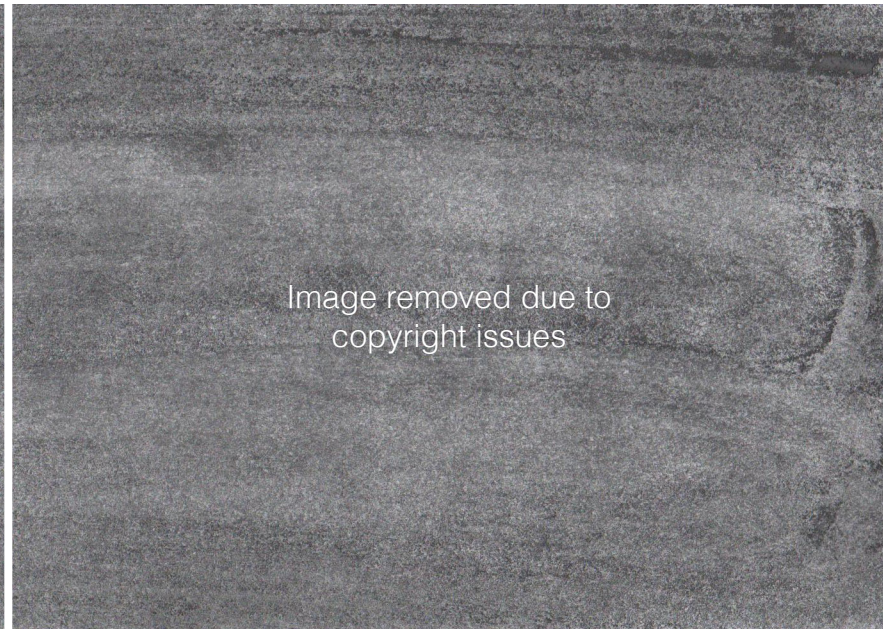
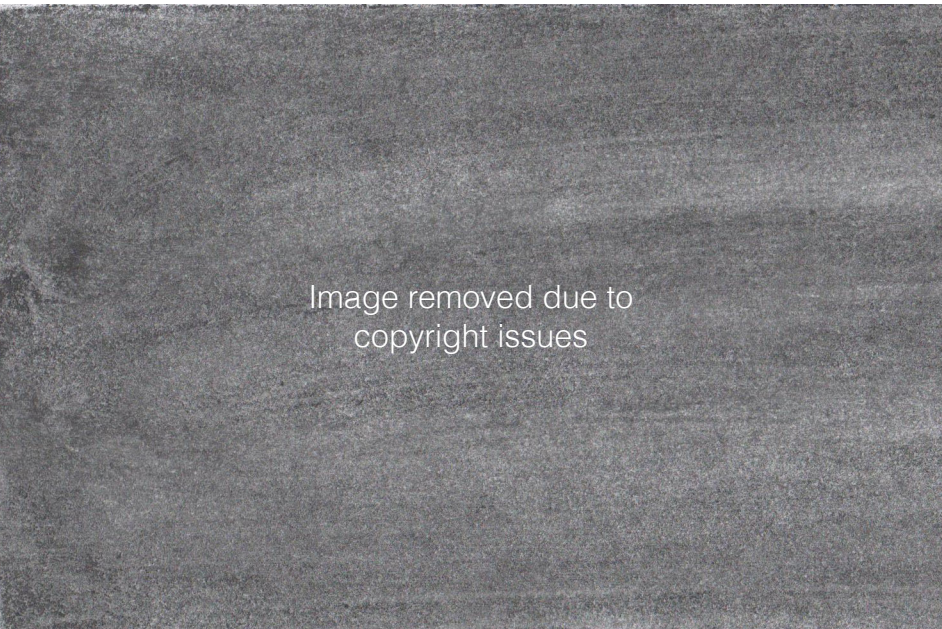


Figure 3.2 Mise-en-Sketches, *Rear Window*



Figures 3.3 + 3.4 Film Stills, *Rear Window* (Left / Right)

REAR WINDOW

Jeff's absorption in the surrounding world promotes a seamlessness between the building architecture and the landscape. Throughout the film, windows are points of connection whereby drama and suspense are built through the viewing of exterior activities in the common courtyard space from the interior spaces of the apartments which surround it, namely Jeff's rear window, and vice-versa. Reciprocity in this scenario is inherent: if the seer is seeing, then the seer must also be seen. Seamlessness reaches its pinnacle when parallel stories cross over one another, namely the various expeditions of Stella and Lisa to 'dig up' the truth on Thorwald, who eventually catches Jeff watching from the rear window perch.

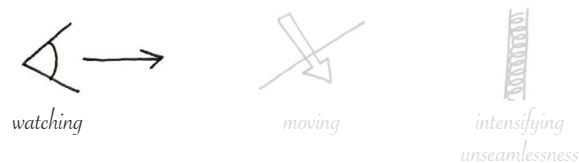


Figure 3.5 *Seamless Cine-Cipher: Rear Window*




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copyright issues

INITIAL SWEEPS¹

Figure 3.6 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

A distinct connection between inside and outside is clearly established from the opening credits of the film. These initial shots establish a fixed vantage point inside Jeff's apartment, a perch in front of a window with three partitions covered by a trio of blinds which are slowly being raised to reveal a sunny courtyard space.

Immediately after the credits finish, the camera sweeps through the window into the courtyard.² This single shot is fluid, smooth and continuous and moves across the barrier of this wall of windows as if it did not even exist. This first sweep of the courtyard, which takes place in the early morning, allows us to ascertain the physical conditions of the courtyard, the utterly 'real' mise-en-scène, prior to its occupation by people.³ In addition to the various windows and doors of the heterogeneous

façades that overlook the courtyard, this space also features a narrow alleyway between two of the buildings which frames a view of the Manhattan skyline beyond. These elements indicate that this private inner place is connected to the city streets, suggesting a seamlessness with the urban fabric itself, as well as indicating that the setting is perhaps less the constructed set that it fundamentally is, and more a genuine locale which potentially exists somewhere in Greenwich Village, New York City.⁴

Following this sweep, the camera re-enters Jeff's apartment through the windows to briefly, silently introduce the protagonist through a series of images prior to swooping out again and leading us on another visual tour of the courtyard. During this second sweep,

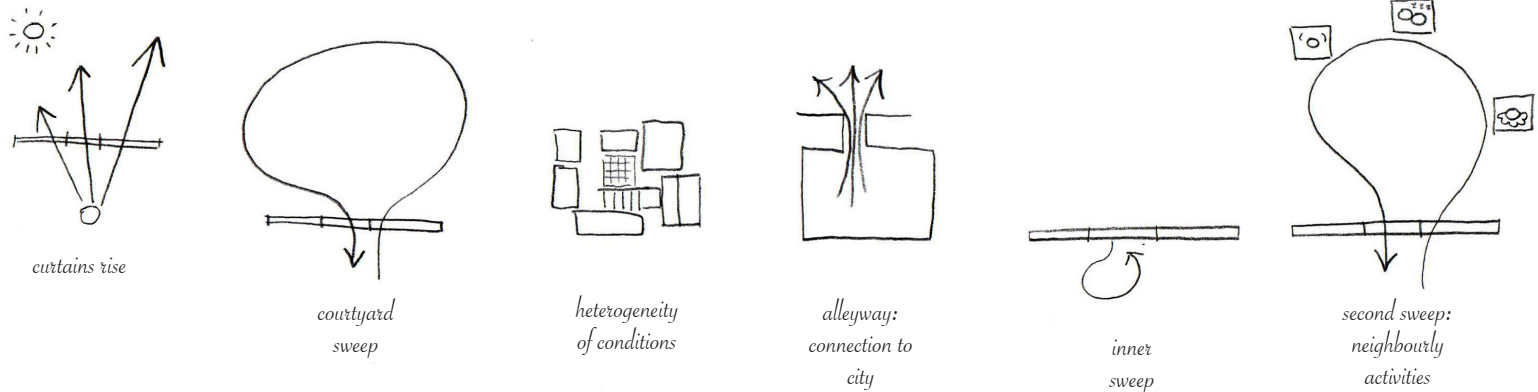
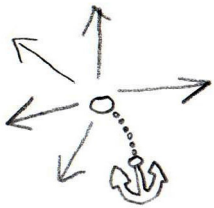


Figure 3.7 Cine-Cipher: 'Initial Sweeps'

we can see the neighbours waking up and beginning their days. The fact that this overview is done not once, but twice, with the occupants performing normally private morning routines, such as waking up, shaving and getting dressed, out in the open rather than behind closed doors or drawn shades, reinforces this sensation of seamlessness between inside and outside from the very beginning of this film.⁵ Despite the fact that the audience is watching, the characters remain blissfully unaware and seem to go about their daily rituals as usual.



housebound:
focus outward

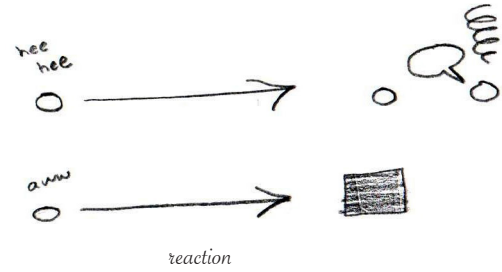
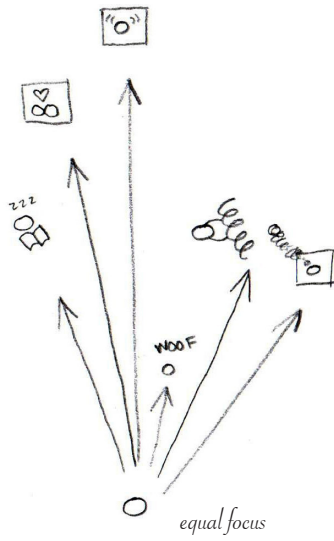


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CAPTIVATING ACTIVITIES⁶

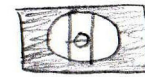
Figure 3.9 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

This sense of seamlessness is enhanced when the protagonist's own personal narrative because dull and deficient, when he is housebound with a broken leg, and he becomes deeply involved in the stories taking place in the spaces around him.⁷ Jeff focuses on the activities occurring inside, as seen in the surrounding windows: the impromptu rehearsals of Miss Torso the dancer, the newlywed couple crossing the threshold, and the musician composing a new song at the piano, as well as the ones outside: the sculptress working in her yard, Thorwald gardening, and a small dog frolicking on the terrace.⁸ While watching from his privileged perch,

Jeff does not distinguish or classify one type of activity as more important than the other but watches both with equal interest, often leaning towards the window or rolling his wheelchair to get closer to the action.⁹ He becomes fully engaged with these events and reacts to each in kind, from snickering at the comical scene on the terrace between Thorwald and the nosy sculptress whereby this lady is told to "shut up," to shyly looking away from the newlyweds' shaded window. Effectively, it is not about whether the activities are occurring inside or outside, but if they are interesting enough to watch, which encourages the development of this seamless notion.



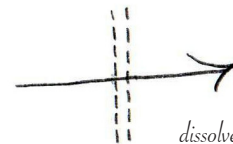
getting closer with technology



*interior
close-ups*



boundary



dissolves




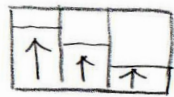
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VOYEURISTIC PROXIMITY

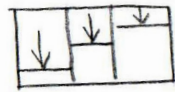
Figure 3.11 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

While observing these events out of his rear window, Jeff utilizes several different technological devices including binoculars and a paparazzi-style zoom lens to get closer to these fascinating events.¹⁰ Again, he focuses equally on interior dramas, such as the forlorn pantomime of the spinster Miss Lonelyhearts, and Thorwald's suspicious clean-up efforts at the kitchen sink, as well as exterior scenes such as the appearance of different characters on the street outside the courtyard at various times during the movie, their movements framed by the buildings in a similar manner

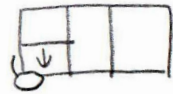
to the windows which enclose the interior views. It is Hitchcock's camera that encourages this sense of seamlessness between both sets of narratives: through the use of the long boom apparatus protruding into the courtyard, the camera offers us viewpoints which would be physically impossible for a person to see from the rear window itself.¹¹ While the space between these activities is shortened, we are given the impression that a boundary condition, whether it be a physical wall or the buffer created by distance, simply does not exist.



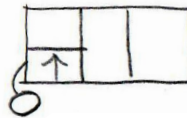
beginning



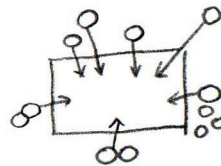
ending



privacy



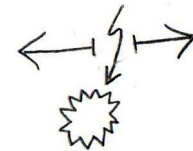
disaster



*narrative draws out
occupants*



*connection
severed*



disaster



*connection
restored*

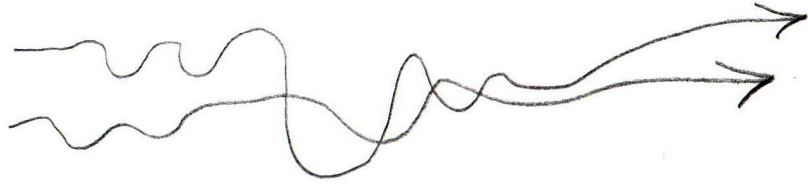
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copyright issues

SHADES UP¹²

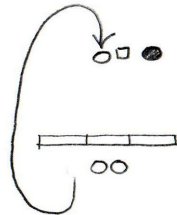
Figure 3.13 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

The developing sense of seamlessness in *Rear Window* is further enhanced by the fact that the shades to Jeff's apartment, as well as most of the other apartments, are for the majority open during the whole movie.¹³ The blinds on Jeff's windows, which are raised in the beginning and lowered at the conclusion of the film, remain up for nearly the entire film. The only exception to this extended exposure is the one scene where Lisa draws the shades to give the neighbours some privacy from Jeff's watching, after witnessing a particularly humiliating scene between Miss Lonelyhearts and her aggressive beau, as well as to create an intimate atmosphere within the apartment. Almost immediately after the curtains are lowered, Lisa must raise them up

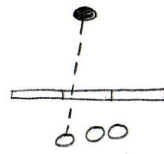
again as a horrifying scream rings out in the courtyard. Despite the fact that the connection between interior and exterior was severed for an instant through the drawing of the shades, the narrative takes precedence over this inside/outside boundary condition and demands that the blinds must once again be lifted to restore this connection. The power of the storyline at this moment, when the dead dog is discovered and the lady on the fire escape loudly laments her contemptible neighbours, draws out all of the characters simultaneously to their balconies, windows, and terraces to find out the source of the commotion, a mass exodus of the interior spaces outwards, effectively a surging seamlessness based on curiosity.



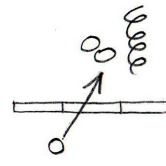
intertwining narratives



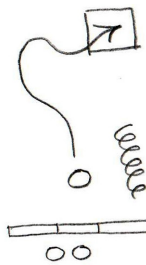
delivery of note



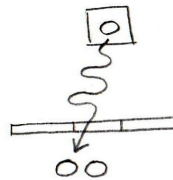
phone call



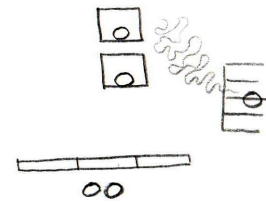
courtyard investigation



interior investigation



gestures



duet

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copyright issues

CROSSING NARRATIVES

Figure 3.15 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

Seamlessness in this film becomes palpable when the parallel narratives occurring both inside and outside of Jeff's apartment begin to interweave. The main characters, Jeff, Stella and Lisa, become so involved with the activities of the neighbours, particularly the suspected murderer Thorwald, that the women actually leave the apartment and suddenly appear in the spaces that Jeff watches from the rear window. From the point where Lisa delivers the accusatory note to the salesman, crossovers between the narratives begin to build the suspense of the picture. Jeff telephones Thorwald, threatening the salesman to leave his apartment, while Lisa and Stella rush down to the terrace to investigate the flowerbed; as a result of this contact, the protagonists are directly involved in the situation unfolding across the courtyard.¹⁴ When their examination uncovers no

evidence as to Thorwald's guilt, Lisa climbs up the fire escape and sneaks into the salesman's apartment to search for a lost wedding band.¹⁵ As she is looking around, Lisa gestures from the window since she knows Jeff is watching from his perch on the opposite side of the courtyard.

At the same time, Jeff and Stella anxiously watch Miss Lonelyhearts, whom they think to be on the verge of attempting suicide.¹⁶ As faint strains of melody emanating from the composer's loft float through the courtyard, both Lisa and Miss Lonelyhearts come to the same spot in the window, one on a floor above the other, and pause to contemplate the beautiful music, and for a moment these two narratives become so deeply intertwined that they become one and the same.

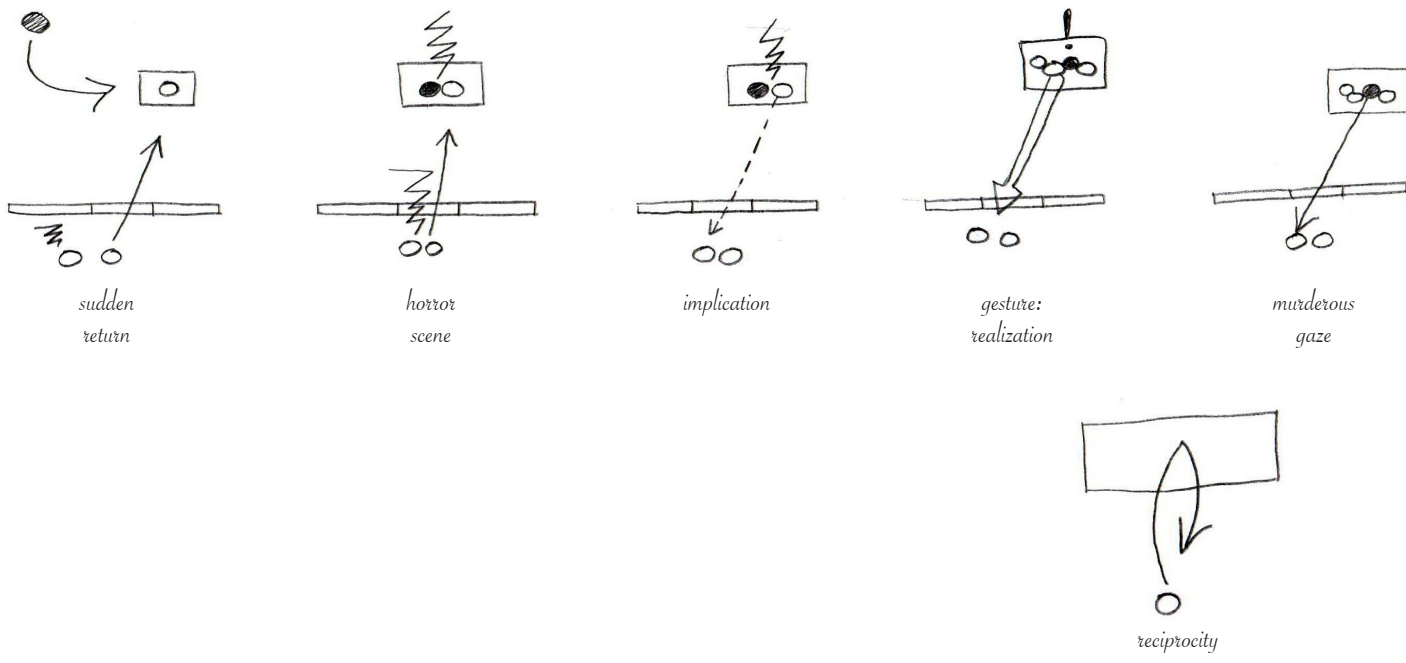




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DIRECT IMPLICATION

Figure 3.17 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

When Thorwald suddenly returns home, Jeff is on the phone calling to get help for Miss Lonelyhearts and thus cannot warn Lisa, who is unaware of the impending danger she faces. As the salesman enters, he catches Lisa snooping around the apartment. Jeff and Stella look on in horror from across the courtyard, powerless to intervene but also unable to look away. While Lisa is being beaten by Thorwald, she cries out to Jeff in the rear window, directly implicating the latter as a participant in the drama unfolding in front of him rather than just a passive observer. After the police arrive, Lisa, with her

back towards the window, gestures discretely to Jeff that she found the ring. Thorwald, noticing this subtle action, recognizes that he is being watched and looks directly into Jeff's rear window.¹⁷ In this instant, there is a sudden acknowledgment of the inherent reciprocity in the configuration of this courtyard: a watcher watching might also be watched. Hence, we achieve a heightened awareness of Jeff's role as a voyeur in this setting as the boundaries of these different spaces continue to dissolve.

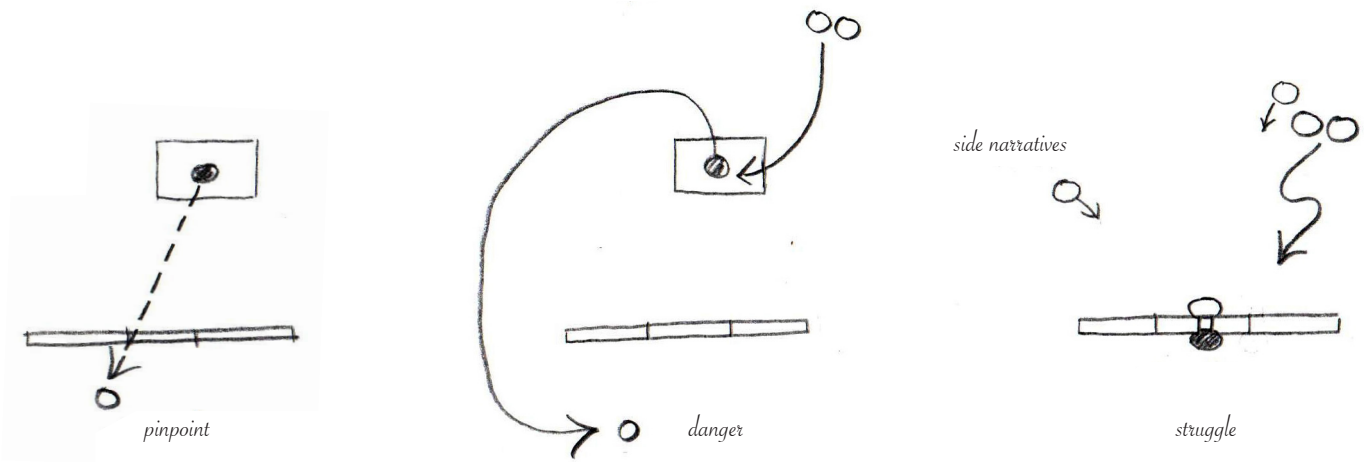


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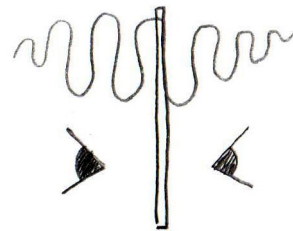
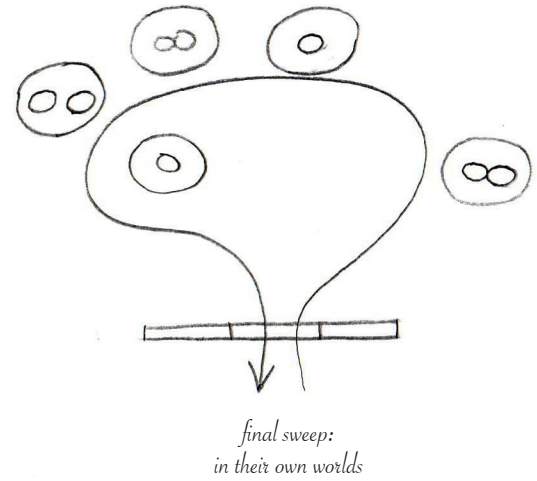
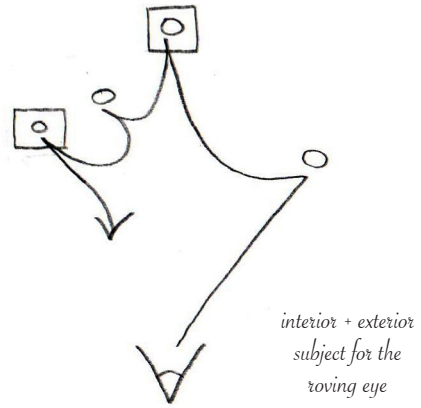
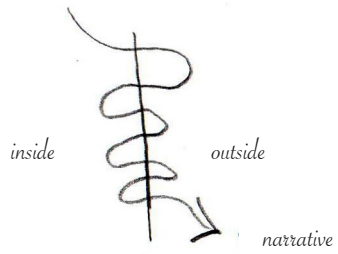
ROLE REVERSAL

Figure 3.19 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

When Lisa is arrested under suspicion of burglary and taken to the police station, Stella rushes off to post bail and Jeff is left alone in his apartment, at which point he receives an ominous phone call. We know that it is the murderer calling in order to confirm his identity and location, that it is only a matter of time before the killer arrives to dispose of Jeff. And so it happens; just as the authorities arrive at Thorwald's apartment to investigate, the salesman enters Jeff's apartment and, after a brief struggle, hurls the protagonist through the titular rear window.

Seamlessness reaches its pinnacle at this point in the film: as Jeff is dangling from the window and the police rush across the courtyard to save him, we are given our first glimpse of the rear window from the outside, thereby

completing the *mise-en-scène* of the set.¹⁹ Through this shot, the illusion is made whole, thereby dissolving the boundaries between the filmic world and our own reality and producing a sense of cinematic seamlessness.²⁰ Through the reversal of the camera onto Jeff's building, we ultimately realize the implications of his – and consequently our own – watching as we witness the protagonist's near-death experience. Despite the severe consequences for these voyeuristic transgressions, the film continues to focus on actions of the neighbours even during the most intense drama of the film: the camera picks up on Miss Lonelyhearts entering the courtyard and the newlyweds coming to the window as Jeff and Thorwald are locked in a physical struggle in the windowsill.






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copyright issues

BLISSFUL IGNORANCE

Figure 3.21 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

The crossing over between narratives draws the diverse aspects of the setting, including both interiors and exteriors, into closer contact with one another. The narratives are not discrete and neither are the spaces in which they occur, but rather both are intertwined as our roving eyes move from subject to subject through the rear window. By the end of the film, we are equally invested in all locations both inside and outside as we follow the action, just like Jeff through his binoculars and zoom lens throughout the film. This interweaving of different narratives as well as interior and exterior spaces continues into the final scene of the film, whereupon the camera accomplishes one final sweep

of the courtyard. While the activities of the neighbours are in full swing, and Miss Lonelyhearts is seen visiting inside the composer's loft (another crossover of parallel narratives), the camera pulls back through the rear window to show both Jeff and Lisa involved in alternative pursuits besides watching the courtyard.²¹ Although their attention is diverted from observing the activities of the neighbours, the windows remain open and the shades pulled up so that we can hear the faint strains of the composer's finished song floating into the apartment. Even though this connection might not be acknowledged, seamlessness still persists as an underlying condition at the conclusion of this film.

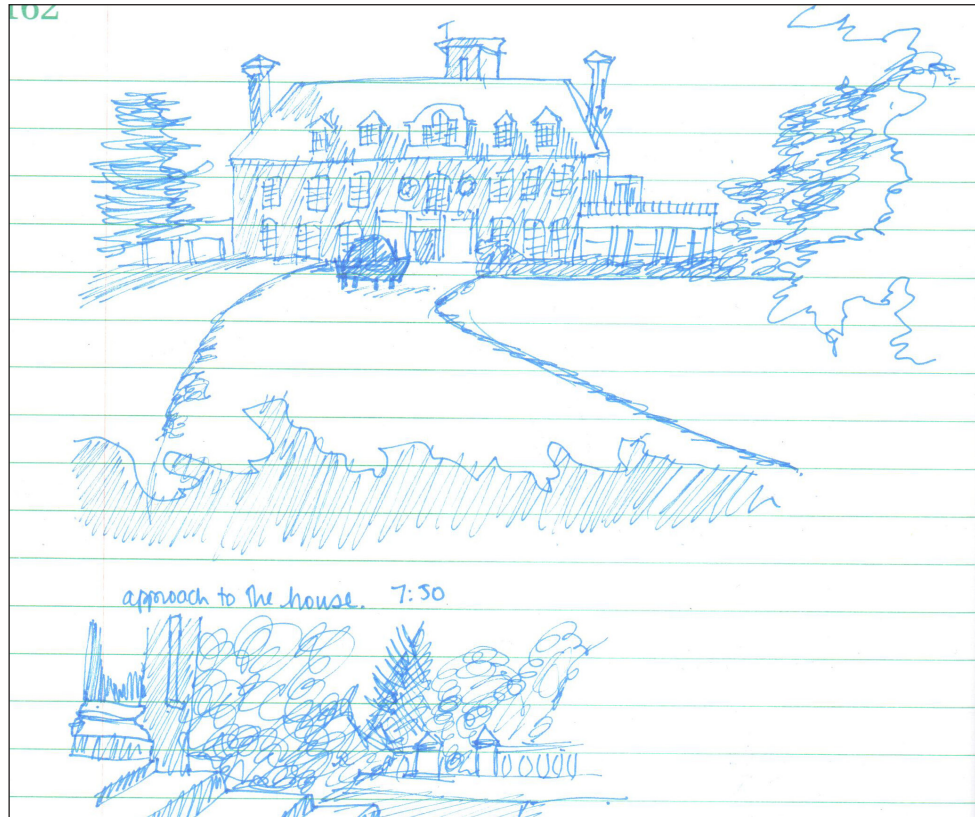
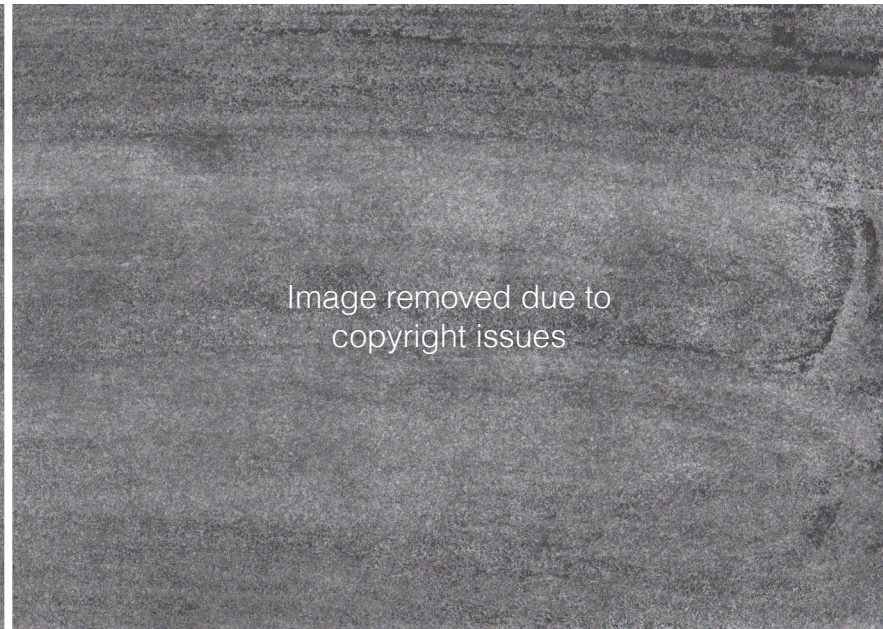


Figure 3.22 Mise-en-Sketches, North by Northwest



Figures 3.23 + 3.24 Film Stills, *North by Northwest* (Left / Right)

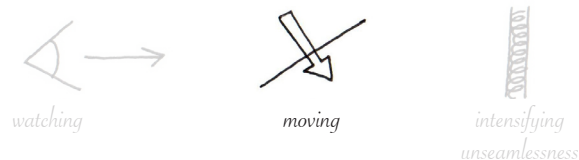


Figure 3.25 *Seamless Cine-Cipher: North by Northwest*

NORTH BY NORTHWEST

A condition of seamlessness in *North by Northwest* also emerges from the first scenes of this film, but instead of being solely derived from a visual connection this seamlessness is manifest instead primarily in the blending of interior and exterior spaces with driving motion through the landscape, as well as the sudden reversal of expectations based on conventional notions of inside/outside. Particularly, windows in the Townsend estate are portrayed as a means of escape, a desirable yet elusive seamlessness.

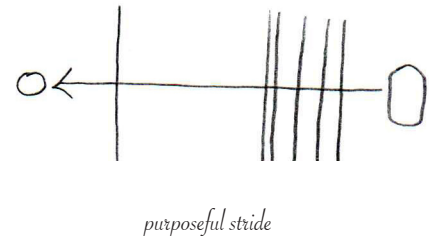
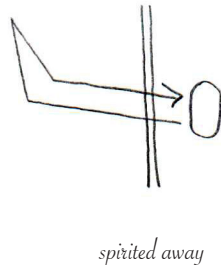
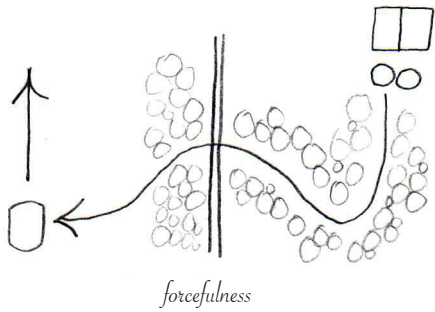


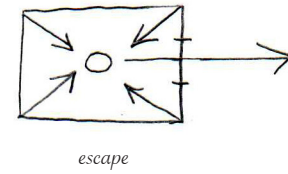
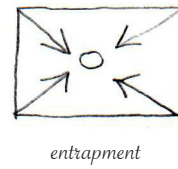
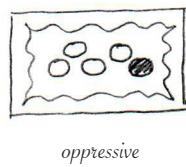
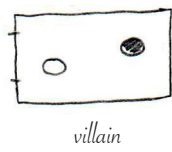
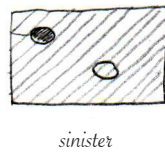
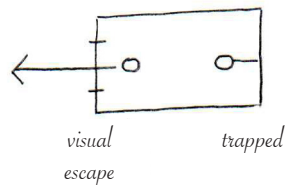
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FORCE OF MOVEMENT

Figure 3.27 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

As Thornhill is dictating instructions to his secretary, the narrative carries us out of the building onto the street. There is a seamlessness between these two discrete spaces – inside the lobby of the building and outside on the sidewalk – which is created by the continuity and motion of the story, as well as the force of crowds rushing to leave the office at the end of a workday. The only subtle indication we perceive of a boundary condition is the hesitation of the secretary when she pauses for a moment at the door, remarking that she should not be going outside without her sweater.²² Despite this meek protest, she is pulled forward by Thornhill onto Madison Avenue and into a cab headed for the Plaza Hotel.

This motion-based seamlessness persists into the following scene outside the Plaza Hotel as Thornhill strides out of the taxi, up the steps and forcefully across the lobby into the Oak Room restaurant. After he is abducted by the heavies who mistakenly identify him as George Kaplan, Thornhill is spirited back out the side door of the Plaza and into a waiting car.²³ Emerging from the cab after the long ride, the protagonist does not hesitate or falter but marches directly up to the mansion, into the entrance hall and all the way into the library at the back of the house, despite the fact that he has no idea why he has been brought to the suburban Townsend estate. As a result, a strong sense of seamlessness based on constant, driving motion of the characters between interior and exterior spaces characterizes the initial scenes of the film.






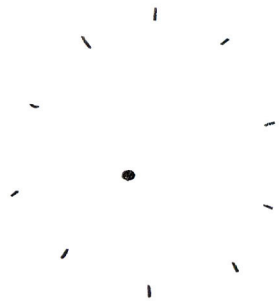
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ESCAPE

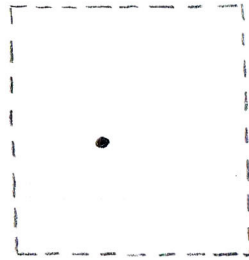
Figure 3.29 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

Once inside the library at the Townsend estate, Thornhill immediately looks out the window which establishes a connection between the interior spaces and the surrounding landscape of lush lawns. When the villain, later introduced as Vandamme, enters the room, he immediately draws the curtains, severing this link between inside and outside and making the atmosphere in the room instantly more sinister and stifling.²⁴ A similar impression is evident in the other interiors in the film, namely the hotel rooms at the Plaza in New York and the Ambassador East

in Chicago, as well as the heavily curtained auction house stuffed with people and antiquities: while windows are either not present or not engaged with in these settings, the characters are disconnected from the outside world and the audience is instead led to focus inward on the mounting tensions which relate to Thornhill's entrapment.²⁵ Stuck in the library, and locked inside a hospital room later on in the film, windows are portrayed as a means of escape. In these instances, the seamless condition is desirable, yet elusive.



outside



inside



*persecution
dissolves
boundary*

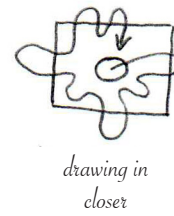
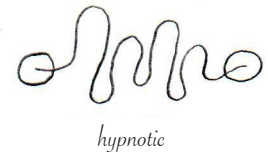
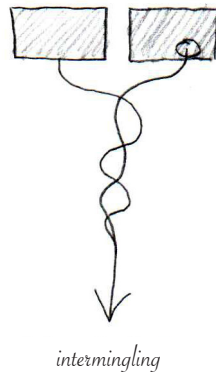
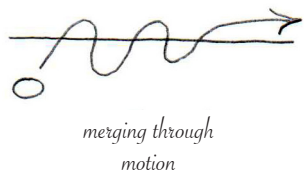
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SCENIC TREATMENT

Figure 3.31 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

After the episode at the mansion in Glen Cove, Thornhill travels to the United Nations General Assembly Building in New York City where he seeks out Mr. Townsend to begin unraveling this mysterious conspiracy. During these shots, which detail the protagonist's entry into the building and his ensuing flight from the scene as an alleged killer, a correlation emerges between the inside and outside through the artistic treatment of these constructed spaces on film: while these settings, aside from the initial establishing shot which was taken on location, are portrayed as large, intimidating places which reduce people to ant-like specs, both the interiors and exteriors were also completely fabricated in the studio utilizing the glass shot technique (described in

Chapter 2) which combines scenic paintings with live action.²⁶ As Thornhill runs through the lobby and into the landscape surrounding the building, we do not get a clear sense of being inside versus being outside, but rather, through the use of painted scenery, a sense that both settings have somehow grown larger in scale in persecution of the protagonist, as opposed to the earlier street scenes when this character seemed to be in completely in control of his surroundings.²⁷ The oppressive atmosphere of these places during Thornhill's mad trajectory from the building to the street, created by the artistic treatment of the setting, produces a feeling of seamlessness which completely overrides any existing perceptions of the inside/outside boundary.






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copyright issues

MERGING THROUGH MOTION

Figure 3.33 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

The condition of seamlessness is also manifest in the manner in which the characters, as human presence in the film, begin to merge with setting through constant driving motion through the landscape. In the scene where Thornhill is forced to drink a bottle of bourbon and let loose on the coastal highway in Glen Cove, Long Island with a stolen Mercedes, the views of the landscape blurring by in the car window are intercut with shots of Thornhill struggling to make sense of these distorted scenes. The fact that the window frame is not visible brings us into the action more intimately, heightens the drama and the feeling of suspense, while the blurred, indistinct landscapes whooshing past the

car give us a unique insight into Thornhill's inner state of mind at this point in the story.²⁸

Later on when Thornhill and Eve are on the train to Chicago, scenery passes behind them as they talk in the dining car. The landscape becomes a device which regulates the pace of their conversation, establishing a rhythm behind the characters and mesmerizing us into believing this unlikely exchange between two complete strangers who happen to meet aboard the *Twentieth Century Limited*.²⁹ This seamlessness between character and setting created by this constant sense of motion is hypnotic, drawing inside and outside into an even closer relationship.

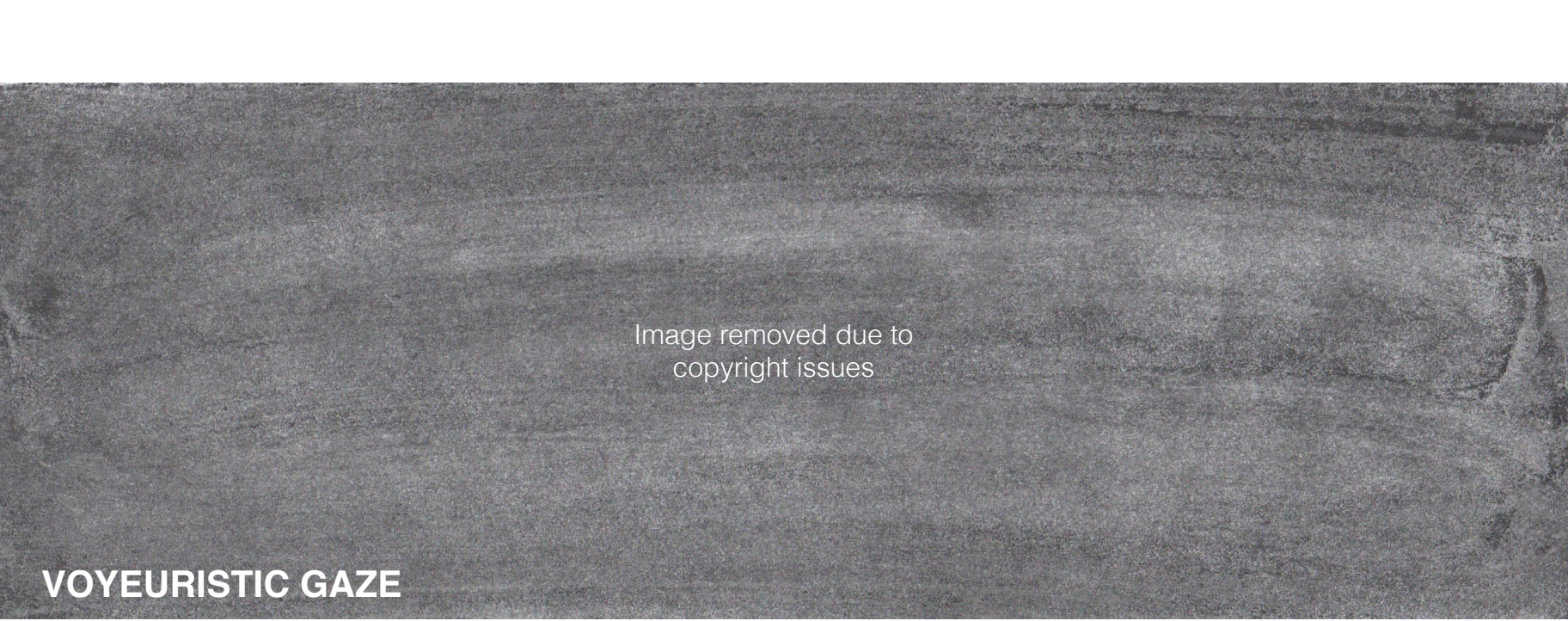


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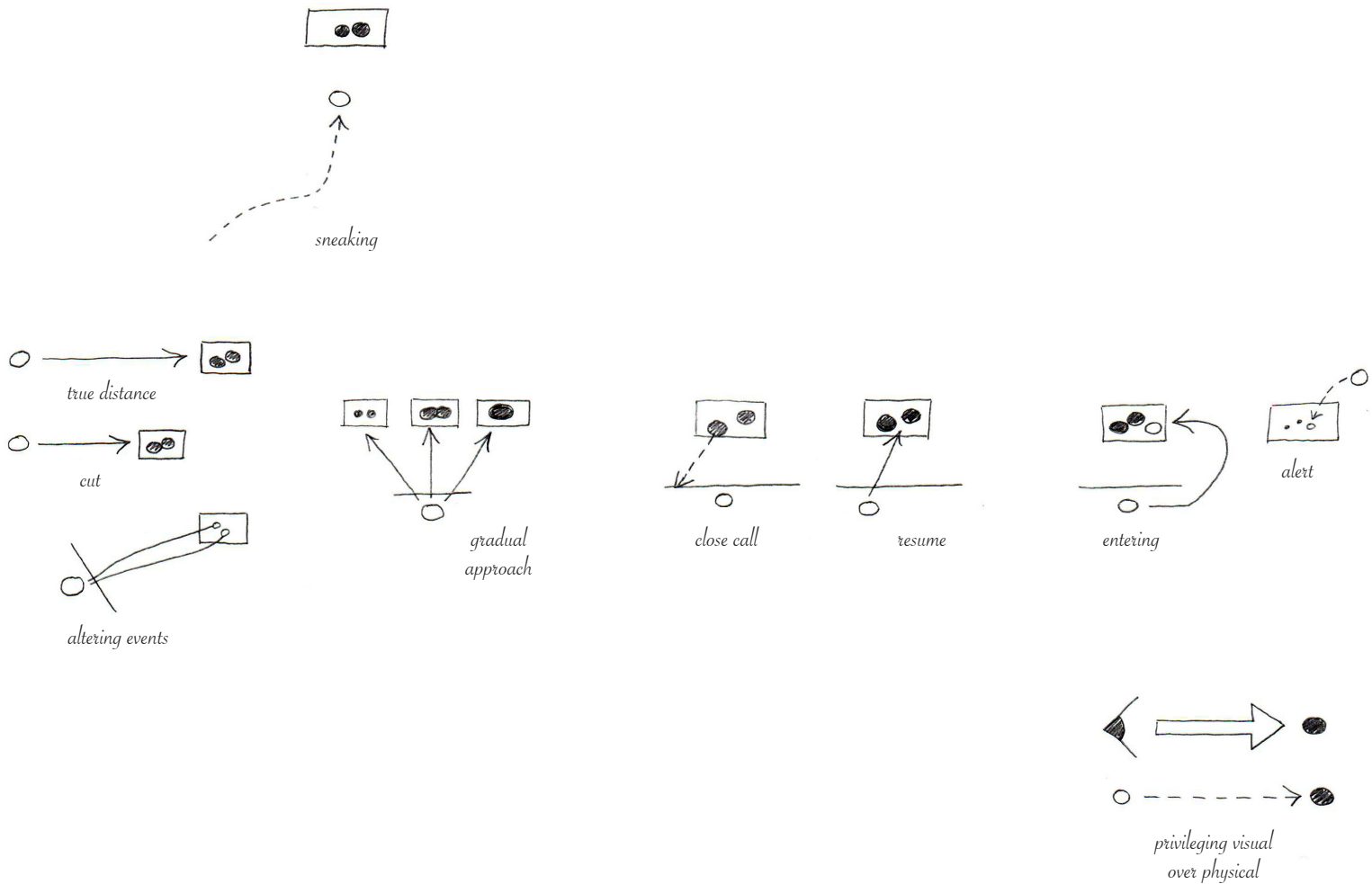
VOYEURISTIC GAZE

Figure 3.34 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

Seamlessness between the interior and exterior spaces in *North by Northwest* is also present as a visual connection in the voyeuristic scenes around Vandamme's modernist villa. While Thornhill sneaks up to the house and peers into the large open windows, the manner in which these scenes were shot and edited erases the typical boundaries between inside and outside, similar to the conditions of Jeff's ideal vantage point in *Rear Window*. Cutting in both of these films gives the impression that the protagonist can see and hear perfectly when in reality people and objects would appear more distant.

This sequence is also all about parallel narratives as interior and exterior dramas unfold simultaneously: as Thornhill sits and watches, he eventually tries to

alter the course of events by throwing coins at Eve's upstairs window, a sound which disrupts the downstairs conversation of Vandamme and Leonard and nearly results in Thornhill being discovered. The way that these shots gradually move in closer to frame the conversation between Vandamme and his henchman Leonard more tightly, and the cutting between these shots and close-ups of Thornhill's face make the action seem more immediate and dramatic, especially when Leonard looks outside to check on the noise. Other than this close call, the characters inside go about their actions unselfconsciously and Thornhill remains undetected until he scales a stone wall, enters the house through an upstairs balcony, and subtly makes his presence known to Eve. After the protagonist moves inside, he



seems more removed from the drama because he is now elevated above the other characters and we can no longer discern their facial expressions or gestures as clearly. While it is ironic that Thornhill seems further away from the action when he is actually physically closer, the seamlessness established through his initial views persists as a haunting memory into these later shots.

Figure 3.35 Cine-Cipher: 'Voyeuristic Gaze'




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copyright issues

REVERSAL OF EXPECTATIONS³⁰

Figure 3.36 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

Seamlessness in this film is also evident in the frequent reversal of interior and exterior conditions within many scenes, exchanges which caused me to wonder how inside and outside can be discrete entities when they are so easily interchangeable. In the Prairie Stop scene, Thornhill is dropped off by bus in a desolate Midwest landscape which can be characterized as an extremely exposed 'outside' condition.³¹ Seeking safety from an attacking crop dusting airplane, the protagonist is able to locate an 'inside' outside in a lone stand of corn. Hiding amongst the stalks, we assume that Thornhill can no longer be seen by the plane and is therefore no longer subject to its assault. However, the crop duster persists in persecuting the hero by dropping powdery chemicals onto the field, reminding us that despite the psychological security that the corn provides, the fact

that the enclosure offers no real shelter undermines our initial expectations of this space as a refuge.

Looking out a 'window' framed by the stalks, Thornhill sees a large truck approaching on the highway. As his 'inside' condition within the corn has been infiltrated, he flees this spot for a more secure location, which he expects to find in the cab of the approaching semi-trailer. Attempting to flag down the truck, he is struck down by it. Subsequently, the crop duster collides into the tanker to create a fiery explosion, leading us to believe that the perceived safety offered by the truck is in actuality not very secure, but rather a target, and the open landscape which initially seemed hostile actually provides salvation for Thornhill; in running away, the hero is able to put distance between himself and the burning wreckage.

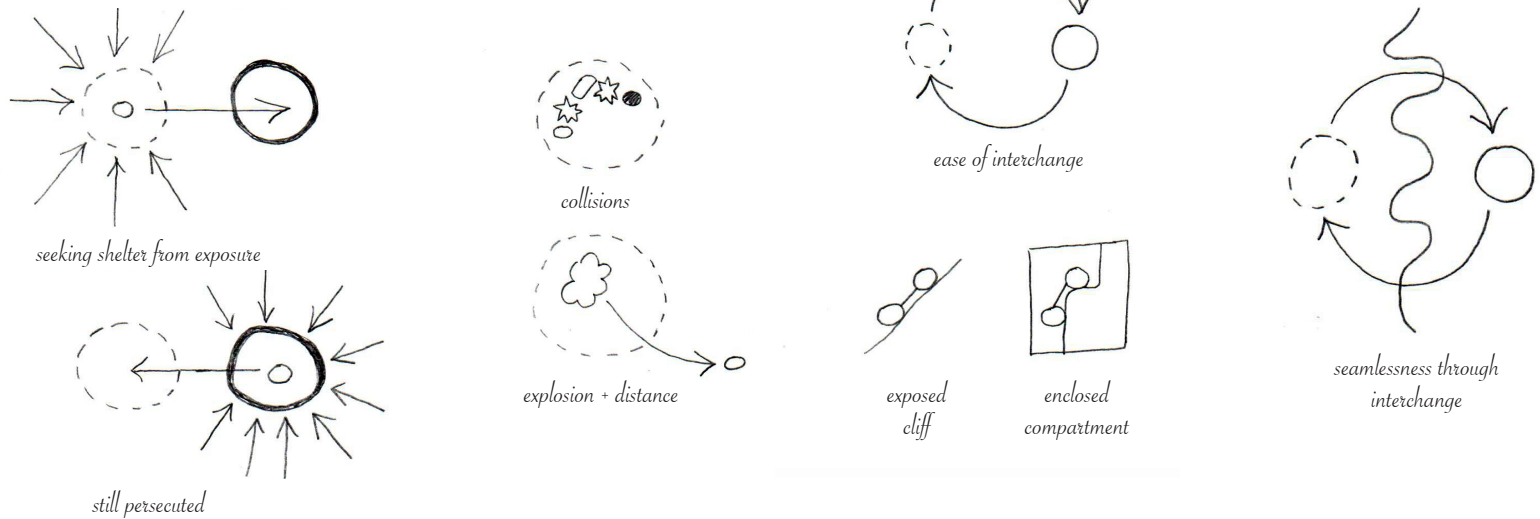


Figure 3.37 Cine-Cipher: 'Reversal of Expectations'

This reversal of inside and outside conditions is also evident in the final chase scene of *North by Northwest*, when Eve grabs the artifact from Vandamme and runs towards a car driven by Thornhill in order to escape from the villain's compound. As she enters the car, we assume that she has attained a state of security from the exposed conditions and the heavies pursuing her. However, Thornhill and Eve only drive a short distance before encountering a wall in the landscape which traps them inside the compound and reverses our reading of the landscape: while we assume that they are striving to flee an exposed 'outside' condition, through the appearance of the barricade we realize that they are stuck within a sinister 'inside' condition, and they

must abandon the perceived safety of the car in order to successfully escape. In the final shots of the film, Eve hangs onto Thornhill for dear life as she dangles precariously from the edge of Mount Rushmore. In a series of close-ups where he strains to lift her up, we assume that the couple is outside the exposed face of a mountain range when in actuality, as the camera pulls back, we see they on the Pullman berth of a train moving through the landscape, in a state of comfort and joy rather than a condition of peril. This sudden reversal between inside and outside, a complete flip of the distinct characteristics of interior versus exterior spaces, produces an undeniable seamlessness at the ending of this film.

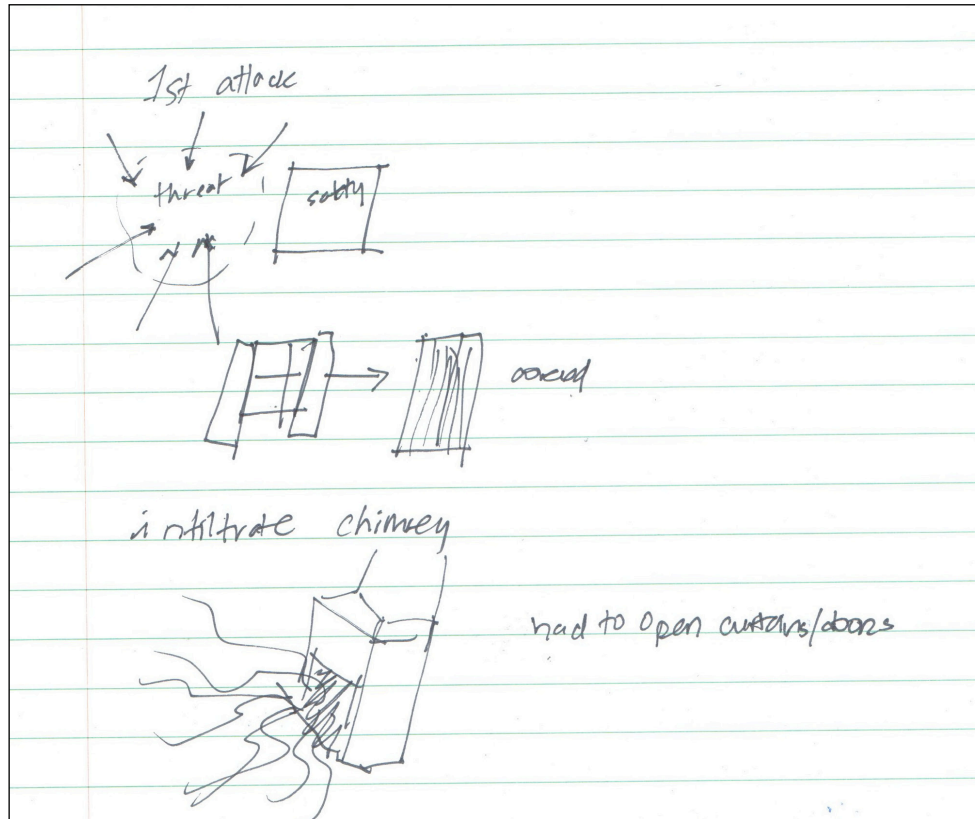
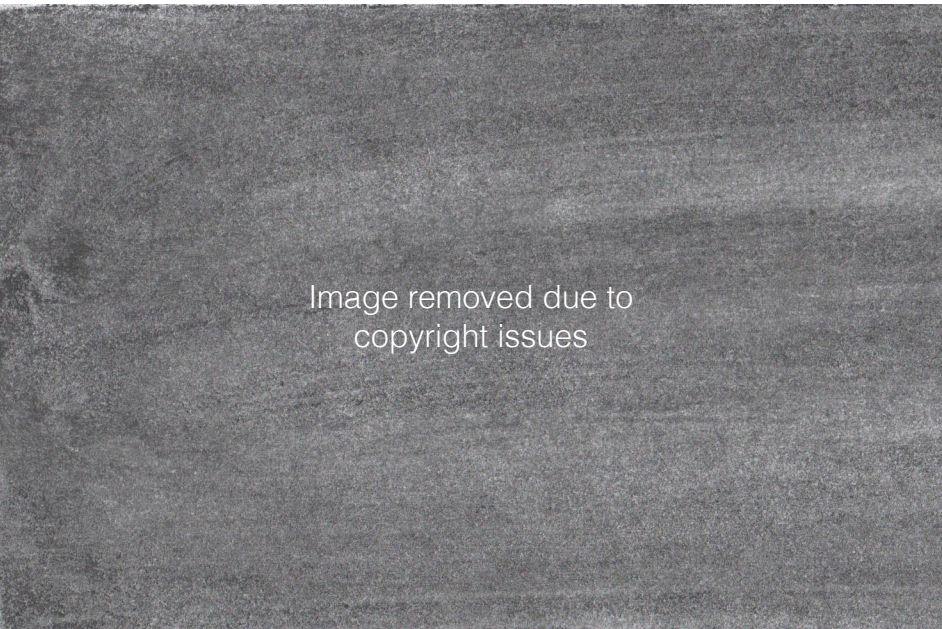


Figure 3.38 Mise-en-Sketches, *The Birds*



Figures 3.39 + 3.40 Film Stills, *The Birds* (Left / Right)

THE BIRDS

Seamlessness is played out in a different way in *The Birds* as a condition of increasing un-seamlessness, whereby existing boundaries are emphasized rather than dissolved as this plot unfolds. While the film begins with a relatively strong sense of seamlessness between interior and exterior spaces, the connection becomes rather ghastly as the plot unfolds and the characters themselves seek to destroy this linkage. Windows are considered to be a point of vulnerability during the bird attacks and are therefore boarded up to sever the connection with outside world in order to minimize its threats. Along with this sense of security is an accompanying uneasiness as the characters, as well as the audience, are forced to turn inward and examine their own roles as humans in this horrible catastrophe.³²

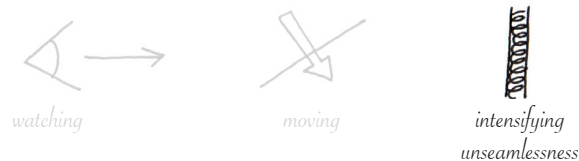


Figure 3.41 *Seamless Cine-Cipher: The Birds*

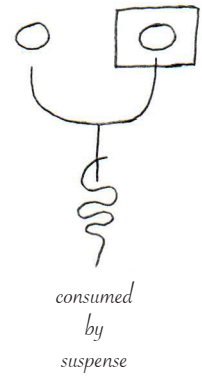
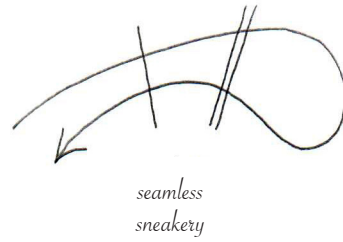
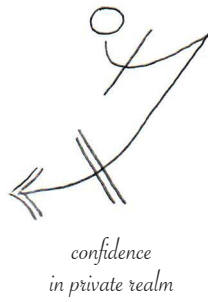
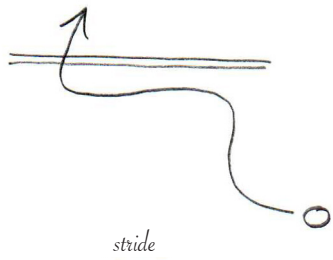


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CONFIDENCE

Figure 3.43 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

In the opening scene, Melanie glides from a streetcar in downtown San Francisco into a pet shop with an air of confidence and self-possession: both the interior and exterior spaces in this city are her domain. Striding with her head held high in the elevator and hallway of Mitch's apartment building as she drops off the lovebirds, Melanie is as self-assured in private interiors as she is in public exterior spaces.

After Melanie drives up to Bodega Bay from the San Francisco, she crosses the bay in a small boat in a second attempt to drop off the lovebirds at the Brenner Farm. This sequence is exceptionally smooth and

fluid as she traverses the dock and enters the home, carrying forth this same sense of confidence, and leaves the birdcage inside with a small note. Despite the fact that this is a private residence, nobody stops Melanie or impedes her from entering this domestic domain. Her sneaking into the house and back out again so quickly and quietly is extremely suspenseful, an atmosphere which is underscored by the lack of sound in this sequence. Although the tension is utterly palpable, the sense that perhaps Melanie is looking to get caught, regardless of whether she is inside the house or outside, subsumes the distinction between interior and exterior spaces and engenders a sense of seamlessness through this assertive attitude.

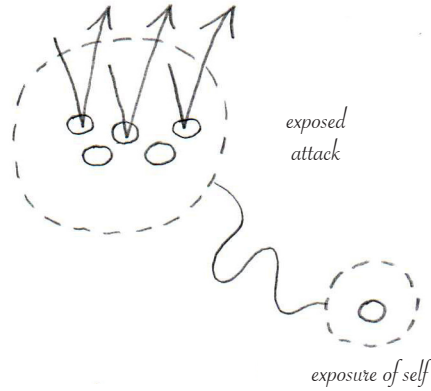
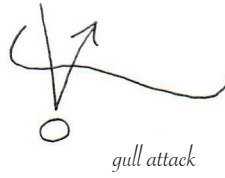
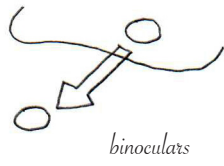
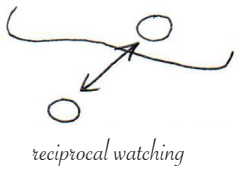




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EXPOSURE

Figure 3.45 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

In the following scene, Melanie and Mitch engage in reciprocal watching between a boat on the bay and the shore of Bodega Head, respectively.³³ Melanie smiles coyly at the fact that she has gotten caught after completing her mischievous plan to enter the Brenner home, while Mitch observes her with a pair of binoculars. As Melanie resumes her journey back across the bay, a lone seagull descends from the sky and pecks her right in the temple, as if the landscape was bestowing a small punishment for her audacity in deliberately crossing private boundaries.³⁴ Her vulnerability at this moment is based on her exposure as a target in the wide-open space of the bay, prey to both predatory birds and Mitch's binoculars alike.

Later on, at Cathy's birthday party on the Brenner farm, a vicious flock of birds attack the children in the open lawn area behind the house, soon after Melanie opens up to Mitch about her troubled personal life; as if her sudden emotional exposure has become echoed in the landscape, the kids are unexpectedly attacked during a game of blind man's bluff. As the characters run away from the dive-bombing crows and gulls, they seek refuge by rushing into the safety and security of the house; caught within an extremely vulnerable, unsheltered condition on the lawn, they consciously turn away from this exposure and sever the seamless connection between inside and outside.




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copyright issues

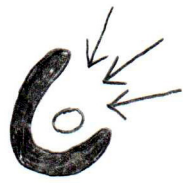
POINTS OF VULNERABILITY

Figure 3.46 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

As the film progresses, windows in the town school, the local diner and particularly the Brenner house, which once provided a seamless visual connection between interior and exterior spaces, begin to represent points of vulnerability in the face of the increasing bird attacks. Annie and Melanie, watching the massing of ravens on the jungle gym outside the schoolhouse, decide it is not safe to remain there and therefore the children must be sent home. While evacuating the school, the characters emerge from the front door just as this threatening flock descends upon them, pecking and flapping at the children, running them down the main streets of the town.³⁵ During this chase, Melanie grabs Cathy and another little girl, and the three take refuge in a nearby car. While this vehicle represents safety by providing a smaller enclosed condition within a larger hostile

landscape, the views offered by the windows into the surroundings chaos are nevertheless very frightening: while these characters are safe from the bird menace, they are still encircled by the terror due to the panorama of windows in the car, an immersed view which evokes a sense of the seamless between the inside and outside worlds.

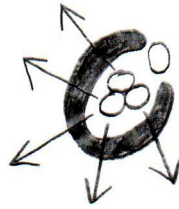
After this scene, the townspeople at the Tides restaurant watch in horror from the large picture windows as an explosion precipitated is by a swooping bird at a nearby gas station. Watching this shocking disaster unfold, we get the sense that the connection between interior and exterior imparted by the windows is negative and undesirable. The following sequence whereby Melanie enters a nearby phone booth during the bird assault



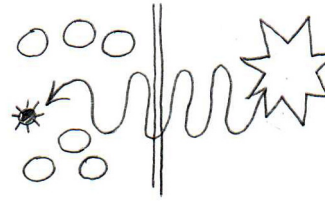
*vulnerable
points*



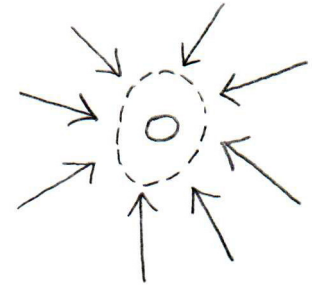
*window:
visual seamless*



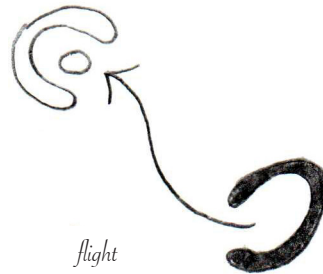
*panorama
of terror*



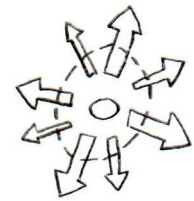
*disaster:
undesirable seamlessness*



seamless sublime



flight



*immediate
danger*

Figure 3.47 Cine-Cipher: 'Points of Vulnerability'

takes this notion of seamlessness one step further as her experience within this transparent, confined space verges on the Sublime; Melanie is plunged into the danger yet protected from it.³⁶ The boundary condition, which we associate with security, is made much more tenuous; although the glass represents a barrier between Melanie and the townscape, each and every detail of the surrounding disaster can be viewed up close and personal. In addition, several gulls smash into the window-walls of the phone booth because

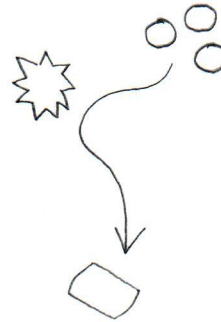
these creatures perceive transparency as a condition of seamlessness rather than a barrier, and therefore fly directly into the glass; these walls are a physically a boundary but visually they dissolve. In the case of such clear and present danger, the phone booth becomes a non-entity providing little protection as Melanie is covered with sprays of glass from several birds which have inadvertently rammed into the sides of the phone booth. Seamlessness has become a dangerous condition and thus must be avoided at all costs.



avoiding windows



turning inward



*from danger
to protection*



*reinforced
boundary*



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copyright issues

SEEKING PROTECTION

Figure 3.49 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Due to the panic and fear engendered by the condition of extreme seamlessness, in which disaster looms omnipresent in the landscape, the human characters in the film begin to shy away from the windows, the doors, and the outside in favour of more protected and secure inner spaces. Such is the case when Mitch and Melanie re-enter the diner, only to find the main room deserted, and proceed around a corner to discover a large group of people cowering inside the hallway, away from the windows and their view of the menace outside. When the couple arrives at Annie's house to pick up Cathy, they discover the former schoolteacher pecked to death in the front yard and quickly usher the young girl into the protection of Melanie's awaiting car.

In the subsequent scene at the Brenner farm, Mitch begins to board up the windows of the family home and sever ties with the surrounding landscape, hoping to negate the threat of the birds while keeping the family safe and sound. This reinforcement of the boundary condition, the emphasizing of an un-seamlessness, gives us a sense of security but also an underlying uneasiness as the characters are forced to turn inward and look more closely at themselves, examining what they could possibly be doing to attract these bird attacks.³⁷ Such extensive probing is the root of the stark accusation by the young mother in the diner who believes Melanie's presence in Bodega Bay has unconsciously invited this disaster, the mutation of this seamlessness into a nefarious condition.




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copyright issues

PERSISTENCE + INFILTRATION

Figure 3.50 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Despite the desire of the characters to seek safe, enclosed areas in response to the growing menace, the condition of seamlessness persists as the birds, elements of the exterior environment, begin to infiltrate the interior spaces into which the humans have sequestered themselves. Following the birthday party attack at the Brenner farm, the family has invited Melanie for dinner which they eat together in the living room, around the hearth. Suddenly, the room is flooded with birds that have flown in through the fireplace, and the air is filled with hundreds of flapping wings. Melanie ushers Lydia and Cathy outside while Mitch attempts to remove the birds from the interior of the house. Since the characters have turned their backs on the outside, the landscape is simply exerting its power and forcing itself on the human characters by orchestrating an

invasion through the smallest opening in the boundary condition: despite the fact that the exterior is unseen, this does not mean that the threat has disappeared.

The aftermath of this incident and the chaos found at the Fawcett farmhouse, a neighbouring property which Lydia visits the next day, both point to similar invasions of the private home space. The most unsettling fact about these twin fiascoes is that these incidents are not isolated events, and indicate that the threat is more pervasive than initially considered; even the places which seem to be the safest in which to hide are vulnerable to these attacks. Later on, while Melanie is hiding in the barricaded home with the Brenner family, with a fire in the hearth this time, the birds burst through at the most vulnerable points of the house, the windows and the door, and Mitch

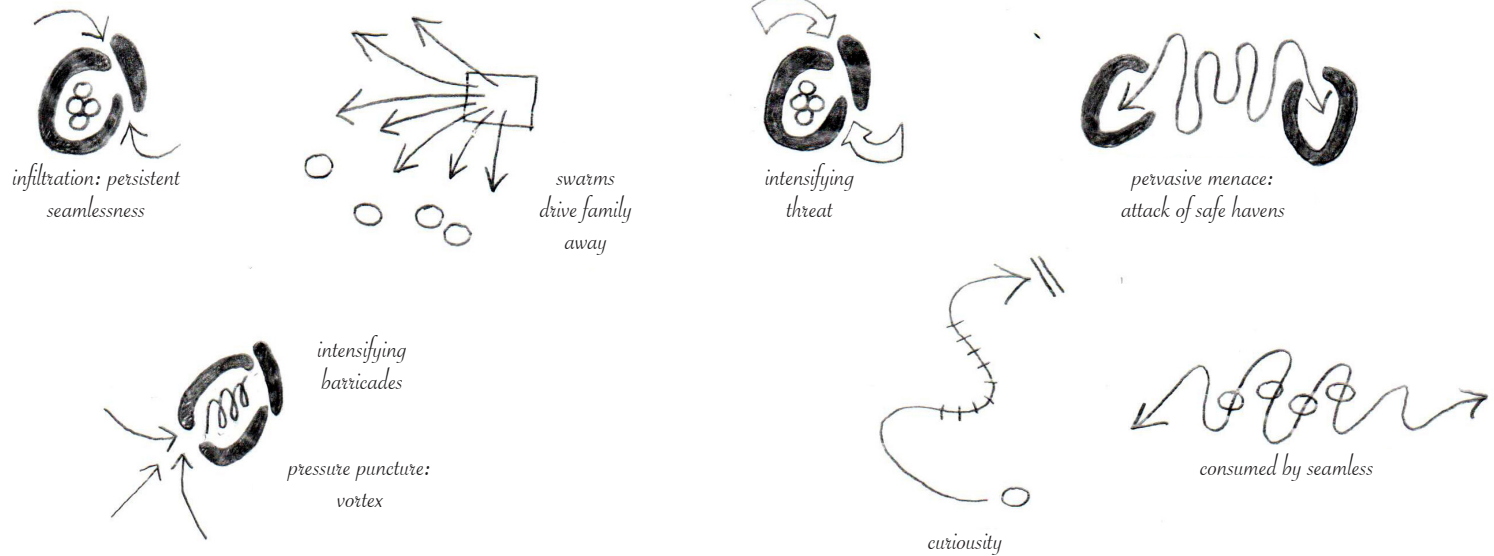


Figure 3.51 Cine-Cipher: 'Persistence + Infiltration'

must work quickly to patch up the holes made by the bird assailants and restore the much sought-after condition of un-seamlessness to the home.

As stability is achieved, the characters rest for the night around the fireplace. Hearing a noise in the attic, Melanie ventures upstairs and steps into a swirling vortex of birds and discovers a large gaping hole in the roof which is open to the night sky. Apparently, the persistence of the seamless condition is such that if weak points in the boundary condition do not exist or appear too well-guarded by humans, then the external

threat will begin to pierce holes through solid walls as the pressure mounts behind the barrier and eventually the terror rushes in. While unfortunately Melanie fell victim to this relentless onslaught and was nearly pecked to death due to her innate curiosity to investigate a strange sound, it occurs to me that since the birds pecked their way straight through a sturdy roof, it was only a matter of time before they reached the humans and delivered their final assault, and effectively, the final warning to leave this place, a landscape whose persistent seamlessness will be their ultimate undoing should they choose to remain in it.

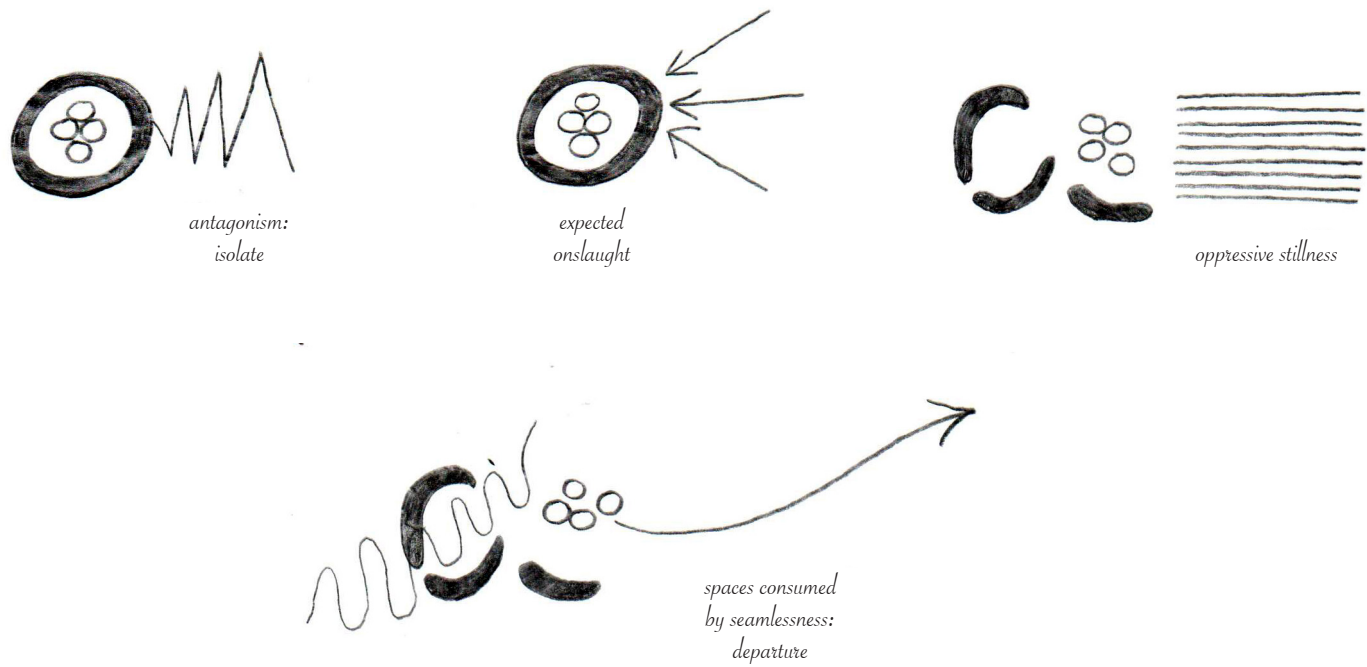




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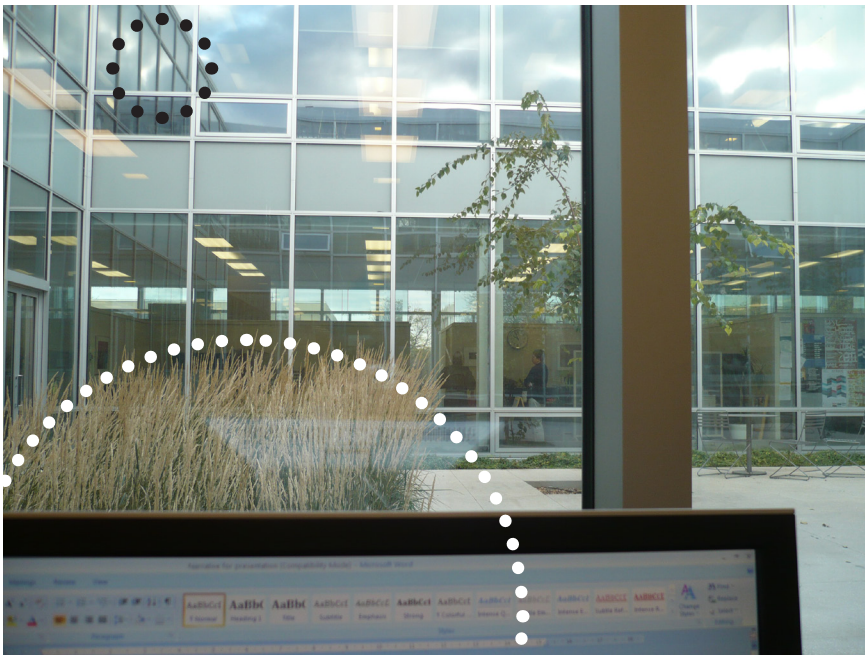
SUSPENSEFUL STILLNESS

Figure 3.53 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

In the last sequence of the film, Mitch re-emerges into the hostile landscape, which has been utterly overtaken by the birds, in order to evacuate the family from this hostile place. Throughout the film, our expectations of the outside has developed into the consideration of this condition as an aggressive, antagonistic entity which humans must seek protection from and sever all ties with, both visual as well as physical. Re-introducing this connection between interior and exterior worlds as Mitch opens the door and exits the house to reach the garage, Hitchcock establishes an extreme sensation of suspense. The oppressive stillness of these final moments in which the birds sit sullenly on the railings, the

ground, the roof, the tree in front of the house and even in the skylight window of the garage, leaves us holding our breath as we wait for these creatures to realize that a human has ventured out among them and that they must attack, immediately.³⁸ The constant presence of this threat and potential harm surrounding the home and its occupants is simply bone chilling. However, ultimately, no further attacks ensue and the family is able to escape to another refuge quickly and relatively unscathed; we heave a huge sigh of relief as they leave this landscape of fear, whose horrors run so deep that no space, neither interior nor exterior, remained untouched in the wake of this disastrous seamlessness.





Figures 3.55 + 3.56 Reciprocal Views, JAR Building (Left / Right)

JAR Building: Seeing the Uncanny in the Everyday

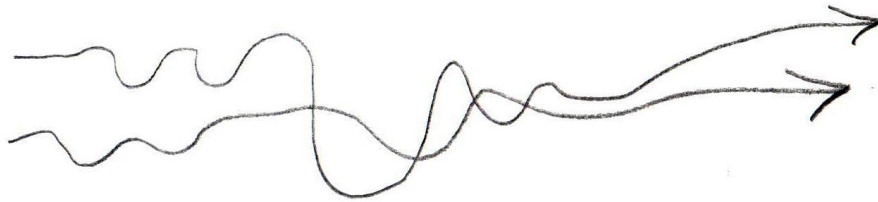
Having developed this theme of *Seamless* through analyzing these three films, I began to apply these diverse manifestations to my consideration of the JAR Studio site.

While the everyday studio spaces are seemingly much more banal on the surface, I believe that they are imbued with a similar atmosphere to the settings in the films. Through the configuration of the building, glazed walls wrapping around a central open space, the activities of the interior spaces beyond the courtyard can be seen quite clearly during the day. However, a sinister feeling emerges as darkness falls: the lighting in the studios surrounding the courtyard transforms these spaces into glass display cases, where one can watch the people on the opposite side of the building just as easily at the

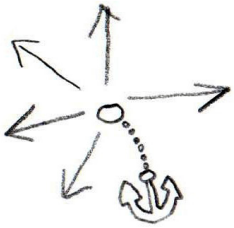
people in the same room, and these interior and exterior spaces blend into a single mass (Figure 3.54). Late at night, this nefarious feeling is unmistakable when most of the lights are turned off and one glimpses a shadowy figure moving through the halls across the courtyard.

Becoming My Own Voyeur

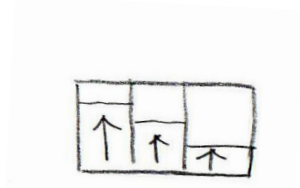
Through the persistent views provided by the shadeless windows, the notion of crossing narratives is also evident in my experience of this place.³⁹ While traveling to different parts of the JAR building, I began to see myself as belonging to these rooms and as I returned to my own spot and resumed my observations, I suddenly realized that I had become my own voyeur (Figures 3.55 + 3.56). This movement around the building, and watching through the exterior space, blurred the boundaries between inside and outside.



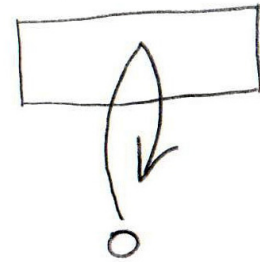
crossing narratives



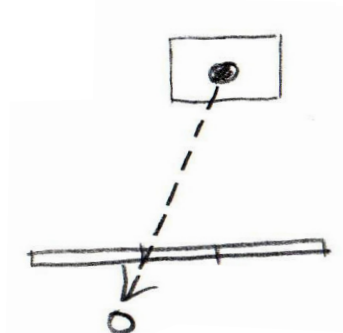
*studio-bound:
focus outward*



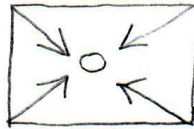
raised shades



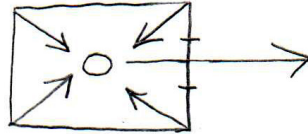
reciprocity



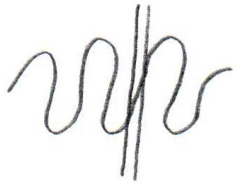
pinpoint



entrapment



escape



*window:
visual seamless*



*protection
from exposure*



*turning
inward*



oppressive stillness



Figure 3.58 JAR Studio View (Left) / Figure 3.59 La Salle Studio View (Right)

[Un]Seamless Studio: Comparative Insight

While the prevalent condition in *The Birds* was one of un-seamlessness, I could not easily establish a relationship between this film and this site until an important event occurred which established a connection between the two.

After working in the studio over the spring and summer months of 2011, my classmates and I had to give up our studio spots at the end of August in order to make room for the next group of students who required these spaces. As a result, I needed to find another place to work. While my apartment in Winnipeg was too small and noisy to support the drawing and writing I needed to accomplish for this project, I decided to move my workspace into the spare room of my parents' house in La Salle.⁴⁰

Whereas the JAR building epitomized this condition of seamlessness, my new studio space manifests a strong semblance of un-seamlessness. At home, a fairly typical bungalow house, spaces are partitioned with walls and can be closed off by doors. The room I invaded contains one window with two curtains and a desk

which faces the wall, a direct contrast to the workspace I had previously occupied in the JAR building (Figures 3.58 + 3.59). Through this increased enclosure, I turned inward and focused more directly on my project since I had become more physically disconnected with, though also more contemplative of, my surroundings. Returning to the studio in JAR one day to work while waiting for a meeting consolidated this distinction: as I tapped my pen to stipple part of a drawing, and later walked around the courtyard to take photos of these visual connections, I felt extremely exposed and that each movement I made was disruptive and intrusive. As I was removed from these spaces for two months while pondering this quality of seamlessness, I found that the studios in the JAR building had acquired an ominous tint.

Seamless Composite

This composite image illustrates these impressions of the *Seamless*. Becoming sensitized to the sinister qualities of this space based on the seamless condition inherent within the films, I created this graphic to convey the insidious, sinister seamlessness I recently experienced in the JAR building.



NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

NOTES

- 1 James Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), p.229-230.

The sub-concept 'Initial Sweeps' was largely influenced from descriptions of *North by Northwest* in Sanders' book.

- 2 Stefan Sharff, *The Art of Looking in Hitchcock's Rear Window*. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), p.22.

This initial movement of the camera through the window "signals forthwith that the film is outbound, looking out...a lesson in viewing across."

- 3 Ibid., p.10.

Sharff also remarks on the function of this early scene: "Hitchcock's strategy is to make the viewers more attentive by sharpening their visual memory: information here circulates in silent form, without commentary."

- 4 Neil Badmington, *Hitchcock's Magic*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.57.

Despite the fact that "only five of the film's principle characters – Stella, Thorwald, Lisa, Tom Doyle and Miss Lonelyhearts – are ever shown in the street that lies beyond the courtyard and their presence there is given very little screen time," Badmington attributes a sense of cinematic magic to the incorporation of this alleyway into the set, a "break" in the carefully ordered frame of the courtyard.

- 5 Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*. (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p.145.

While the first and second sweeps of the courtyard were initially intended as alternate shots, Krohn remarks that Hitchcock eventually decided to use both to describe the form, and subsequently the function, of these courtyard spaces.

- 6 François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*. (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1984), p.216.

The sub-concept 'Captivating Activities' was inspired by a remark by Hitchcock in his book-length interview with Truffaut: "I'll bet you nine out of ten people, if they see a woman across the courtyard undressing for bed, or even a man putting around in his room, will stay and look; no one turns away and says, 'It's none of my business.' They could pull down their blinds, but they never do; they stand there and look out."

The voyeuristic impulse motivates this watching, both for the characters in the film as well as the audience.

- 7 Sharff, *The Art of Looking*, p.6-7, 28.

Sharff writes: "Jeffries, the protagonist, is somehow excused for his actions; in a wheelchair, his leg in a cast for nearly six weeks with nothing to do, he looks. Peeping at the dancer, 'Miss Torso' as he calls her, does provide a certain amount of sexual undertones; the rest is common observation born out of idleness" (p.6-7). He adds that: "one should keep in mind that Jeffries is a photo-journalist accustomed to nosing into other peoples' affairs" (p.7), and refers to these narratives as "silent films" for Jeff to watch from the rear window (p.28).

- 8 Ibid., p.7.

Sharff states that the exterior stories provide a counterbalance for the interior narratives, and therefore hold equivalent dramatic weight as the scenes within the windows.

- 9 Ibid., p.28.

These subtle gestures were pointed out in Sharff's detailed examination of the film.

- 10 Laurent Bouzereau, 'Rear Window' *Ethics: Remembering and Restoring a Hitchcock Classic*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 2000).

Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.146.

In Bouzereau's film, camera operator Leonard South explains that Hitchcock generally tended to prefer a 50mm lens for filming due to its similarity with the human eye. In *Rear Window*, Krohn describes the use of different lenses ranging from 75mm to a 150mm telephoto lens which were used, along with black mattes, to mimic the various technologies used by Jeff in the story to zoom in on the activities he sought to scrutinize.

- 11 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.146.

The use of the crane-mounted camera is discussed in Krohn's book.

- 12 Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.229-230.

Sanders' description of the initial scene in *Rear Window* inspired the development of the sub-concept 'Shades Up':

- “As the credit titles come up and Franz Waxman’s jaunty score begins, three bamboo window shades rise, one by one, to unveil the courtyard view beyond them” (p.229).
- 13 Ibid., p.233.
- In his chapter on *Rear Window*, Sanders attributes the open windows “to the heat; in the days before residential air-conditioning became common, summer life in the city naturally gravitated toward open windows, or to outdoor spaces like fire escapes” (p.233).
- 14 Sharff, *The Art of Looking*, p.71.
- Sharff pinpoints this moment of connection to the telephone call that Jeff makes to Thorwald, effectively establishing “electronic contact between them.”
- 15 Ibid., p.70.
- In the film, it is “Lisa [who] insists the wedding ring would provide the needed proof” to incriminate the salesman as the murderer of his wife.
- 16 Ibid., p.38.
- Sharff’s discussion identifies Miss Lonelyhearts as a crucial subplot within the film, intertwined with the main narrative unfolding in Jeff’s apartment, namely the monitoring of Thorwald’s activities to discover his true guilt.
- 17 It is the expression upon Thorwald’s face at this exact moment, a murderous look evoking sheer terror in the audience, which indicates clearly that he is aware of the fact that he is being observed by his blackmailer, Jeff, from across the courtyard.
- 18 Sharff, *The Art of Looking*, p.69.
- Sharff eloquently describes the role reversal at this particular point in the film: “The looking inverses itself: instead of peeping ‘there’, where before endured a dim sensation of daydream, fantasy or even nightmare, the reality now sets in. Lisa finds herself in the lion’s den, in Thorwald’s apartment; eventually the lion himself gradually comes in contact with the peeper. At the end, he even intrudes on Jeffries’ premises, ready to kill” (p.69)
- 19 Badmington, *Hitchcock’s Magic*, p.50.
- 20 Sharff, *The Art of Looking*, p.93, 182.
- Describing “the most crucial reverse shot in the film,” Sharff states that this point in the film is “the first time we see the geographically correct other side of the ‘across,’ the fourth wall of the film” (p.93). While this shot is delayed until the end of the plot, seamlessness peaks with the dramatic climax of the narrative near the close of this movie.
- 21 In this final scene, Jeff is actually sleeping with a peaceful smile on his face.
- 22 Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).
- 23 In film, the term ‘heavies’ refers to the primary antagonists, who in this case are the burly, intimidating henchmen of the villain.
- 24 Jean Domarchi and Jean Douchet, “An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock,” in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.182.
- In this interview, Hitchcock explains that this drawing of the curtains “makes it possible for [Vandamme] to resort to violence. Since it isn’t his house, he has to be careful.” This threat of violence heightens the feeling of menace within this scene.
- 25 Tom Gunning, “In and Out of the Frame: Paintings in Hitchcock,” in *CASTING A SHADOW: CREATING THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK FILM*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.29.
- Gunning states that this theme of entrapment is characteristic of the thriller genre, and as such much of the suspense is derived from the narrative itself while the settings are manipulated to support and express these situations.
- 26 Ernest Lehman, “Commentary by Screenwriter Ernest Lehman,” Disc 1, *North by Northwest*, 50th Anniversary Edition, DVD, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. (New York: Turner Entertainment Co., 2009).
- Production notes on this scene were supplied by Lehman’s recollections.
- 27 Domarchi et al., “An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock,” p.184.
- Hitchcock, in the interview with Domarchi and Douchet, explains the “dramatic effect” in this scene relies considerably upon the mise-en-scène, which generate the “impression that the whole world is conspiring against [Thornhill’s] small silhouette.”

28 Lehman, "Commentary."

Lehman recalls the creation of this setting through scenic paintings in conjunction with shooting on the back lot in Hollywood, California. Thus, in essence this cinematic place is also a seamless composite of both interior and exterior locales assembled in the editing stage of the film.

29 Scott MacDonald, *The Garden in the Machine: A Field Guide to Independent Films About Place*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p.403.

While "the scenes out the window...are a reasonably accurate depiction of what is now the Amtrak route through the Hudson Valley highlands" and represent a fairly realistic portrait of the landscape, it must be noted that this illusion was created in the studio through the use of rear projection technology.

30 Robert Trachtenberg, *Cary Grant: A Class Apart*, Film. (New York: Turner Entertainment Co., 2004).

The sub-concept 'Reversal of Expectations' was influenced by a fleeting remark on the Prairie Stop sequence made by Hitchcock in a 1966 interview: "There's a scene where Cary Grant is sent out into the countryside. Now, you know it's a set-up for him to be shot, and Cary Grant gets out of a bus and stands there. Now the audience is saying: well, it's perfectly normal, what can happen here?"

31 Robin Wood, "North by Northwest," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.206.

Critic Robin Wood frames this concept of inside/outside rather clearly through an eloquent description of the Prairie Stop sequence: "Hitherto in the film, Thornhill has always been inside: inside cities, buildings, vehicles: and we know him as a man at home in the complacency-encouraging security of office and cocktail bar. Now, suddenly, he is in open country. And not merely open country: a flat landscape, treeless, houseless, shelterless, parched, stretching away apparently to infinity on all sides. In the midst of this he stands, and isolated speck with the whole world against him, absolutely exposed and vulnerable: modern man deprived of all his amenities and artificial resources."

32 Laurent Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*, Film. (Culver City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2000).

In this documentary, Robin Wood remarks that in this film "the birds represent the eruption of chaos, of unpredictability, and which can be taken to be everything that we don't understand and can't control about our world – not only the physical world but also the world inside us," a comment which encouraged me to consider our relationship with these creatures, not just in the film but in the real world as well.

33 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.256.

Krohn describes this sequence as typical shot/reverse-shot, however this editing pattern alternating between mid-shots of each character establishes a deceptive connection between Melanie and Mitch despite their distant positions, thereby encouraging a sense of seamlessness akin to the 'Voyeuristic Gaze' in *North by Northwest*.

34 Ibid., p.256.

In his chapter on *The Birds*, Krohn recounts that "the sequence ends when a gull flies out of nowhere to strike Melanie on the forehead just as she locks gaze with Mitch on the dock," almost as if Melanie is also being disciplined for the attraction and desire she feels towards her love interest, for this instant connection with Mitch.

35 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

As per Hitchcock's characteristic methodology, this footage is not solely recorded on location but comprises a blending of interior studio shots whereby the actors were made to run on a large treadmill in front of a projected background of the town. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of the production of this scene.

36 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into to Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1971), p.252.

In this philosophical discourse on the Sublime, Burke states: "Having considered terror as producing an unnatural tension and certain violent emotions of the nerves; it easily follows... that whatever is fitted to produce such a tension, must be productive of a passion similar to terror, and consequently must be a source of the sublime, though it should have no idea of danger connected with it." Although the Sublime provokes strong reactions of fear, a person is never at any real risk contemplating this condition.

37 See Note 32.

38 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.249.

Krohn describes this sequence, aptly, as Mitch “picking his way through a minefield of birds.”

39 The persistence of this visual connection presented to me as much of a diversion from my practicum work as the windows in *Rear Window* offered a mental release for Jeff, or a physical escape for Thornhill in *North by Northwest*.

40 I am extremely grateful for the generosity and patience of my parents in granting me the space of not just one bedroom but essentially free run of the house to engage in the various image-making activities which often conquered large, awkward portions of their home.



Figures 4.1 + 4.2 La Salle Studio Panorama: Excerpts (Left / Right)

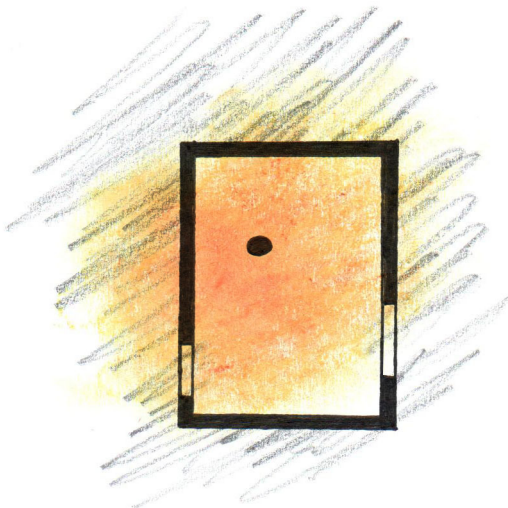


Figure 4.3 Picto-Gram of La Salle Studio

Detour: The Scenic Route

As I contemplated these possibilities inherent in the seamless spaces of the JAR building as well as the less seamless spaces in my new studio space in La Salle (Figures 4.1 – 4.3), I found my mind wandering to other experiences, both inside and outside, which related to the awareness I was developing through the films.

While the arrangement to move my studio to La Salle was extremely suitable in providing the space and quiet I needed, the only downside was the commute

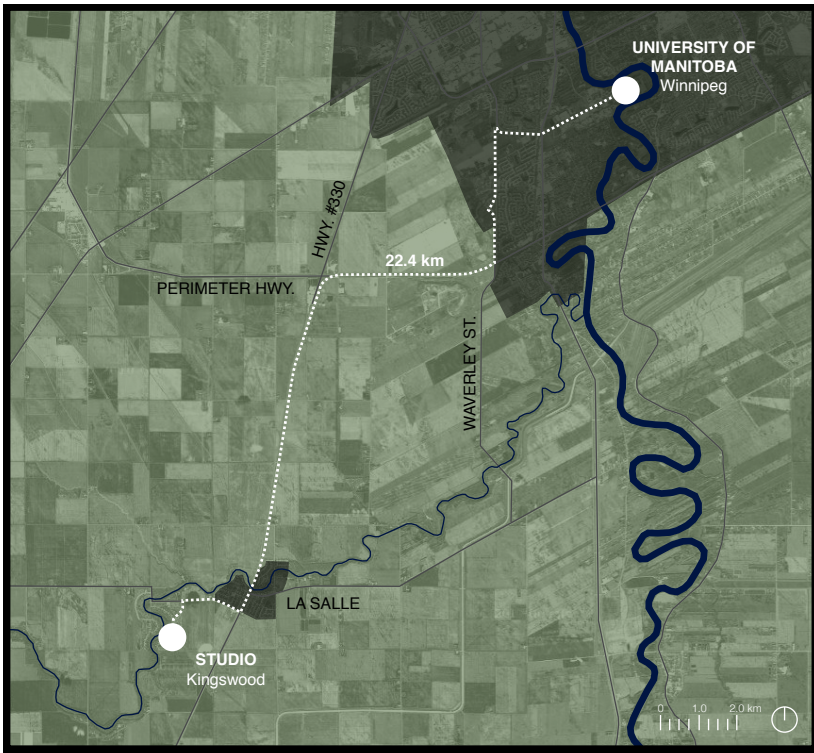


Figure 4.4 Route from La Salle to the University of Manitoba



Figure 4.5 Correlation Between Route and Films

(Figure 4.4). Over the past seventeen years that my family has lived in La Salle, this drive has been an onerous part of daily living. To go anywhere takes a minimum of 30 minutes, and trips need to be bundled together to save on gas. In the winter, my family's plans were frequently re-scheduled or canceled due to icy roads or blowing snow. Needless to say, this situation did not make it easy to socialize since most of our friends, our school, our extra-curricular activities and our jobs were in the city. While my brother and I were growing up, traveling this distance every day was manageable, although difficult enough that we both moved into the city as soon as we could.

Since being away, and especially after working on this project, I now appreciate the peace and beauty of the landscapes surrounding our family home. Driving this route more frequently after moving my studio to my parents' house, and carefully scrutinizing the constructed landscapes in the three chosen films, I have begun to watch the scenery more closely from the car window and notice small changes in the landscape. The commute, once long, boring and interminable, is now my personal contemplation time and I cherish it because my hands are occupied while my mind is allowed to roam free while moving through such a lovely, expansive landscape.¹

As it was always my intention in this project to relate the concepts that I had discovered from the films to actual, real-life places, it seemed only natural to consider this route, which I had traveled a great many times, as a datum of these spaces. Having previously discovered a connection between *Rear Window* and the JAR building, I began to consider how *North by Northwest* and *The Birds* could relate to this excursion through the landscape (Figure 4.5).

Site 2: Brady Road Landfill

One location that particularly struck me along this drive, which runs from the University of Manitoba down Waverley Street to the Perimeter, and eventually to Highway #330, was the new suburban development located along the west side of Waverley (Figure 4.6). Over the past decade or so that my family has been driving this route to the University, there have been extensive changes in this area; a new subdivision called Bridgwater Forest was recently built on the land south of Bishop Grandin Boulevard which, although it did not extend down to the portion of the road that we drove, required changing the existing configuration of Waverley Street from a thoroughfare to a slow-speed residential drive despite the fact that the heavy levels of traffic on this street including numerous semi-trailer trucks and commuters remained constant.³ With the subsequent development of the South Pointe subdivision along this stretch and the omnipresence of road construction, the speed of traffic was further reduced which encouraged my contemplation of the adjacent spaces.

One fall day, while driving along Waverley Street past an area cleared for another subdivision south of South Pointe, I noticed the congregation of hundreds and hundreds of seagulls (Figure 4.7). Due to this massive accumulation of birds, the horizon itself was pure white. As I continued to drive past the Brady Landfill I noticed hordes of these creatures frantically circling over the highest point of the landform created by the accumulation of garbage (Figures 4.9 + 4.11). Presumably, the gulls were roosting in the cleared land of the subdivision as well as an adjoining agricultural field to be near a favorite food source, which explained their large numbers and dense occupation of these hills and fields, as well as the sky above (Figures 4.13).



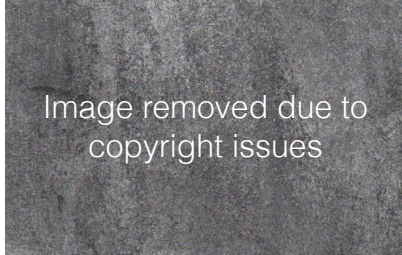
Figure 4.6 Brady Road Landfill

4.7



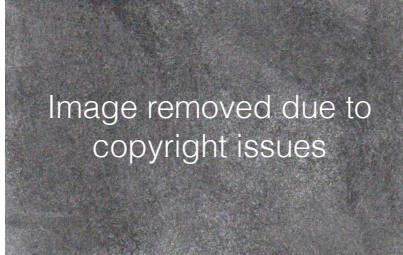
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4.10

4.11



4.12

4.13



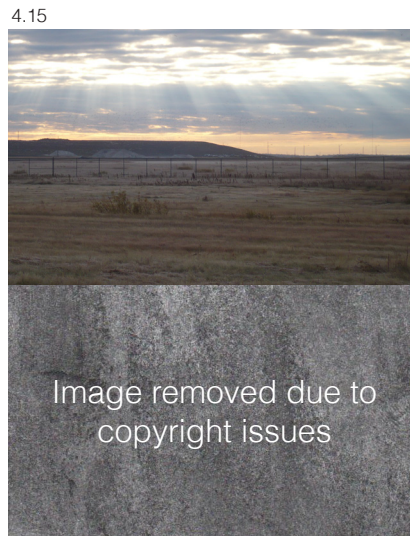
4.14

Opposite:
Figures 4.7, 4.9, 4.11 + 4.13
Views, Brady Road Landfill

Figures 4.8, 4.10, 4.12 + 4.14
Film Stills, *The Birds*

Figure 4.15
View, Brady Road Landfill

Figure 4.16
Film Still, *The Birds*



Faced with these particular views over and over again during my drives, I was reminded of certain scenes from *The Birds*: particularly the beginning of the film when Melanie drives up the hilly California coast to reach Bodega Bay, and the ending scenes where the gulls and crows sit together in bands on the Brenner's roof, conjured up a strange sense of uneasiness and foreboding as I drove along this stretch of the Perimeter Highway (Figures 4.8, 4.12, 4.15 + 4.16).

Although I believe that the birds have always gathered at the dump, I do not think I would have noticed their presence or these landscapes had Waverley Street remained a high speed route, while the seagulls would surely not have chosen to occupy this land had it not been cleared for a new subdivision so near to the landfill. Despite the fact that I may not agree with the planning moves which keep encouraging Winnipeg's suburban sprawl and changing transportation routes to make the movement of goods and people more inefficient, time-consuming and unsafe, and having always considered these spaces as unsightly, I must say that I feel fortunate to experience the unique phenomenon of the birds and recognize the beauty of the local topography. Essentially, I am glad to have seen this contemptible landscape in a different light based on my reactions to the films.

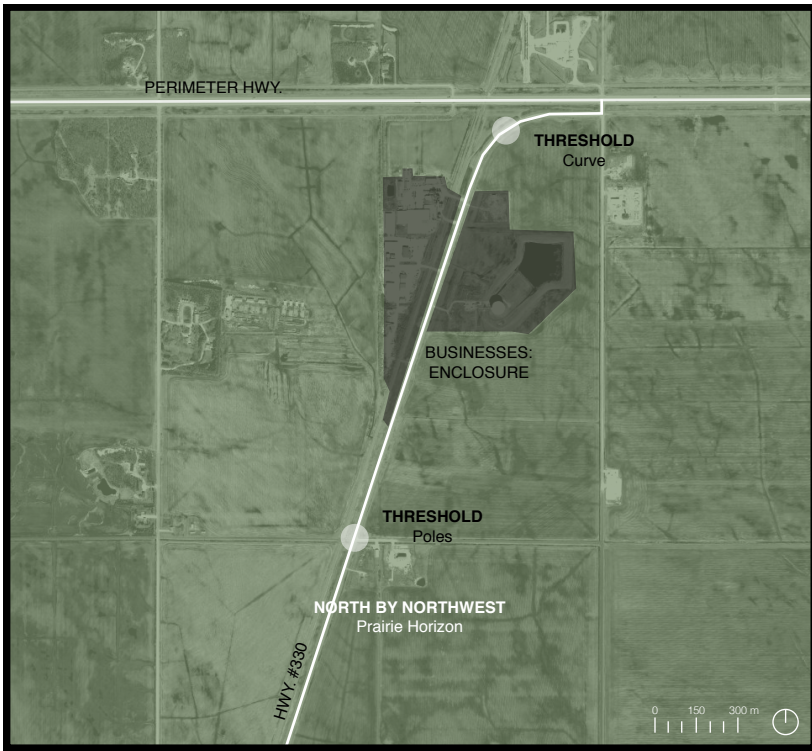


Figure 4.17 Highway #330

Site 3: Highway #330

Another portion of this journey which had a strong effect on me was the stretch of Highway #330 located just after the turnoff from the Perimeter (Figure 4.17). Prior to this project, I have always considered this tract to be the most boring part of the commute; after turning from the Perimeter, which is a very busy route with a heavy volume of traffic where one must pay careful attention to the task of driving, Highway #330 is much more calm and sedate in comparison with fewer vehicles and semi-trailer trucks.

As I began to consider my own movement through this landscape and the sequence of spaces along this route, suddenly this mundane drive became fascinating.⁴ Beginning with a gentle curve upon which speed must be reduced, this road lulls me into a completely different world from the previous high-speed highway (Figure 4.18). After this bend, several industrial-agricultural businesses located on both sides of the road provide enclosure and form a threshold which I quickly cross as I drive forward (Figure 4.19). As I speed up, the highway straightens out as the buildings and trees alongside the highway dissolve away to reveal a staggeringly expansive panorama of the prairie sky (Figure 4.20).

Driving back and forth through this space over the past few months, I am captivated by the continual changes in the colour and light of this landscape: a stormy blue-grey sky in the morning can easily dissipate into a piercing cyan in the afternoon with nary a cloud in sight (Figures 4.21 + 4.22). The sunsets along my commute have also been simply phenomenal to watch because nearly the entire sky can be seen with few obstructions of the horizon (Figure 4.23). With the continually variable weather we experience on the prairies, whereby one day is sunny and the next is blustery, the landscape itself

Opposite:
Figures 4.18, 4.19 + 4.20 Serial Views: Curve, Exposure + Expanse (Left Strip)

Figures 4.21 + 4.22 Changing Moods (Right Strip: Top / Middle)
Figure 4.23 Sunset (Right Strip: Bottom)



4.18



4.21



4.19



4.22



4.20



4.23



Figure 4.24 Film Still, *North by Northwest* (Bottom)

Figure 4.25 Stormy Skies (Top)

Opposite:

Figure 4.26 Film Still, *North by Northwest* (Top)

Figure 4.27 Roadside Contemplation (Bottom)

shifts from a pastoral warmth to a moody, lonely and even antagonistic presence. Although the landscape itself is indeed changing, it is my perception of these spaces which attribute these different atmospheres. It is through these subtle variations and their associated moods that I am reminded of the Prairie Stop sequence in *North by Northwest* whereby the flat, expansive terrain of the plain, which I initially considered (or failed to consider) as featureless and uninteresting, ultimately becomes oppressive, stifling and menacing (Figures 4.24 + 4.25).

Despite driving through this landscape for the past seventeen years, I have never stopped for any length of time, and certainly not to contemplate the landscape itself. While I cruise down Highway #330, likewise do most vehicles rushing past Thornhill in the film, and this landscape becomes one that is generally experienced dynamically, in extreme motion. Since no one ever normally stops along the side of the highway unless they are in some sort of trouble, I felt the fact that the film dedicates a nearly eight minute sequence contemplating this landscape usually experienced from the car as extremely unsettling and worrisome.⁵ Despite the sinister quality of these shots and the unnerving idea of being stranded in the middle of nowhere without a vehicle as Thornhill was in the film, I am captivated by an underlying beauty in this landscape: perhaps this threat makes the experience just a little more vivid (Figure 4.26). Getting past this discomfort, in the film and in reality, of the underlying disaster that these surroundings may hold, I have begun to realize and appreciate the allure of the prairie landscape (Figure 4.27).



4.26



4.27

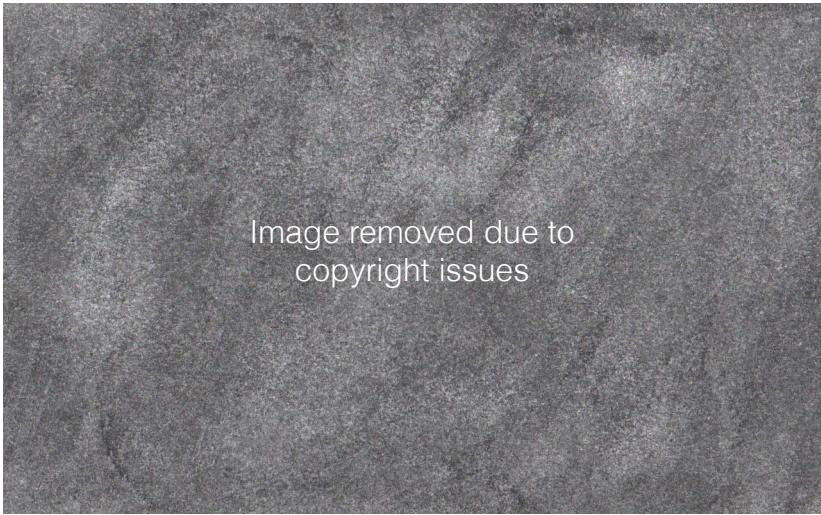


Figure 4.28 Film Still, *The Birds* (Left) / Figure 4.29 Sunset View, Brady Road Landfill (Right)

An Ostranenie of the Everyday

While describing my personal landscape experiences in a meeting with my external advisor Brenda in October 2011, she brought up the notion of *ostranenie* (остранение). In this concept, which emerged as a literary device initially described by Viktor Šklovskij of the Russian Formalists and translates as 'making strange,' the everyday is presented as unfamiliar which enables the audience to view common objects, settings or experiences with fresh eyes and to discover hidden qualities or potentials which were previously taken for granted or ignored.⁶ Šklovskij felt that it was the function of all art to provide this fracture of everyday perception, which he described as simple recognition, and to jolt people into discovering the underlying richness in life.⁷

While *ostranenie* is a curious concept, relevant to a variety of domains ranging from literature to fine arts, this notion has specific applications to film and landscape architecture in this particular practicum. Cinematic *ostranenie* is evident in the playground scene in *The Birds* whereby the presence of these creatures transforms the monkey bars into an object of terror (Figure 4.28). Similarly, *ostranenie* of the landscape involves an estrangement from the familiar aspects of a space to discover latent atmosphere (Figure 4.29).

Through my engagement with these three films, I began to realize how plunging into these constructed worlds and

horrific scenarios had violently sensitized me into seeing the world differently, just as the protagonists in the films themselves had been transplanted from a complacent existences into terrifying settings.⁸ Suddenly, I realized that my reading of these places had been overturned: the seemingly innocent spaces of the JAR building had taken on a sinister quality through the seamlessness of the architecture and the landscape, the ugly Brady landfill became a site of grotesque beauty whose hills just crackle with birds, and the normally boring drive on Highway #330 was suddenly captivating through the changes in colour, pattern and light. While *ostranenie* was a concept that I recognized, it was one that I could not name until after meeting with Brenda.

These films, *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest* and *The Birds*, served as devices of *ostranenie*, their atmosphere and imagery granting an estrangement from my everyday surroundings which enabled me to see creative possibilities inherent within the ordinary landscape.⁹ Returning to reality from these cinematic worlds, I am much more aware of the hidden inspirations that these seemingly mundane and ordinary places hold for my work as a designer. With the revelation of the Brady Road Landfill and Highway #330 as additional sites through the *ostranenie* of Hitchcock's films, I was able to proceed with the two remaining landscape themes in this practicum project.

NOTES

- 1 In this meeting with Brenda, I mentioned the old saying 'familiarity breeds contempt' in reference to this long drive. In this case, I think it certainly applied to my experiences of the landscape prior to this project.
- 2 At this point, I designate the JAR Building as Site 1. Although this numbering does not appear prior to this chapter, it is introduced at this point in order to properly label the forthcoming sites.
- 3 The City of Winnipeg's plans to extend Kenaston Boulevard, a parallel route to the west, to the Perimeter and accommodate these users while taking pressure off Waverley Street has not yet materialized.
- 4 Gordon Cullen, *The Concise Townscape*. (Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1995), p.17-19.

Cullen's writings on serial vision largely influenced me to consider the sequential views through this landscape.
- 5 While several users were observed along the highway, namely the man catching a bus in the film, and volunteers cleaning up garbage in the ditches in real life, I would say that normally seeing a vehicle stopped on the shoulder of Highway #330 would most likely indicate a vehicular breakdown.
- 6 Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine*, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p.76.
- 7 Ibid., p.177.
- 8 Gary Leva, *North by Northwest: One for the Ages*, Film. (Glendale, CA: Leva FilmWorks, 2009).

Laurent Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*, Film. (Culver City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2000).

Robert Trachtenberg, *Cary Grant: A Class Apart*, Film. (New York: Turner Entertainment Co., 2004).

Several documentaries on Hitchcock's films also traced these similarities between his films and helped me discover the underlying meaning of these movies within this practicum project.

In *North by Northwest: One for the Ages*, director Guillermo Del Toro remarks that "Hitchcock many times took heroes

and heroines that came from a comfortable, morally shallow background and punished them for their banality."

Director Peter Bogdanovich also comments on *The Birds*, and essentially all of Hitchcock's pictures, in Bouzereau's documentary: "It's [*The Birds* is] a movie about the dangers of complacency, I think is what he said. We all take things for granted, and we take birds for granted. What if they suddenly turned, you know? This is what would happen. That's a theme that runs through a lot of Hitchcock's pictures – that people take things for granted, people go through their life unthinkingly. And then something happens and then they have to think."

Referring to *North by Northwest* in Trachtenberg's film, actress Eva Marie Saint notes that "Hitchcock loved to take people seemingly in such control of their lives and themselves in the beginning of the film and it all falls apart, where all's in jeopardy because people in the audience think: oh, he's got it made...oh, he doesn't have it made, he's being kidnapped!"

- 9 Jean Domarchi and Jean Douchet, "An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.180.

In an interview with Domarchi and Douchet, Hitchcock declares: "Spectators who go to movies lead normal lives. But they go there to see extraordinary things, to see nightmares. For me, the cinema is not a slice of life but a piece of cake."

This remark instigated my understanding of the essential connection between landscape and film: inhabiting these intensely visual constructed worlds, which we enjoy and seek out as a means of escape, we return with an alternative sense of perception that is then applied to our work as designers as well as our daily lives.

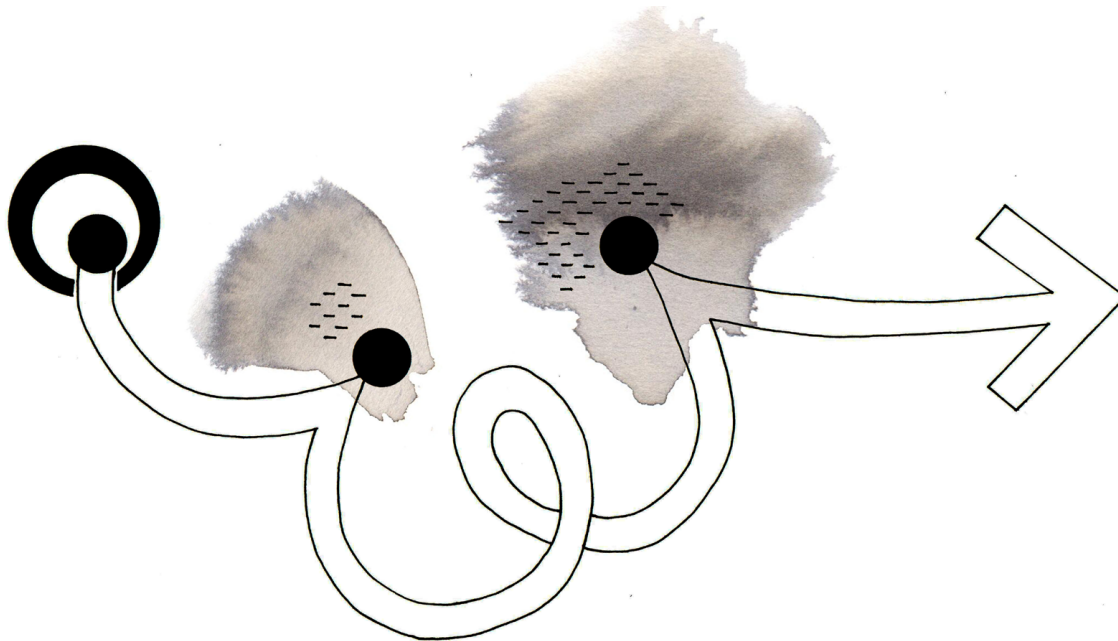


Figure 5.1 *Pursuit* Picto-Gram

Theme 2: Pursuit

The second theme I investigated was *Pursuit*, which arose from repeated viewings of *North by Northwest*. The drama in this film derives from constant motion and emotion, as Thornhill rushes from place to place in pursuit of the truth, and suspense is continually built through the gradual revealing of crucial information and the delivery of sudden shocks. In each of these three films, pursuit begins as the protagonists emerge from a comfortable existence which is disrupted by strange and horrible circumstances whereby they are jolted into unfamiliar territory and pulled through a ghastly journey.¹

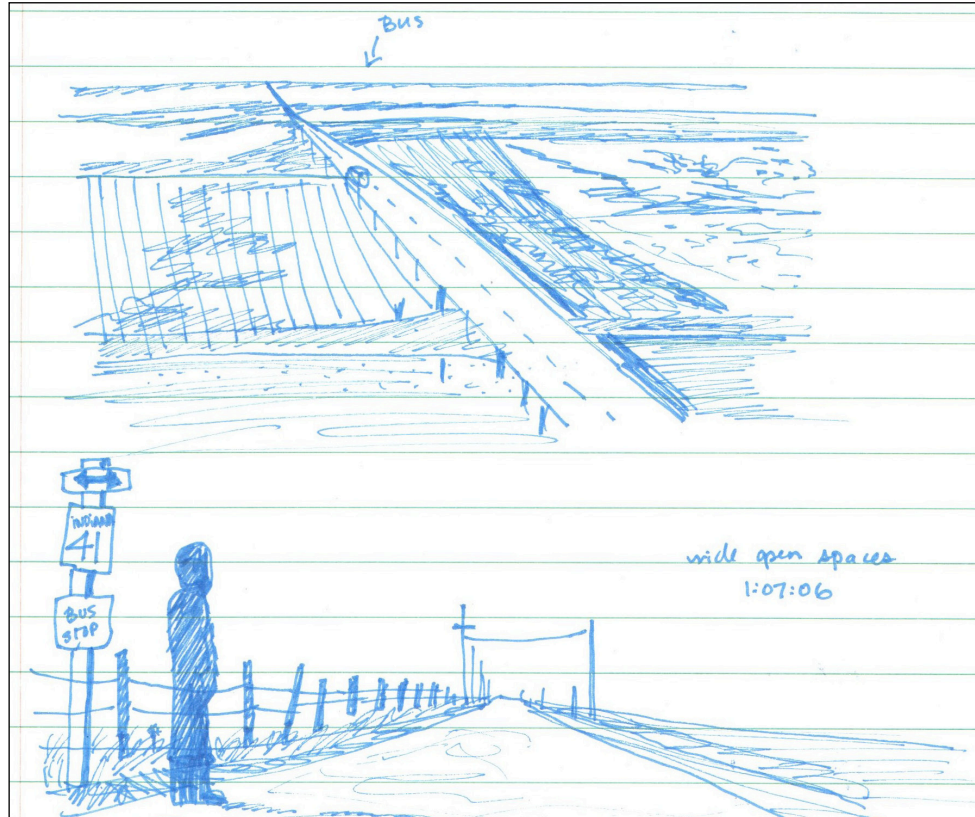


Figure 5.2 Mise-en-Sketches, *North by Northwest*

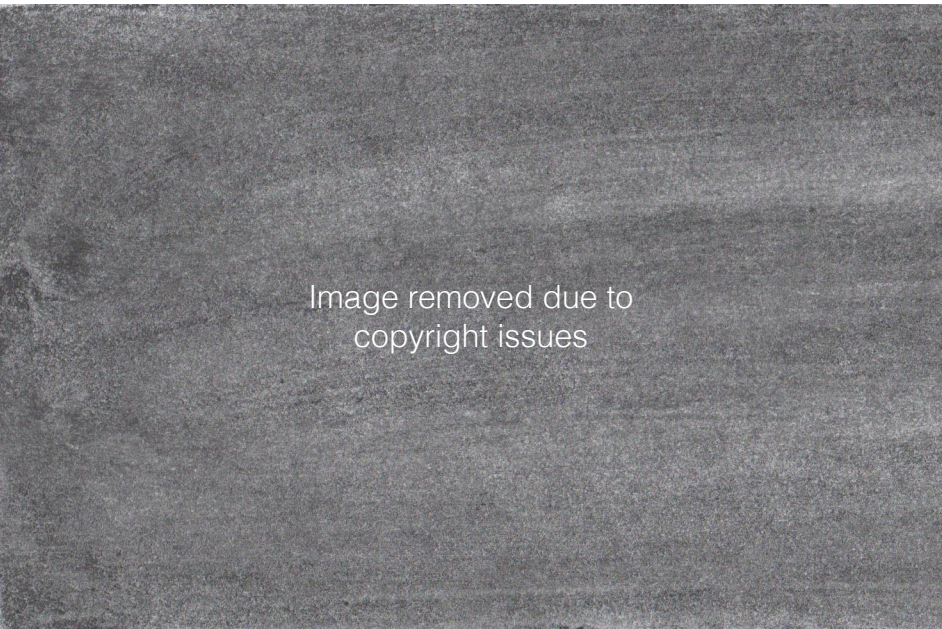


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Figures 5.3 + 5.4 Film Stills, *North by Northwest* (Left / Right)

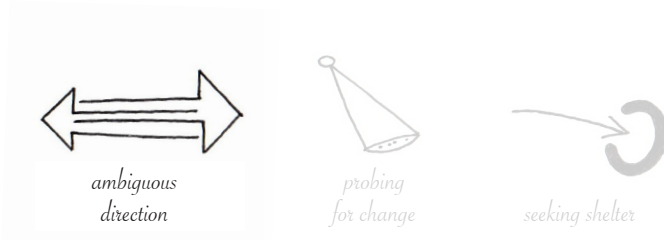
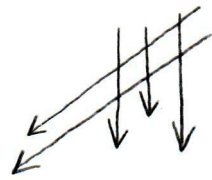


Figure 5.5 *Pursuit Cine-Cipher: North by Northwest*

NORTH BY NORTHWEST

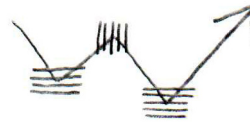
The notion of pursuit comprises the essential premise of *North by Northwest*, a film whose plot description can be distilled to a trans-national chase between a variety of both urban and rural locales. Although the storyline contains a powerful directionality, this pull through the landscape is itself based upon mistaken identity – a characteristic theme of Hitchcock’s cinema – when a series of events transpire to suddenly overturn the characters’ expectations as well as our own. With each scene contributing to a mounting sense of menace and suspense, we are gradually revealed the facts motivating this pursuit as it finally resolved.



frantic feeling



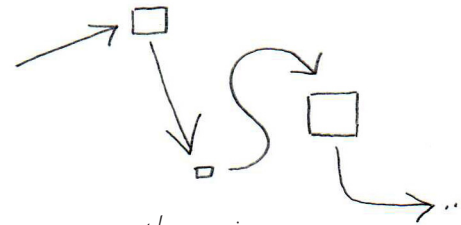
panic: spot hopping



transience



pursuit of ambiguity



must keep running



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PANIC

Figure 5.7 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

While pursuit in this film is inherent in the narrative itself, this strong motion is itself based upon ambiguity: while Thornhill proceeds from place to place, he does not know who he is chasing or why but that he has somehow been mistaken for another man and falsely accused of murder, and therefore he must keep running from the police. From the first frantic lines which appear on the screen, and crisscross to form a skewed grid to the sound of Bernard Hermann's feverish score, an atmosphere of frenzy is unmistakable.² This mood persists as the initial

abstract geometric illustration melts into a series of bustling scenes on the streets of Manhattan. While this intense activity appears ordinary enough, especially in a large city such as New York where throngs of people are a common sight, the coupling of these images along with the anxious soundtrack produces an immanent sense of panic, whereby there is a clear need to rectify the situation, but the exact solution is in itself unclear.³ In essence, the initial credit sequence sets the frenetic tone of the pursuit within *North by Northwest*.



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TRANSIENCE

Figure 5.8 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

This sensation of combined facelessness and movement is promoted by the fact that the story takes place for the majority in locales of travel including hotels, highways, streets, train stations, and airports.⁴ Certain settings are even in motion themselves including the various scenes set in cars and trains. While many of these places in the movie are portrayed in a verisimilar manner to their real-life counterparts – for instance the episode in Grand Central Station where Thornhill is running from the police, which was filmed on location (and thus conceivably could have happened in real life) – other spaces are more ambiguous locales fabricated in the studio.⁵ Such was the case with the various sequences on the *Twentieth Century Limited*, including the scenes

in the dining car and in Eve's compartment which used projections of film shot on location to simulate views from the windows while the train moved through the landscape.⁶

While this scenery represents a fairly accurate representation of the sights on an actual ride through the Hudson Valley, it is fairly reasonable to assume that these views were orchestrated to coincide with the dramatic events unfolding in the interior spaces: while Eve is being questioned by the police as to the whereabouts of the wanted man Thornhill, the scenery in the window behind her becomes increasingly dark as she persists in recounting her false story to the detectives.⁷ These

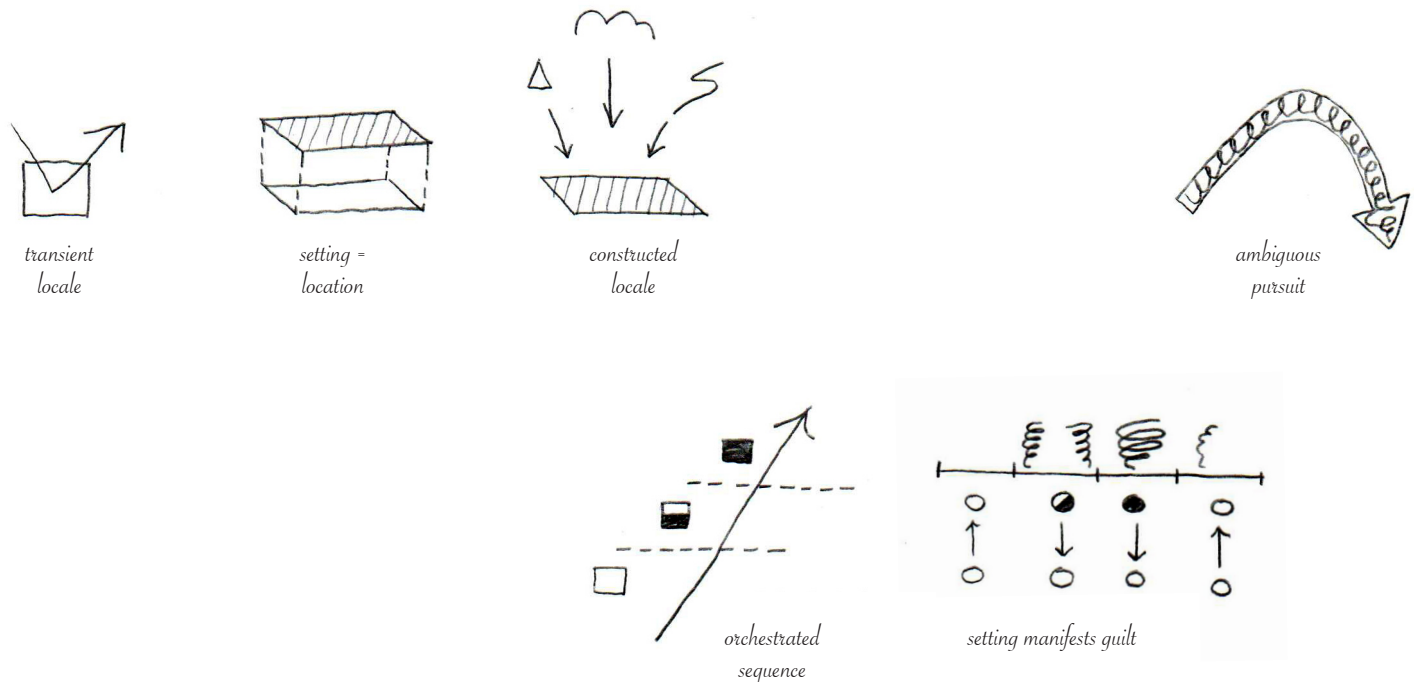


Figure 5.9 Cine-Cipher: 'Transience'

shady masses, which block the expansive view across a lake at twilight, indicate that perhaps her conscience, in attempting to hide Thornhill from the law, is more closely associated with this setting at this particular moment in the film than with being representative of a genuine locale. It is through Hitchcock's blending of authentic locations and constructed settings in such transient locales which lend *North by Northwest* a sense of impermanence, a transience which effectively accentuates the ambiguity which characterizes the overarching notion of pursuit within this film.



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REVERSAL

Figure 5.10 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

This pervasive ambiguity can also be seen in other settings within the film through which the pursuit takes place. While certain landscapes have particular deep-seeded, culturally derived connotations for the audience, this film overturns these common readings to produce a disconnection between our expectations and the reality of the film, effectively building suspense. While prairie landscapes are generally considered flat and monotonous by most people, the wide-open spaces and horizon in the Prairie Stop sequence instead feel menacing and stifling due to the presence of a threat in pursuit of Thornhill.⁸ Although each of these places is expansive and exposed, the landscape in the film contrasts sharply with the menace present in this scene to produce an oppressive tension which contradicts our initial perceptions. Space extends out in all directions

but rather than produce a reaction of indifference, it engenders one of fear: in the middle of nowhere, “no one can get you, but there’s absolutely nowhere to hide.”⁹

The Prairie Stop sequence is also a striking episode in this dynamic narrative since it represents the first time that Thornhill halts his pursuit and waits for something to occur instead of his movements serving as the events in the story. Standing stationary in the landscape at the side of the highway, the protagonist waits impatiently for his rendezvous with the mysterious Kaplan as vehicles rush past and impudently kick up dust in his face. The horizontality of the Prairie Stop is intimidating, reducing the protagonist to a spec of nothingness in contrast to the introduction scene in Manhattan where the soaring

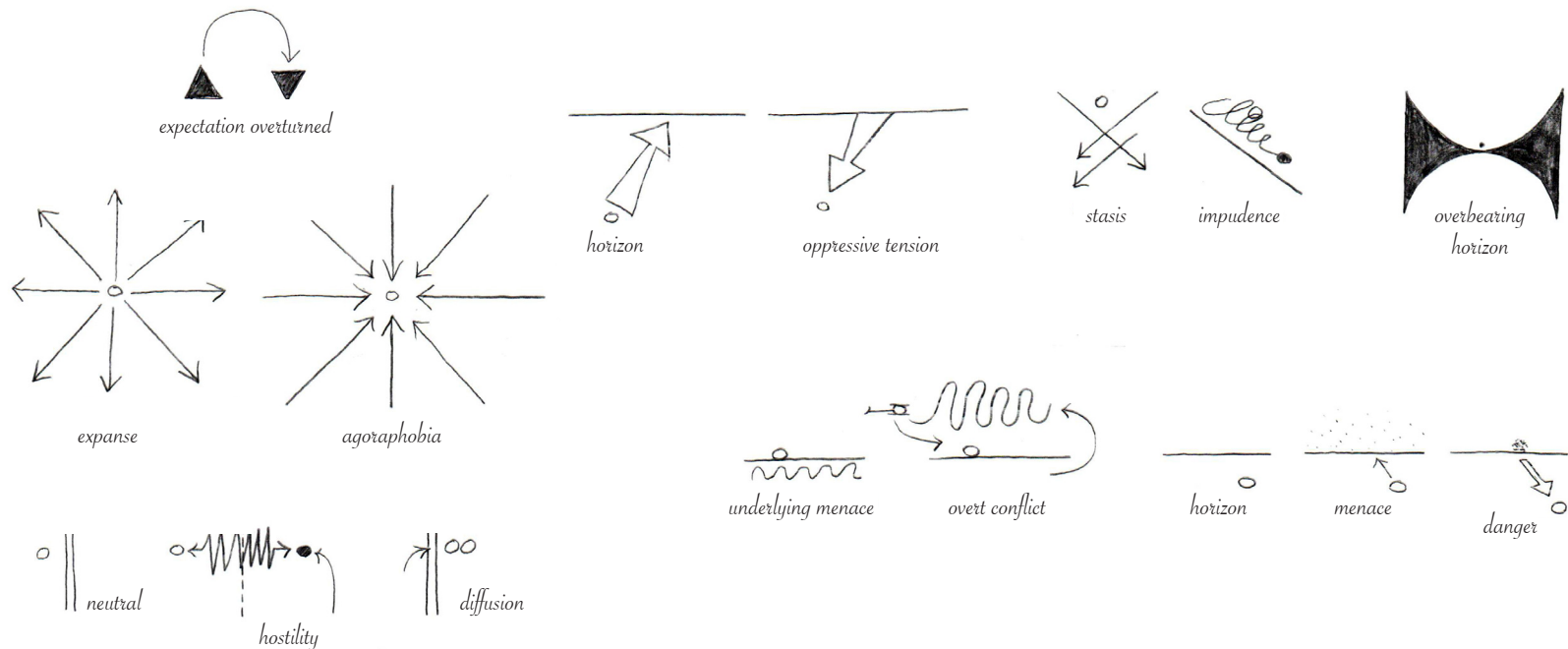


Figure 5.11 Cine-Cipher: 'Reversal'

verticality of the skyscrapers served to feed Thornhill's identity rather than to undermine it.¹⁰

When a blue car emerges from an adjacent cornfield and drops off a man across the road from Thornhill, the highway itself becomes a space of confrontation between two opposing sides. This ordinary landscape, normally considered bidirectional and neutral, suddenly becomes markedly hostile and tense. This pull across the roadway is momentarily diffused when Thornhill crosses over to the other side and learns that the man is simply waiting for the bus. The resulting moment of sheer suspense is based upon a misleading impression of the landscape imposed by the plot: while briefly portrayed

as dramatic and intense, the prairie is once again a mundane space. However, when the local man points out the peculiar presence of the crop dusting plane on the distant horizon, which is "dustin' crops where there ain't no crops," we are once again re-engaged with the uncanny qualities of this landscape and its underlying potential for menace.¹¹ The vague sense of suspense yields to overt feelings of persecution whereby the plane proceeds to chase Thornhill through the fields and back across the highway, and our initial inklings of the prairie landscape as an antagonistic entity are ultimately validated through the chase sequence. It is through this continual reversal of expectations that the nebulous pursuit unfolds in *North by Northwest*.



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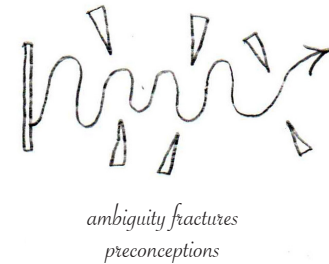
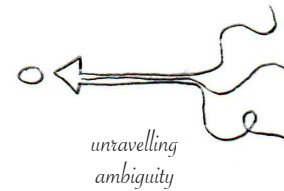
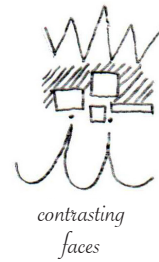
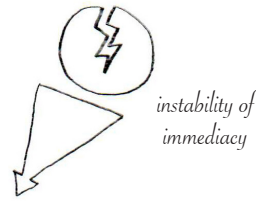
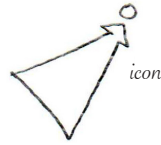
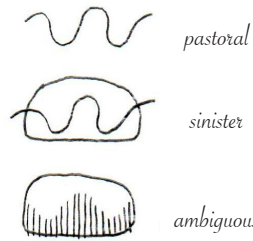
PEELING AMBIGUITY¹²

Figure 5.12 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

The pastoral scenery surrounding the Townsend estate, which appears earlier on in the film, also represents a manifestation of ambiguity through which the pursuit transpires. Viewed from the car window while travelling along the winding driveway, this setting would normally be associated with beautiful, calm and carefully composed landscapes of the Picturesque such as Stourhead.¹³ However, in the film this scenery possesses an aggressive hostility as Thornhill has just been forced into this vehicle at the Plaza Hotel and is being held against his will by two henchmen. This sinister, yet nebulous quality is further developed within the mansion whereby Thornhill is subjected to more overt verbal threats, from a unknown villain, to supply information which the protagonist simply does not know as the victim of mistaken identity.¹⁴ Later on, the

underlying ambiguity of this location is revealed as we discover that this manor did not even belong to the villain Vandamme, but rather a respectable United Nations dignitary named Lester Townsend. The underlying pastoral quality of the landscape was perhaps the genuine character of this setting after all; the nefarious qualities imposed in this scene were supplied by the menacing behaviour of its temporary occupants. While portrayed as set in Glen Cove, the actual estate itself is located further inland in Westbury: this transplant of locale was devised to intensify the drama of the subsequent getaway sequence on the coastal highway and make the danger to which Thornhill is subjected on the sharp cliffs much more immediate and intense.

Similarly, the chase sequence across the faces of Mount



Rushmore – an iconic national monument generally regarded from a distance to reflect idealized civic virtues such as honour and stability – transforms this landscape into a shaky setting of persecution and fear.¹⁵ While the steep cliffs and crumbling rocks of the mountain seen close up convince us wholly of the absolute danger to which Thornhill and Eve are subjected as they are hunted by Vandamme’s henchmen, this entire sequence is in actuality a complete illusion created within the studio using painted backdrops and constructed sets.¹⁶ While place in *North by Northwest* is initially portrayed in one way, it is these layers of ambiguity which unravel throughout the film and expose alternate identities of the landscape, insidiously undermining earlier, pre-conceived notions of these settings as the narrative keeps driving the action on to the next locale.

Figure 5.13 Cine-Cipher: ‘Peeling Ambiguity’



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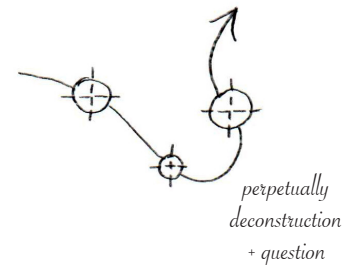
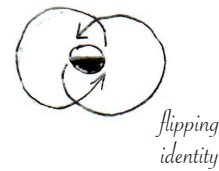
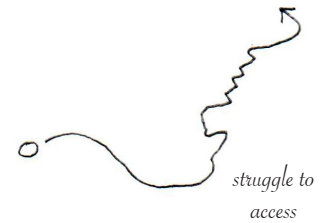
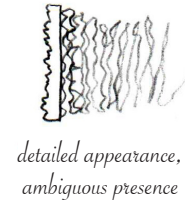
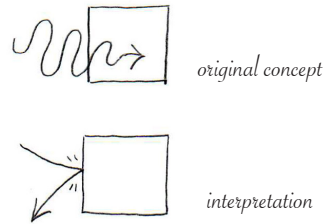
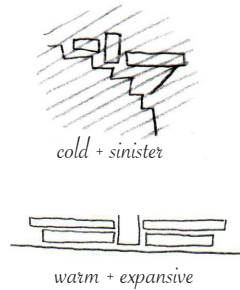
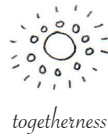
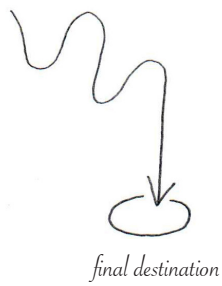
DESIGN SKEW

Figure 5.14 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

One noteworthy case of skewed identity in *North by Northwest* is Vandamme's isolated villa on the back slopes of Mount Rushmore, the final destination of the pursuit within this film. This modern house was borrowed from the designs of prominent architect Frank Lloyd Wright, particularly his Prairie Style houses, which were initially inspired by the horizon line of the plains in which they were often constructed and the central hearth as a symbol of family togetherness.¹⁷ Transplanted onto a rocky mountain and partially cantilevered into the sky, this organic architecture takes on a completely different character than was intended in the initial design: the warm, natural materials become cold and hard in the night sky, and the minimalist aesthetic takes on a sinister anonymity. While it is difficult to identify who might occupy this strange house and the manner in which

they dwell inside this cold, remote residence, this set is rendered in such convincing detail that this captivating illusion begins to eclipse any lingering questions of practicality.

While Wright's original conception involved creating a sense of connection between the interior and exterior spaces, this menacing and unapproachable house impedes Thornhill's pursuit to save Eve: the hero struggles up the rough topography just to gain visual access, and subsequently must climb across a jagged stone wall to simply enter the residence.¹⁸ Distinctly portrayed in the film as the ominous hideout of the villainous Vandamme and his violent henchman, this dwelling originates from a plan which above all else promoted a sense of welcoming warmth. While both identities are tangible,



one in the film and one in the houses designed by Wright, the true character of this domicile is ambiguous. As the action unfolds and flows through the architecture and back into the landscape, we are offered no additional insight as to which conception we should believe. Instead, we are left with a pervasive sense that neither of these conditions should be unconsciously accepted at face value but rather perpetually deconstructed and critically examined alongside this ever-moving narrative of pursuit which forms the basis of *North by Northwest*.

Figure 5.15 Cine-Cipher: 'Design Skew'

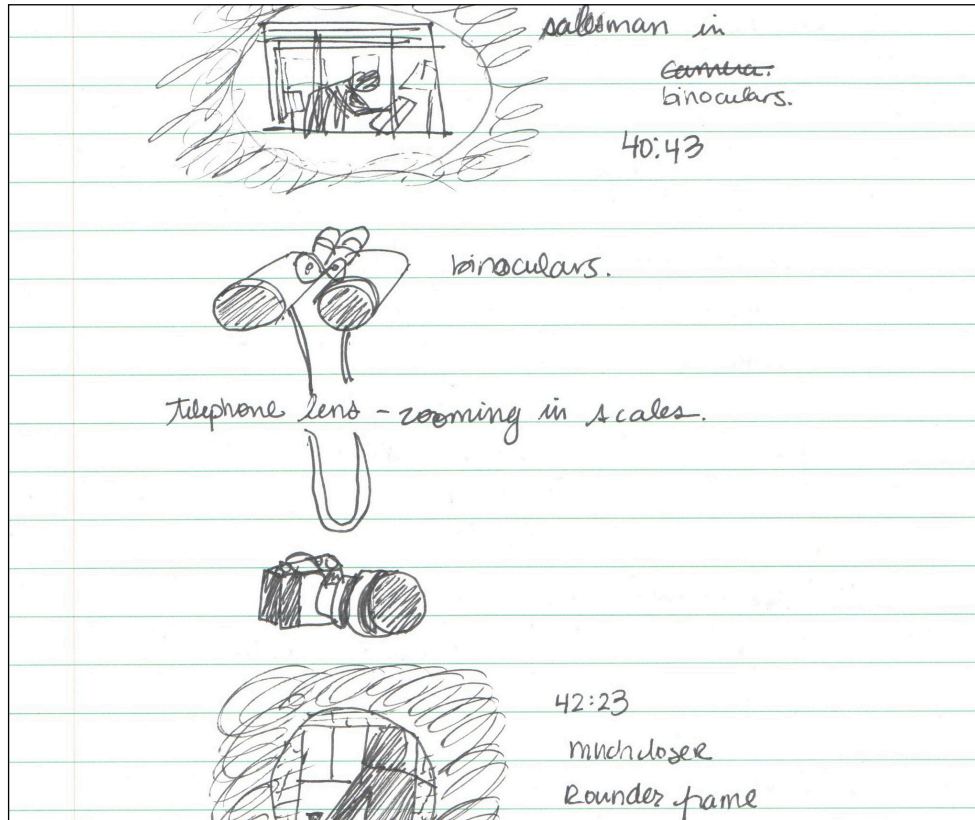
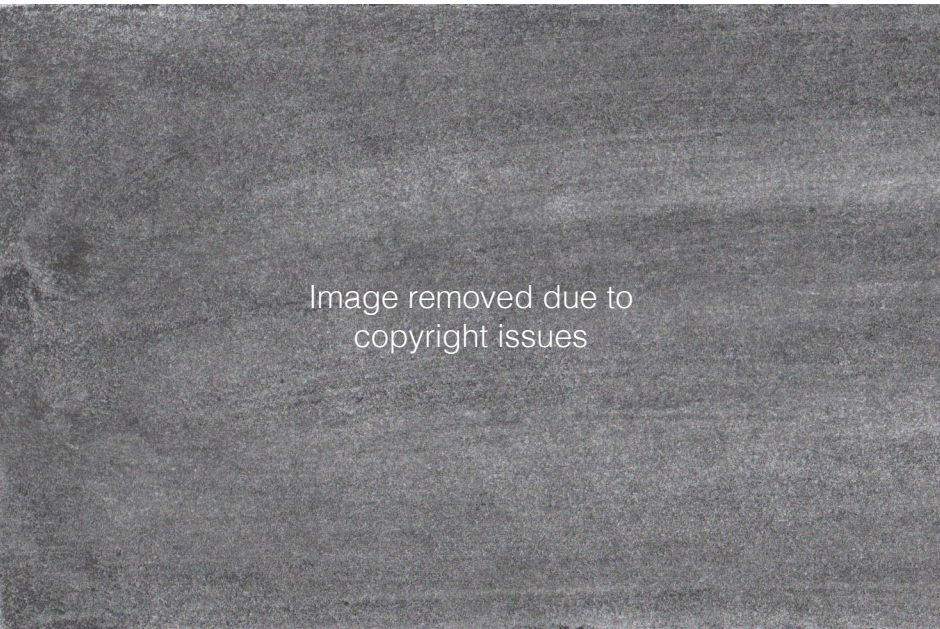


Figure 5.16 Mise-en-Sketches, *Rear Window*



Figures 5.17 + 5.18 Film Stills, *Rear Window* (Left / Right)

REAR WINDOW

Rear Window, shot almost entirely in the one room set of Jeff's apartment overlooking the central courtyard, provides a contrasting pursuit to the chase in *North by Northwest*. While the latter can be characterized as a physical pull through the landscape to different locales, movement in *Rear Window* is limited due to Jeff's broken leg. Motion is thereby transformed into a psychological pursuit whereby his insatiable motivation to travel as a freelance photographer morphs into an inner compulsion, bordering on obsessive paranoia, to capture a suspected murderer by deliberately probing the landscape for clues. Over the course of the film, the courtyard and its surrounding spaces are regarded with increasing suspicion as Jeff's scrutiny, with the aid of technological devices, reveals the smallest, most minute changes in both the interior and exterior settings of the film.

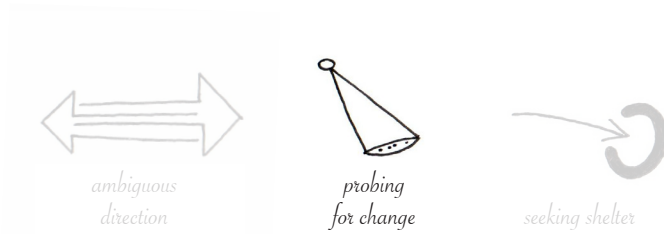


Figure 5.19 Pursuit Cine-Cipher: *Rear Window*



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ANOMALY¹⁹

Figure 5.20 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

While this psychological pursuit in *Rear Window* begins innocently enough with Jeff's bare-eyed glances out to the various inside and outside activities of neighbours, the drawn shades of the newlyweds' window initially draws suspicion from Lisa; she ponders aloud the guilty activities that this pair might be engaging in behind the curtains. While it is obvious enough to us that this couple is simply seeking privacy for their intimate activities – as is confirmed later on in the story when the shade is eventually raised and we catch a glimpse inside – the anomaly of the closed window in the sweltering heat wave is still introduced as a sign of culpability. In the courtyard, the other windows remain open for the majority of the

film, providing us as well as Jeff with visual access into the interior lives of the various inhabitants occupying the dwellings bordering this courtyard condition.

While the newlyweds have drawn their shades, Jeff witnesses a particularly intense argument between Thorwald and his invalid wife Anna in the open windows of their apartment. This complete exposure in putting their personal problems on display for all to see seems to indicate a sense of innocence in that this older couple has nothing to hide. However, as the story progresses, the blinds on the Thorwalds' windows are closed for extensive periods of time on several occasions. This

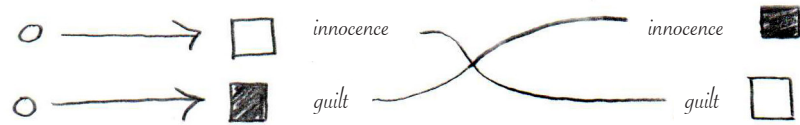
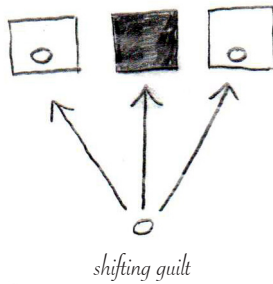
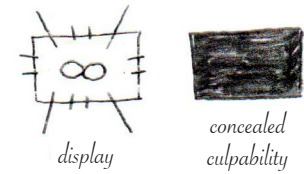
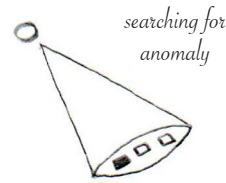
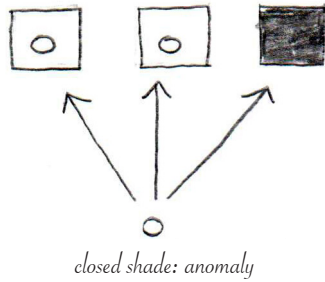


Figure 5.21 Cine-Cipher: 'Anomaly'

deliberate concealment, along with the mysterious darkness inside the apartment when the salesman fails to approach the window during the scene when the dead dog is discovered and the rest of the neighbours enter the courtyard, subverts Thorwald's initial innocence and deliberately points to an unmistakable sense of guilt. The anomaly of the dark, closed window arouses Jeff's suspicions and instigates his psychological pursuit for visual clues within the courtyard space.



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SCRUTINY

Figure 5.22 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

Through the use of binoculars, and subsequently a telephoto camera lens, Jeff's watching goes from casual glances to hardcore voyeurism in order to probe the landscape itself for traces of evidence while closely examining the activities of his surrounding neighbours: the shapely Miss Torso, the miserable Miss Lonelyhearts, the tortured composer, and Thorwald the traveling costume jewelry salesman. Perceiving the random late-night absences of the latter from the apartment as peculiar behaviour, as well as the Mrs. Thorwald's sudden disappearance oddly coinciding with the removal of an extra-large trunk, Jeff begins to form the idea that this woman has been murdered by her husband.

Later on in the film, while surveying the courtyard from the darkness of the one-bedroom apartment with Lisa and Stella, Jeff notices a subtle change in the landscape: namely, the difference in the height of the vegetation in the flowerbed itself. Retrieving a photograph taken previously, the protagonist proceeds to compare both images side by side, the slide and the framed view of the courtyard in the rear window, in order to carefully evaluate the variation.²⁰ While this change is incredibly subtle, being displayed for the audience through the 'back and forth' visual effect of juxtaposing similar images several times as well as through the dialogue itself, it is taken as an unwavering sign of Thorwald's guilt and prompts the deduction that

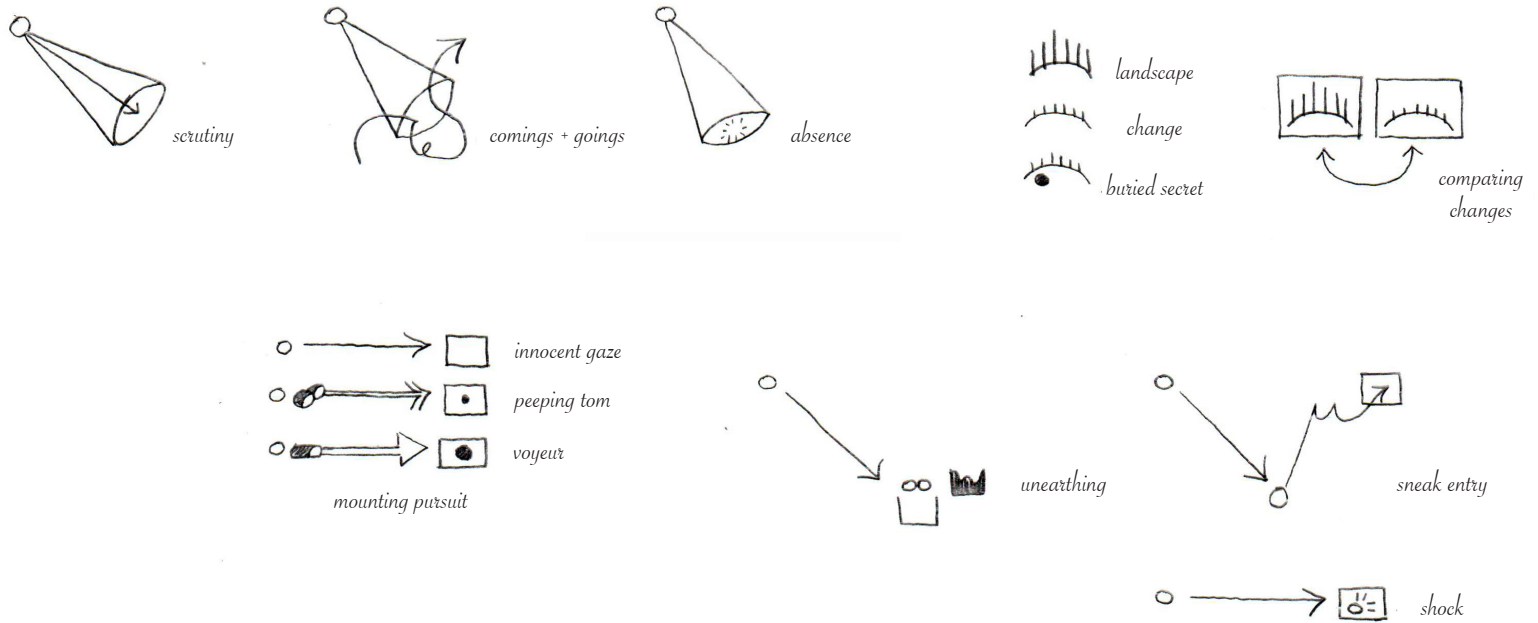


Figure 5.23 Cine-Cipher: 'Scrutiny'

the salesman must have buried his murdered wife in the terrace below. Jolting the characters into action, Lisa and Stella proceed down to the courtyard to excavate the flowerbed in an attempt to find hard evidence of Thorwald's act, while Jeff remains in his window perch and uses the zoom lens to follow their movements as well as to scrutinize the hole as it is being dug. While no proof is discovered in the terrace itself, Lisa fearlessly scales the fire escape and climbs into the open window of Thorwald's apartment in search of the truth.

Captivated by his girlfriend's frantic search inside the apartment, Jeff continues to watch through the camera while Lisa rifles through Thorwald's possessions to find a purse containing the key piece of incriminating evidence: Anna Thorwald's wedding ring. Framing and enlarging specific moments in which traces within the landscape are investigated and discovered, it is through the use of technology in *Rear Window* that the psychological pursuit in this film begins to acquire a pathological dimension through a maniacal scrutiny of the landscape.²¹

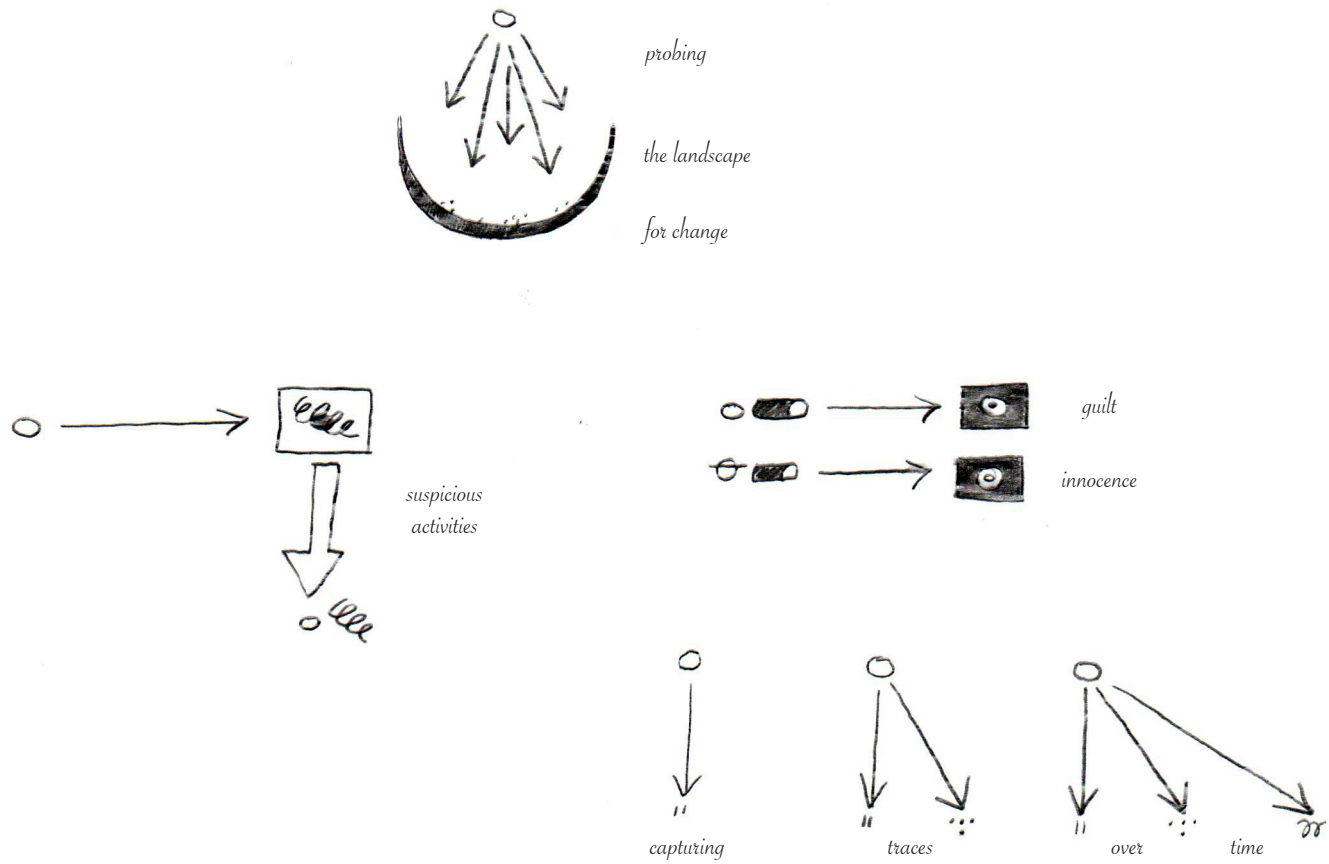




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NUANCE

Figure 5.25 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

In the second morning within the narrative of the film, Jeff uses the zoom lens to observe Thorwald at the kitchen sink washing an assortment of large knives, nervously peering down to the terrace while the neighbours' dog sniffs around the flowerbed.²² The protagonist feels that these impressions confirm the salesman's guilt as a murderer because these activities diverge from 'ordinary' behaviour previously witnessed.²³ In addition to this suspicious aura created by Thorwald's actions, the blinds in the bedroom are raised to reveal that his invalid wife is missing from her usual position in the apartment. Noting this additional fact almost immediately, Jeff invites his friend, the police detective Doyle, to the rear window apartment in order to investigate this alleged crime.

When observing the terrace using the exact same equipment as Jeff, Doyle remarks that the situation appears normal. Since the latter is not privy to the subtle changes unfolding in the courtyard over a more extended period of time, he dismisses the signs described by Jeff as simply ridiculous. To the detective, Anna Thorwald has merely departed on an extended vacation and therefore he must discount this foolish pursuit of attempting to discover a killer. Even though Doyle considers this notion of murder amongst the ordinary circumstances of the courtyard to be preposterous conjecture, Jeff remains convinced by these small nuances within the landscape and continues to probe his surroundings for further clues in pursuit of the guilty party.

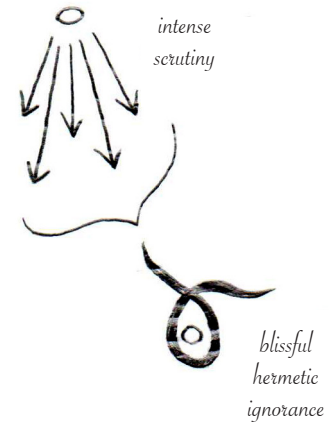
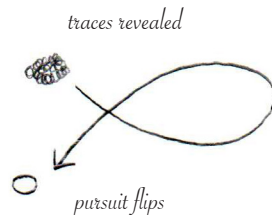
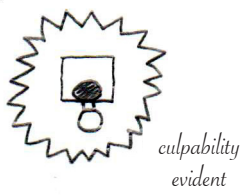
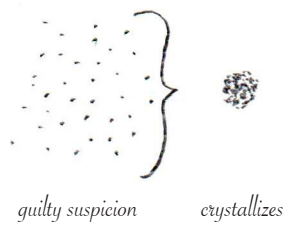




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TURNAROUND

Figure 5.27 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

From his fixed vantage position, Jeff's sustained viewing of the courtyard eventually yields traces in the landscape which point to the murderer accountable for Anna Thorwald's death. Through the gradual reveal of these hidden secrets, the underlying culpability of the killer is made overt and the pursuit is flipped: Jeff himself suddenly becomes the target of Thorwald's efforts to 'get away with murder,' as the latter suddenly arrives at Jeff's door to eliminate the nosy photographer. While this attempted homicide is truncated by the abrupt

appearance of the police, Thorwald's guilt is made evident to the entire world as he dangles Jeff out off the second-story window in front of all the neighbours. With this revelation at the close of the film, the psychological pursuit through the landscape concludes with the narrative of *Rear Window*. In the final scene, the intense scrutiny of the courtyard has been abandoned, replaced by a peaceful ignorance as each of its occupants engage in their own hermetic worlds, once again unaware of the activities going on around them.

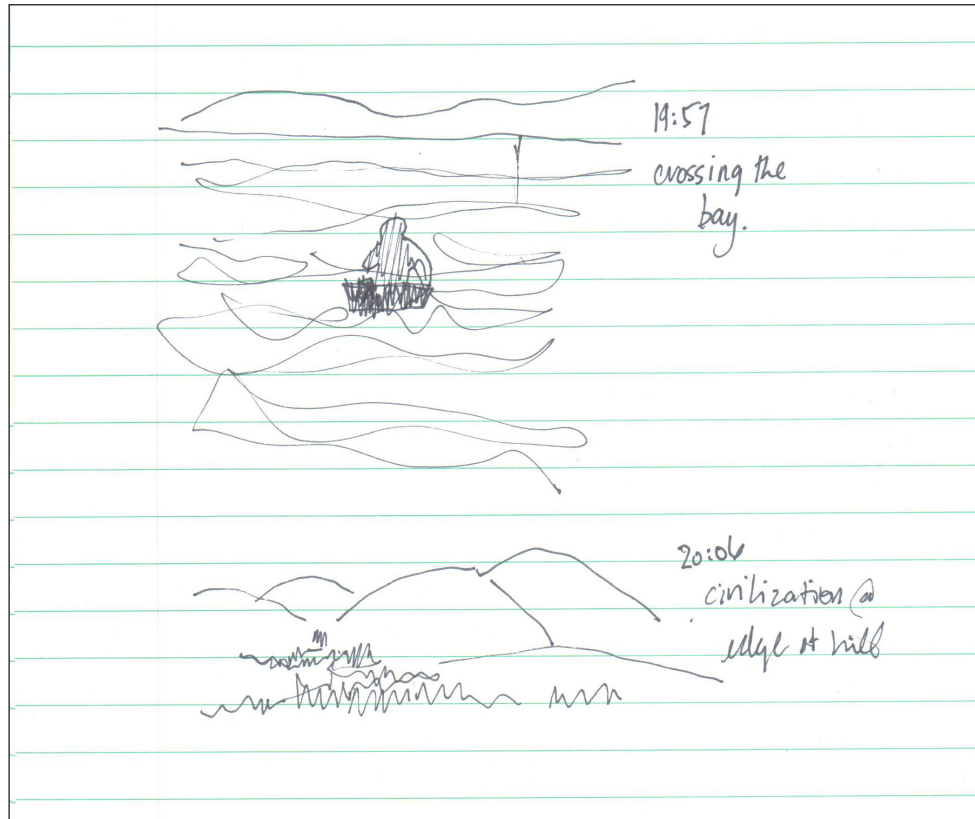
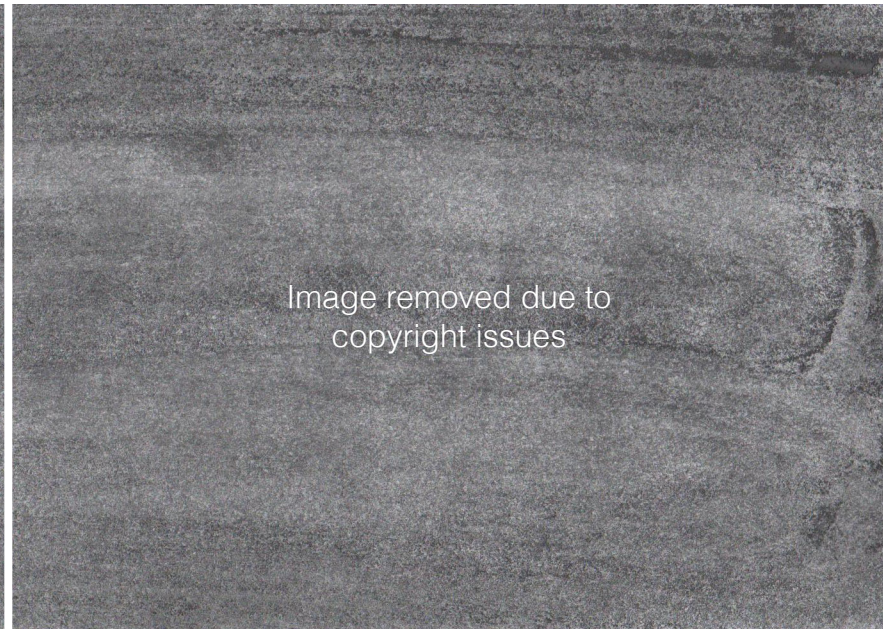


Figure 5.28 Mise-en-Sketches, *The Birds*



Figures 5.29 + 5.30 Film Stills, *The Birds* (Left / Right)

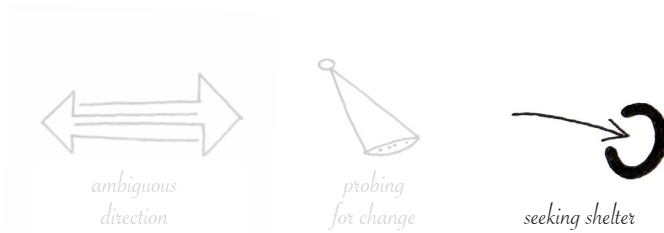


Figure 5.31 Pursuit Cine-Cipher: *The Birds*

THE BIRDS

In Bodega Bay, the characters in *The Birds* flee for their lives in pursuit of safety and security from the landscape and its growing masses of hostile birds that chase and attack the humans for no apparent reason.²⁴ As the motivation behind the birds' pursuit of the humans is unclear, the pattern and force of their attacks become ambiguous through the film: these creatures recede into the landscape and begin to mass together after an interval of time causing psychological distress through the threat of possible attacks as damaging as the physical trauma from the assaults themselves.

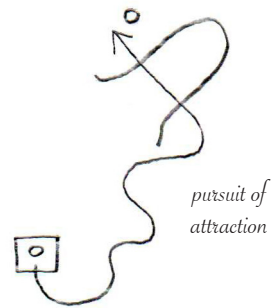
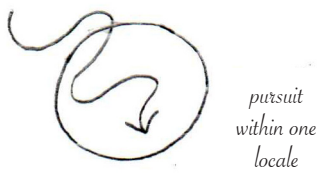




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ATTRACTION

Figure 5.33 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

While pursuit is manifest in *North by Northwest* as motion between different locations, in *The Birds* it is revealed as movement to and through primarily one locale: Bodega Bay. Although the first scene takes place in a San Francisco pet shop, Melanie is subsequently drawn up the coast to the small town based on her initial attraction to Mitch. The directions that she is given by Mitch's neighbour when she visits his apartment and by the shopkeeper at the general store are clear and direct, and Melanie's subsequent journey through the rolling

landscape to the small town, as well as her trip across the water in a rented motorboat to reach the Brenner house, unfold as serial views along fixed routes. While the primary manifestation of pursuit in this film unfolds as a clear, linear sequence through the landscape, it terminates in the one inevitable conclusion: Melanie 'getting her man' as he gazes upon her with delight from the shore while she proceeds to re-cross the bay and return back to the town.



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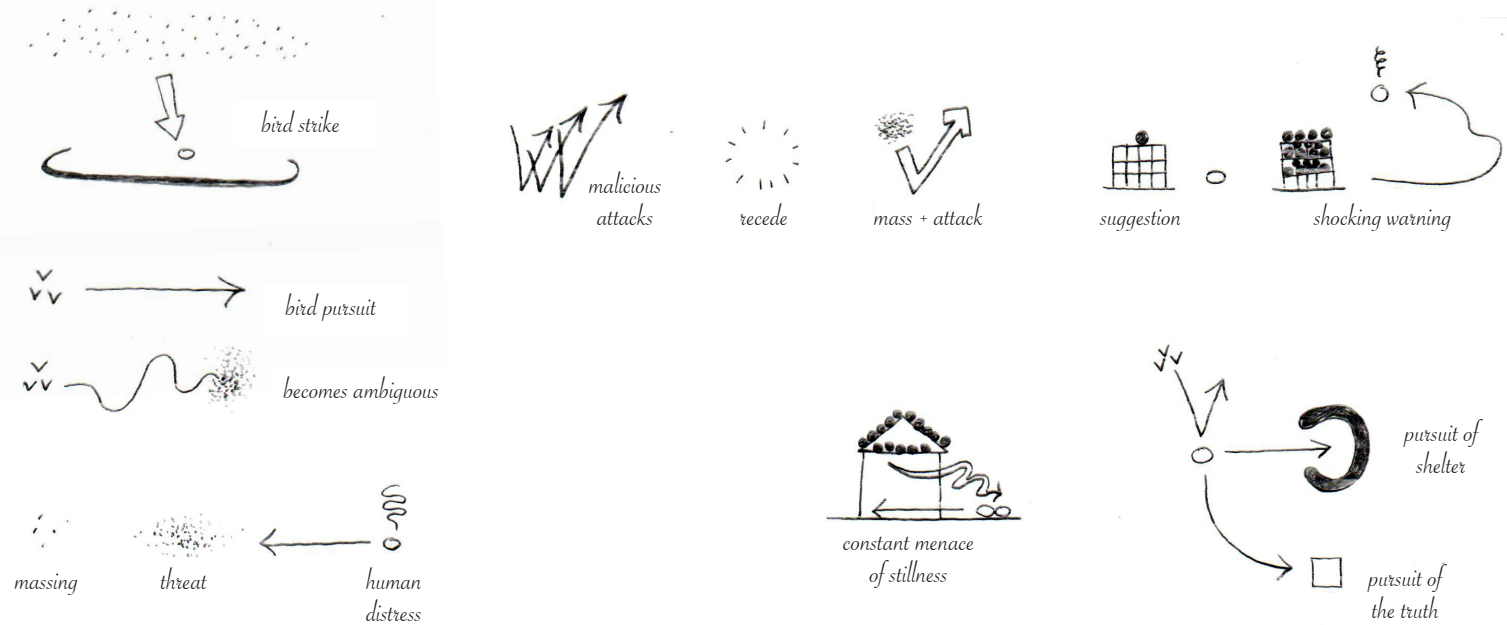
MASSING OF MENACE

Figure 5.34 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Once resolved, this initial pursuit based on human attraction yields to a new pursuit, that of the birds in relation to the human characters in the film. As Melanie complacently steers the boat back to the dock in Bodega Bay, she is attacked by a diving seagull which strikes her in the forehead with sufficient force to draw blood. While this incident can be considered fairly traumatizing, Melanie's cuts are cleaned and this event is simply dismissed as a freak accident. Life continues normally until these attacks begin to recur with increasing severity and the pursuit shifts to the birds' mission to wipe out the humans with the attacks initiated by this massing external threat. As this menace forms, it announces its presence in the scene of Cathy's birthday party in the Brenner yard. This sequence begins cheerfully with the children playing a game on the lawn, but the atmosphere

shifts to one of fear as the kids are targeted by several birds that begin to swoop down and peck them forcefully and with deliberate malice.

While the motivation behind the birds' pursuit of the humans is unclear at this point, the pattern and force of these attacks become ambiguous over the course of the film.²⁵ Rather than directly assaulting the humans at each and every potential opportunity, the birds instead retreat into the landscape and begin massing together after an interval of time, causing psychological distress to the people through the continual threat of possible onslaughts. In the exterior sequence at the school playground, Melanie smokes a cigarette and waits to speak with Annie regarding the odd behaviour of the birds, while in the background we see a set of monkey



bars occupied by a single raven. As Melanie sits with her back to the yard, the birds calmly begin to assemble on the metal structure, unbeknownst to the protagonist. While no direct pursuit is evident at this point in the scene, Hitchcock provides a faint suggestion that these creatures are gathering for a purpose, to lie in wait for another attack, commanded by insidious forces into eventually resuming their persecution of the humans.

When Melanie does eventually turn towards the play structure, she is confronted with a horrific view: a fluttering black mass of ravens cover the monkey bars and threaten the approach of another grisly attack, a shocking warning which prompts her to run from the yard into the school and instigate the evacuation of this building as well as a subsequent attack on the children.

Figure 5.35 Cine-Cipher: 'Massing of Menace'

A similar massing of menace is evident in the thick layers of birds which cover the landscape, sitting in eerie stillness as Melanie and Mitch return to Annie's house in order to rescue Cathy following the major attack on the town. While these creatures do not attack the humans during this scene, the constant menace implied by the dense accumulation of these creatures upon the landscape is extremely upsetting to the characters and catalyzes their pursuits: finding an explanation for these senseless attacks, and discovering safe, protected interior spaces in which to hide.



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PURSUIT OF THE TRUTH

Figure 5.36 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

In an initial attempt to discover the truth behind the inexplicable behaviour of the birds, Lydia leaves to visit the nearby Fawcett farm in order to diagnose the problem suffered by her chickens at home. As she enters her neighbour's house, she is confronted with an ugly scene: along with the chaotic aftermath of an attack inside the home, Lydia stumbles upon the gruesome corpse of Dan Fawcett in the back bedroom, a character whose eyes were viciously pecked out by the terrible creatures. Despite being faced with this horrible scene, she obtains no answer or reasons as to why the birds are behaving so violently and reacts instinctually by fleeing for her life in a desperate, frantic rush back to the Brenner farm.

This pursuit of the truth persists into the later scenes in the diner where the various townspeople congregate and begin to discuss the possible rationale behind the bird attacks. While each character puts forth a particular theory, none of these conjectures seem to be conclusive.²⁶ As this discourse takes place, disaster suddenly erupts outside when a swooping gull hits a service station attendant, precipitating an explosion when an innocent bystander accidentally tosses a lit match into a puddle of gasoline. As if in response to the inquiries of the humans, the pent-up energy of these creatures becomes so intense that it explodes: when she steps into the phone booth, Melanie is immersed into a swirling vortex of birds, humans and fire, a chaos

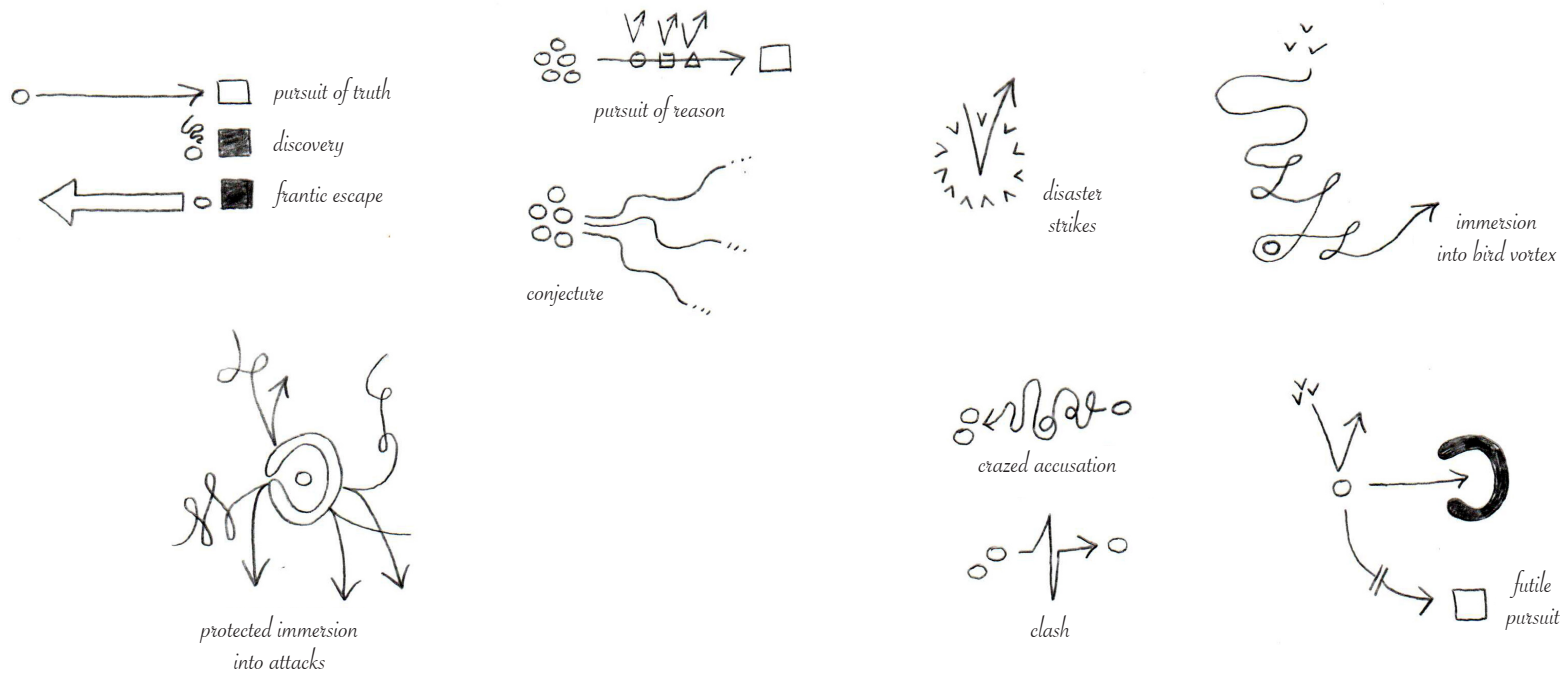


Figure 5.37 Cine-Cipher: 'Pursuit of the Truth'

so intense that it seems to violently defy all attempts at rationalization.

Subsequent to this episode, Mitch rescues Melanie from the phone booth and they enter the restaurant together. The logical arguments presented prior to this attack have evaporated, leaving only crazed lunatic ravings prompted by the illogical nature of these random

assaults; one lady in particular accuses Melanie of actually bringing the birds to Bodega Bay.²⁷ In response, the protagonist slaps the woman: this pursuit of the truth has ended with dramatic clashes between the humans as they turn against one another, recognizing their search for meaning as futile.²⁸ This search for a rational explanation ultimately yields to the pursuit of safety and shelter from the vicious bird attacks.

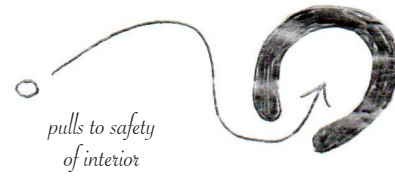
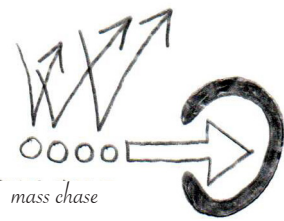


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RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES

Figure 5.39 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

While the humans ultimately cannot find a conclusive answer for the cause of these random attacks, they begin to view the landscape from an increasingly irrational perspective.²⁹ As their ability to reason becomes diminished due to the chaotic events occurring in the surrounding environment, these people tend to develop reactions based on gut feelings rather than logic. When their primal instincts kick in, the inhabitants of Bodega begin to see the exterior primarily as the territory of hostile assailants rather than a pleasant landscape for them to enjoy, and thus they are pulled into the safety and security of the protected world within enclosed buildings.

Attracted towards secure interior spaces, the human

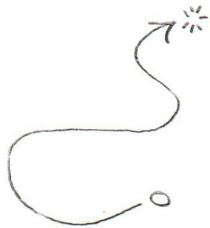
characters are forced to 'run for their lives' in the chase sequence outside of the town school. After deciding that the school is an unsafe place for the children to remain with the impending threat of the birds, Melanie and Annie evacuate the building. As they exit, the kids are barraged by these creatures and chased through the town as they flee for their lives. While this small town was previously portrayed as quaint and charming, it is now reduced to a mere collection of potential places to hide. Under the deluge of the birds, the main pursuit becomes one of survival and salvation; any means of shelter, such as the parked car at the side of the road into which Melanie and Cathy take refuge or the Brenner home during the brutal attack on the birthday party, is the ideal destination within this new landscape of fear.



fortification



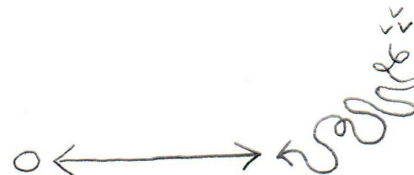
stir crazy



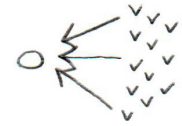
lured to investigate



*descent
into
insanity*



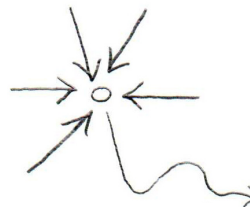
confrontation: internal forces



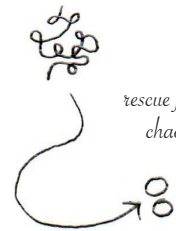
barrage



*curiosity consumes
mind*



surrender to threats



*rescue from
chaos*

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INNATE CURIOSITY

Figure 5.41 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Seeking sanctuary, the Brenner family eventually retreats to their farm on Bodega Head. While the additional fortifications to the home temporarily protect its inhabitants from the onslaught of birds in the surrounding landscape, Mitch's efforts to maintain a safe and secure refuge are eventually undermined by Melanie's psyche. Her innate curiosity, a force intrinsic to all humans induced as much by an insatiable need to control as by circumstances forcing one to turn inward and examine oneself more closely, prompts her to leave the cozy shelter proffered by the Brennens and venture directly into the terrifying maelstrom of the birds.

After Mitch, Lydia and Cathy have fallen asleep in front of the hearth following a particularly intense attack on

the house, Melanie hears a stirring in the attic and is lured upstairs to investigate this noise. As she is pulled into the bedroom containing the mysterious sound, she is confronting her own irrational nature as much as a physical torrent of seagulls, crows and ravens that flap and peck at her chaotically.³⁰ In the face of such atrocities, which transform everyday settings into landscapes of horror and fear, the human mind begins to disintegrate and is pulled downward into a state of insanity. This altered state of perception, whereby anxiety consumes the subconscious mind, is precipitated by the lingering presence of external threats, a continual menace to which Melanie finally surrenders when she is rescued by Mitch and his mother, and eventually resuscitated on the sofa downstairs.³¹

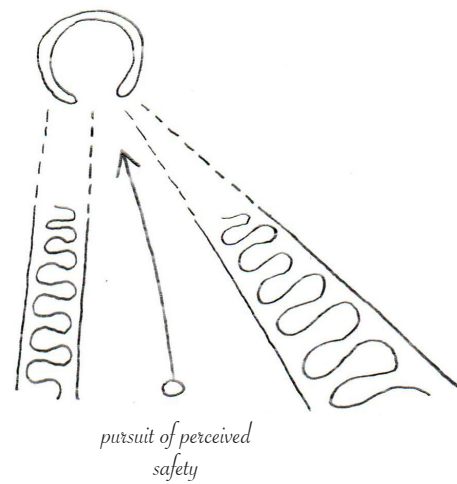
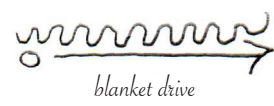
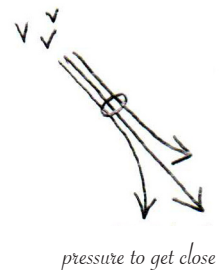
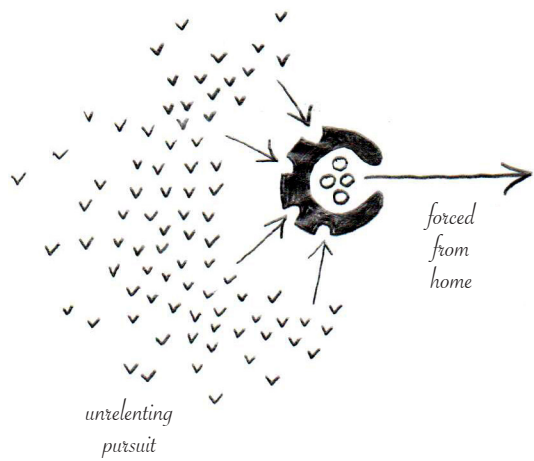


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UNRELENTING PURSUIT

Figure 5.43 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Following the vicious assaults on the Brenner home, the unrelenting pursuit of the birds towards total destruction of the humans continues into the final scenes in this film. From the initial attack on the house, whereby a swarm of sparrows infiltrate through the chimney, the birds persistently strive to overtake the interior spaces claimed by the people as refuge, by making these settings uncomfortable and dangerous for human inhabitation. The hole in the attic roof, an aperture created through a solid piece of construction, is testament to the force of these efforts to encroach closer and closer until the entire human presence in Bodega Bay is eventually wiped out. At the conclusion of the story, the incessant attacks of the birds drive the family to withdraw from their only home in their sole hope for survival.

Once the characters have committed to leaving town

for San Francisco in order to seek help for the injured Melanie, the birds cease their attacks and placidly cover the landscape as the humans drive away. Once again the characters are in pursuit of safety and security, albeit in a distant location, while the final shot of their departure down the lane is simply plastered with birds: commanding the entire frame, Hitchcock seems to suggest that these creatures have also taken over the world.³² In contrast to the strong linear quality of the road prevalent in earlier scenes on the farm, the directionality of these closing shots is obscured by the sheets of birds which cover the landscape, clouding the minds of its former inhabitants and causing them to seriously question if their efforts to escape will indeed be successful.³³ While the movie itself does not indicate a clear outcome, we can only imagine the disastrous outcome of this primal pursuit for shelter through a hostile landscape.



Figures 5.44 + 5.45 Shifting Views, Highway #330 (Left / Right)

Highway #330: Glances from the Car

Having explored the concept of *Pursuit* through these three films, I began to apply these ideas to the Highway #330 site. This landscape is in itself a transient locale, normally experienced at a rapid speed and taken from granted as a mundane setting. As I frequently continued to drive along this highway, I began to notice changes in the colour and texture of the landscape according to the weather condition and time of day (Figures 5.43 + 5.44). While I was captivated by this shifting atmosphere, I started to capture these variations with my camera since this type of sustained observation became difficult – focusing on subtle changes and pondering these transformations were certainly not conducive to safely driving a vehicle. To be careful while traveling along the highway itself, I began taking quick snapshots during my commute and later scrutinized

these images in juxtaposition with one another in a manner similar to Jeff's actions in *Rear Window* whereby he compared the two different slides of the courtyard in order to ascertain the most minute change. While this analysis did yield some fascinating impressions as well as a multitude of interesting photographs, I still felt alienated from this landscape since I had not yet experienced this space firsthand. While this site warranted further investigation, I decided to step out of my car and experience it as a pedestrian.

Revelations on an Impromptu Walk

Inspired by the Prairie Stop sequence in *North by Northwest*, as well as the fact that I have never previously experienced this site on foot despite passing through this landscape for the past seventeen years, I became curious and was suddenly lured outside to explore one



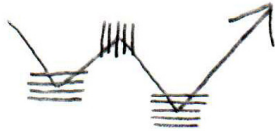
Figures 5.46, 5.47 + 5.48 Highway Debris (Left / Middle / Right)

unseasonably warm Sunday afternoon in late October 2011. While I had always been somewhat afraid to become stranded at the side of the highway without transportation, I put these feelings aside and seized my cell phone as I left to pursue a closer encounter with this landscape in order to discover its underlying character.

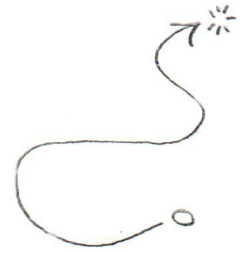
Initially, my walk along Highway #330 was simply bizarre. In addition to being stared at by the drivers on the road, I was overwhelmed by the exposed conditions of this wide-open landscape. Vehicles whizzed by me as I walked along the shoulder and I realized that much of the hostile element in this setting can be attributed to the presence of the cars as much as from the exposed characteristics of the place itself. While there was no overt danger in the form of an attacking crop duster during my experience, I was fearful of the constant

barrage of traffic and the potential danger that it held for me if I did not watch out for myself properly and thus became hyper-conscious of my own position as a potential target for a hit-and-run accident. Though I did take a number of photographs from the center of the highway, I felt extremely uncomfortable in this particular location and ran back to the shoulder immediately after snapping these pictures.

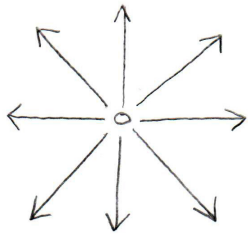
When the roadway became vacant between swarms of vehicles, this antagonistic presence was diffused and I focused on probing the landscape for traces, similar to Jeff's psychological pursuit of the landscape in *Rear Window*. The debris at the side of the highway rather engaging, ranging from a lone glove to a dehydrated, flattened skunk to a lost pair of underwear (Figures 5.45 – 5.47). Wondering how some of these items could end



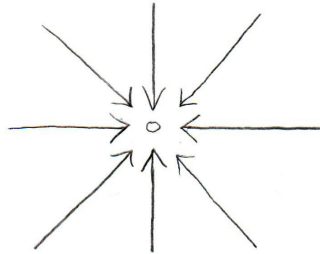
transience



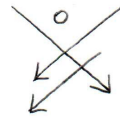
lured to investigate



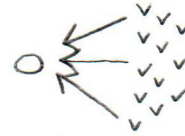
expanse



agoraphobia



stasis



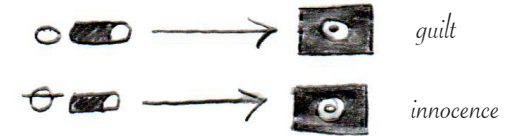
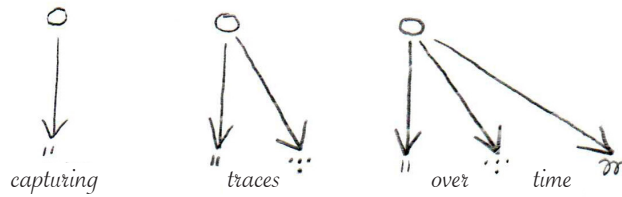
barrage



comparing changes



*ambiguity fractures
preconceptions*



up on the side of the road, I surmised that there might be an underlying narrative about this string of artifacts based on their relative positions along the shoulder of the highway.³⁴ This sequence of discrete objects might indicate a number of different stories ranging from a forbidden midnight tryst between a frisky gardener and her near-sighted lover to remnants of a performance art piece to simply just refuse generated by a series of passing vehicles. However, the true origins of these articles remains a mystery of the landscape to which I myself am not privy as mere visitor, just as Doyle, an outsider to the courtyard spaces in *Rear Window*, could not seem to make sense of the nefarious traces discovered by Jeff, a native occupant of this place.

Pondering Prairie Richness

After walking for two hours along this exposed roadway, I was extremely cold, tired and hungry. While I must admit that these factors quickly pulled me back into the safety of the car interior at the end of my adventure, I did manage to gain valuable insight into the prairie condition in order to contextualize the previous experience of travelling through this landscape inside

a vehicle. My prior impressions of this site were based upon a dynamic condition in which space unfolded sequentially from enclosure to exposure and paralleled the clearing of my own mind while driving along the highway. Experiencing this site as a pedestrian, these expectations were fractured: traveling at a much more reduced pace, the previous serial vision of the car ride no longer existed in my consciousness. As a result, I was able to leisurely probe the landscape and discover the underlying richness to which I was previously oblivious as a driver. Noticing and documenting these changes over time, I began to appreciate the prairie as I became captivated by its unique, underrated beauty.

Pursuit Composite

Based on these ideas of the *Pursuit*, I generated this composite image of Highway #330 using photographs of the site in conjunction with materials from *North by Northwest*. Pausing to appreciate this fascinating landscape, I began to notice and appreciate the prairie allure. It is my intention to reveal the qualities and traces which captured my attention in this expansive landscape and completely changed my earlier impressions of this seemingly banal locale.





NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

NOTES

1 See Chapter 4, Note 8 for additional details.

2 Gary Leva, *North by Northwest: One for the Ages*, Film. (Glendale, CA: Leva FilmWorks, 2009).

The sub-concept of 'Panic' was inspired by the descriptions of the opening credit sequence by several filmmakers in Leva's documentary. Guillermo Del Toro states: "From the moment Hitchcock opens with diagonal lines, *North by Northwest* a nonsensical sense of constant motion," while Christopher McQuarrie adds that: "Hitchcock starts with this very jarring, very unusual title sequence, this Saul Bass title sequence, and Bernard Herrman's driving music against this very mundane reflected image of cars and traffic to tell you that however placid and however ordered the beginning of this film may seem, it's all going to run off the rails."

3 This anxiety, the 'I-need-to-fix-this-somehow-but-I-don't-know-what-to-do' feeling, is a sensation I have also experienced throughout my own work, especially over the course of this practicum, a project whose goal was always defined but the route itself was full of questions and doubt.

4 James Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

The concept of transient locales in *North by Northwest* is discussed in Sanders' section on this film in *Celluloid Skyline*, p.290.

5 Ernest Lehman, "Commentary by Screenwriter Ernest Lehman," Disc 1, *North by Northwest*, 50th Anniversary Edition, DVD, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. (New York: Turner Entertainment Co., 2009).

6 Peter Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock: The Making of North by Northwest*, Film. (West Hollywood, CA: Fitzfilm, 2000).

7 Scott MacDonald, *The Garden in the Machine: A Field Guide to Independent Films About Place*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p.403.

8 François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*. (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1984), p.256.

In this interview, Hitchcock explains to Truffaut his intentions to flip these popular expectations: "I found I was faced with the old cliché situation: the man who is put on the spot, probably

to be shot. Now, how is this usually done? A dark night at a narrow intersection of the city. The waiting victim standing in a pool of light under the street lamp. The cobbles are 'washed with the recent rains'. A close-up of a black cat slinking along against the wall of a house. A shot of a window, with a furtive face pulling back the curtain to look out. The slow approach of a black limousine, et cetera, et cetera. Now, what was the antithesis of a scene like this? No darkness, no pool of light, no mysterious figures in windows. Just nothing. Just bright sunshine and a blank, open countryside with barely a house or tree in which any lurking menaces could hide."

9 Leva, *One for the Ages*.

Claudia Bell and John Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism and Identity*. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), p.72-82.

In Leva's documentary, filmmaker Christopher McQuarrie provides this agoraphobic description of the Prairie Stop landscape.

This concept is extended, and partially explained, by Bell and Lyall as the "horizontal sublime," a sensation of fear engendered by expansive, uncharted territories in contrast with vertical notions of the sublime which are manifest in the mysterious depths of chasms, ravine and mountainous features. Emerging from the initial land explorations of vast, sprawling North American continent, the anxiety produced by wide-open spaces initially developed from the notion of an omni-present danger, in the form of hostile native inhabitants, harsh climatic conditions and the threat of starvation, which could strike at any moment, from any direction, within this immense, unknown landscape.

10 Robin Wood, "*North by Northwest*," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.206.

Critic Robin Wood's review explores the manner in which Thornhill's identity within the film is reflected in the exterior landscape through a fascinating description of the Prairie Stop sequence.

11 Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

12 Leva, *One for the Ages*.

Within this documentary, director Francis Lawrence remarks

- that: “almost everybody in that movie isn’t who they seem,” continuing on to explain that while the antagonist thinks that Thornhill is the mysterious Kaplan, Thornhill himself considers Eve as an ally in his plight even though she is only pretending to help. Filmmaker Curtis Hanson subsequently adds that: “Eve Kendall is revealed to be Vandamme’s mistress, and then is revealed to, in fact, be a government agent. Even Vandamme, when we first meet him, is at the home and masquerading as distinguished Long Island resident Lester Townsend.” The fact that no person in this film is who they seem to be, and that true identity is revealed as the narrative unfolds, is a notion which inspired the development of the sub-concept ‘Peeling Ambiguity.’
- 13 Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, *The Landscape of Man*. (New York: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1995), p.240-241.
- Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton, *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*. (New York: J. Wiley, 1998), p.137.
- These two books each offer a description of the composition and features of Stourhead, which unfold according to a sequence of narrative views.
- 14 Marian Keane, “The Designs of Authorship: An Essay on *North by Northwest*,” In *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.215.
- This veiled hostility, Keane explains, is carried through in Vandamme’s refusal to accept Thornhill’s identity at face value.
- 15 David Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema: From Wilderness to Wasteland*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p.144.
- Steven Jacobs, “Sightseeing Fright: Alfred Hitchcock’s Monuments and Museums,” in *The Journal of Architecture* 11, no.5 (2006), p.594.
- Melbye observes the irony that the climactic final struggle of a film based on mistaken identity takes place upon large-scale, sculpted faces, while Jacobs attributes this newfound perception to looking at the monument “from a ‘wrong’ position...in the middle or on top of it.”
- 16 Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock*.
- For a more detailed discussion on the production of this film, please consult this documentary or the additional information included in Chapter 2.
- 17 Alan Colquhoun, *Modern Architecture*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.53.
- 18 Nikolaus Pevsner, *Pioneers of Modern Design: From William Morris to Walter Gropius*. (London: Peregrine Books, 1988), p.191.
- 19 Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline*, p.235.
- The sub-concept of ‘Anomaly’ was inspired by Sanders’ discussion of perceived privacy within *Rear Window*, in particular through a quote from the film in which Lisa states: “a murderer would never parade his crime in front of an open window.”
- 20 Tom Gunning, “In and Out of the Frame: Paintings in Hitchcock,” in *Castings a Shadow: Creating the Alfred Hitchcock Film*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.31.
- Gunning describes this side-by-side comparison between photo and landscape as an “index of change.”
- 21 Neil Badmington, *Hitchcock’s Magic*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.60.
- Badmington notes the ironic effect of actually seeing less through the use of this zoom effect: “seeing in more detail involves becoming blind to, cutting out, blocking or blacking out, part of the *mise en scène*.” He also remarks that: “in getting closer...the camera moves further away from the wider space over which it has apparently promised mastery. Reframing and cutting to the details means cutting off – and being cut off from – part of the visible.” The obsessive focus on one particular element, while discounting the rest of the setting, entails moving from an objective view towards subjective close-up shots tinged with suspicion. Although Jeff is probing the landscape based on several unmistakable signs he has initially witnessed, this scrutiny is fed by pre-conceived ideas of Thorwald’s guilt, which influences exactly how and what the hero sees. Ultimately, this heavy-duty investigation reinforces Jeff’s hunch, feeding his growing mania while incriminating Thorwald and encourages further compulsive observations of the neighbours.
- 22 Stefan Sharff, *The Art of Looking in Hitchcock’s Rear Window*. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), p.47.

Within his analysis, Sharff notes that: “to Jeffries, he [Thorwald] looks like ‘a man afraid that someone is watching him.’ ”

23 Ibid., p.48.

This is perhaps due to the pre-conceived notions developing in Jeff’s mind, the “first visible suspicion of an alleged murder” that is revealed to the audience “in a telling close-up” of the protagonist’s face, and which begins to colour his view of the landscape. See Note 21 for further details on his compulsive scrutiny.

24 Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*. (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p.239.

While pursuit in *North by Northwest* and *Rear Window* can be characterized as a human endeavour, in *The Birds* this concept also relates to an inexplicable, non-human menace which was difficult to envision. In Krohn’s book, production designer Robert Boyle states that: “ ‘It was a little scary for all of us, and probably for him [Hitchcock]. The antagonists were birds, you know. It wasn’t a distant country that’s trying to do us in, it wasn’t a murderer or a rapist. It was something...strange. And it was hard to get a hold of.’ ”

25 Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film. (Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

In the final scene of the film, an announcer on the radio declares: “It appears that the bird attacks come in waves with long intervals between. The reason for this does not seem clear yet.”

26 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.241-249.

Laurent Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*, Film. (Culver City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2000).

Krohn explains that a variety of potential meanings for the bird attacks were proposed to placate questioning members of the audience (p.249). Ultimately, Hitchcock declined to provide a conclusive reason for this strange behaviour since it was deemed to produce greater anxiety by leaving the phenomenon unexplained (*All About The Birds*).

However, several explanations were initially included in the film, several of which are discussed by the characters within this particular scene:

1. The bird attacks were intended to represent a metaphor for the looming threat of a war with Russia and/or with Cuba (p.241-243).

2. These creatures are retaliating against the various ways which humanity mistreats them, namely: hunting, killing, cooking and eating birds for sustenance and for pleasure. This notion is subtly introduced into the film when the characters’ discussion in the diner is ironically interrupted by the waitress placing an order for “three southern fried chickens!” (p.247-248).

3. With biblical connotations, this pestilence denotes the end of the world. Although a church scene was cut from the film, Krohn explains that “the Irish drunk in the diner preaching contently about ‘the end of the world’ [serves] to commemorate these ill-advised attempts to portray the bird attacks as an Old Testament-style expression of God’s wrath” (p.248).

4. The uncharacteristic aggression of the birds is somehow dictated by animal instinct. While Mrs. Bundy, the ornithologist, seem to discount the attacks since it is not natural for these creatures to behave in such a manner, Hitchcock remarked that in reality, “ ‘these things do happen from time to time...and they’re generally due to a bird disease, a form of rabies. But it would have been too horrible to put that in the picture’ ” (p.248-249, 261).

In the end, Krohn concludes that it is ultimately the fault of the viewers in prompting the birds to attack: “Like Jimmy Stewart in *Rear Window*, who wants a murder to have happened in the apartment across the courtyard just to relieve the monotony of being an invalid, the audience for whom Hitchcock made the film is, logically, the first cause of everything that happens in it. Alerted for months by an ad campaign, planned by the Master, stating that “*The Birds* is coming’, they impatiently desire their arrival, and are therefore the cause of the first attack” (p.261).

27 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.259, 261.

At this point in the film, Mrs. Bundy, the voice of reason who previously dismissed the strange bird attacks as unscientific, sits with her back towards the camera amongst the cowering group in the hallway (p.261). While her shivering shame represents the defeat of logic within the film, Krohn suggests that Melanie is now perceived as the transgressor in this tense situation, the responsible party for this disaster. She is “the jinx that brings down the disaster on Bodega Bay by her silly

prank, which expresses her unstated desire for Mitch and his for her, and provokes the jealousy of Lydia and Annie” (p.261). Although they are presented in a highly emotional and irrational manner, and would be impossible to prove logically, the hysterical allegations of the young mother in the diner may contain a small grain of truth within this chaotic scenario.

28 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.262

Badmington, *Hitchcock's Magic*, p.139-140.

Krohn states that this slap ultimately dispels “the paranoid explanation of Melanie-as-jinx to leave us only one alternative, which is already implicit in the way the remarkable eyes of Doreen Lang...seem to stare into each spectator’s soul as she utters her accusation” (p.262), that is his theory the audience is responsible for initiating these attacks. See Note 26.

In his chapter on *The Birds*, Badmington interprets this lack of logical justification for this phenomenon as “a failure of knowledge and human understanding” (p.139): as Melanie utters the phrase “I don’t know why” when she is questioned by Mrs. Bundy about the bird attack on Cathy’s party, this author believes that “the birds escape explanation and remain in flight” (p.140).

29 Badmington, *Hitchcock's Magic*, p.139-140.

According to Badmington, the “struggle to find an explanation that will bring the birds’ attack within the realm of the known and the understood,” which concludes with the realization that people are ultimately at the mercy of these creatures, is a “glancing blow to human mastery” (p.139). He adds that the regulations which apply to the conduct of the inhabitants of Bodega Bay, represented ironically by Mitch’s profession as a lawyer, have “no jurisdiction” over the savage birds conquering the town (p.140).

30 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

In this film, critic Robin Wood notes that facing the birds represents facing chaos and turmoil within ourselves. See Chapter 3, Note 32 for a detailed description.

31 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.251.

Robin Wood, in Krohn’s book, describes Melanie’s submission as “a gesture of ‘voluptuous surrender and prostration’ before her attackers.”

32 See Chapter 2, Note 47 for a complete description of this complex shot.

33 Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*.

In this documentary, production designer Robert Boyle states that this final scene was “a very important shot, because there really wasn’t any ending to the movie. It had to be the sort of ending that led you to believe there may be something going on again, you know, or beyond the film.” To me, the “moody” tone of this imagery seems to suggest a dystopian conclusion to the film: while the humans manage to escape the clutches of the birds, they might never return to Bodega Bay and life may never be the same for them again.

34 Potteiger et al., *Landscape Narratives*, p.109-112.

This notion of discovering narratives within the landscape was inspired by the chapter entitled “Sequencing” in the book *Landscape Narratives*. The authors, Potteiger and Purington remark that: “Philosopher Paul Ricoeur discusses how sequences create a sense of ‘connectedness’ despite the realities of independent events, the unexplainable, freak disasters, or sudden chance. The reader assumes that because one event in a story takes place next to another, there is a causal relation. [...] In the landscape, assumptions regarding causal relationships are often made based on spatial proximity. [...] The suggestion and presumption of causality by proximity means that narratives are constantly and unconsciously evoked in the landscape” (p.109-110). This description of the manner in which stories arise from sequences experienced while moving through space directly influenced the application of this concept to the Highway #330 site as well as the imaginary narratives generated from the string of artifacts found within this locale.

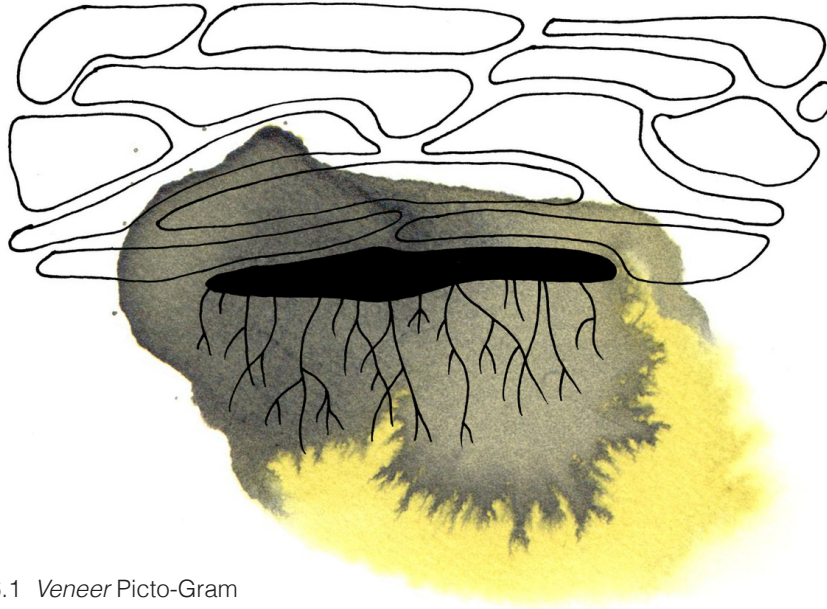


Figure 6.1 *Veneer* Picto-Gram

Theme 3: Veneer

The third theme of *Veneer* constitutes one of the primary concepts in *The Birds*: the bucolic scenery of northern California acts as a façade for an underlying evil which simmers below this superficial innocence and eventually emerges into the landscape as blatant darkness and horror at the conclusion of the film. In each of the three films, the emergence of a benign condition represented by nature in the exterior settings serves to obscure the deeply rooted evils which are exposed over the course of the narrative.

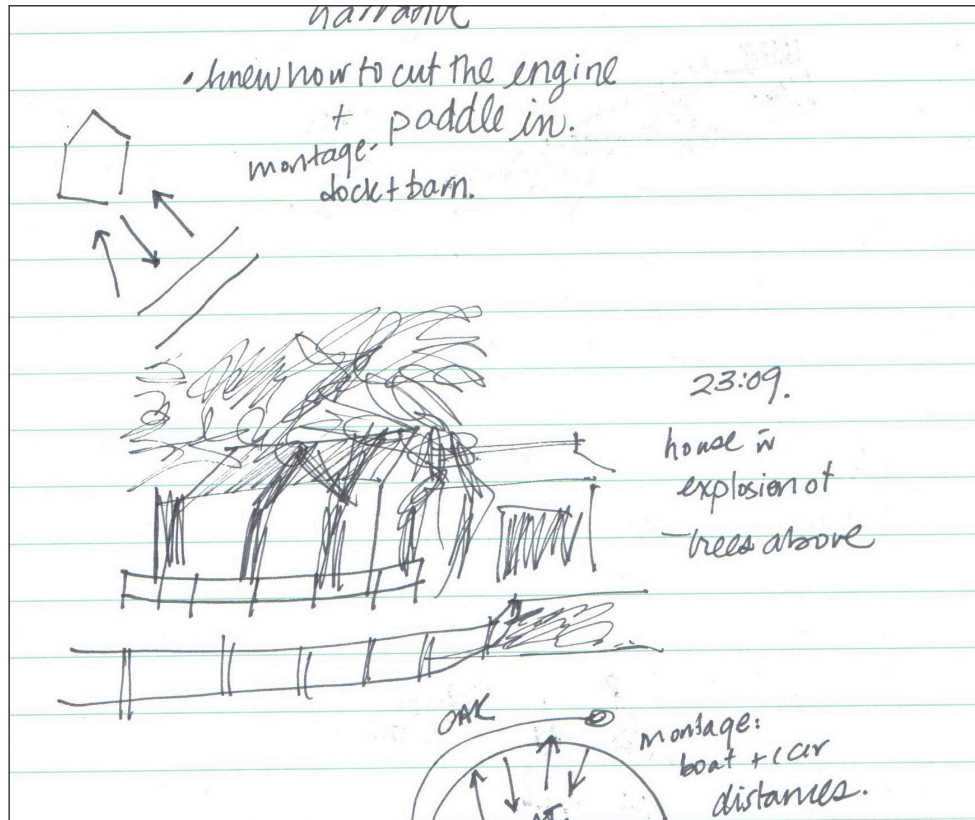
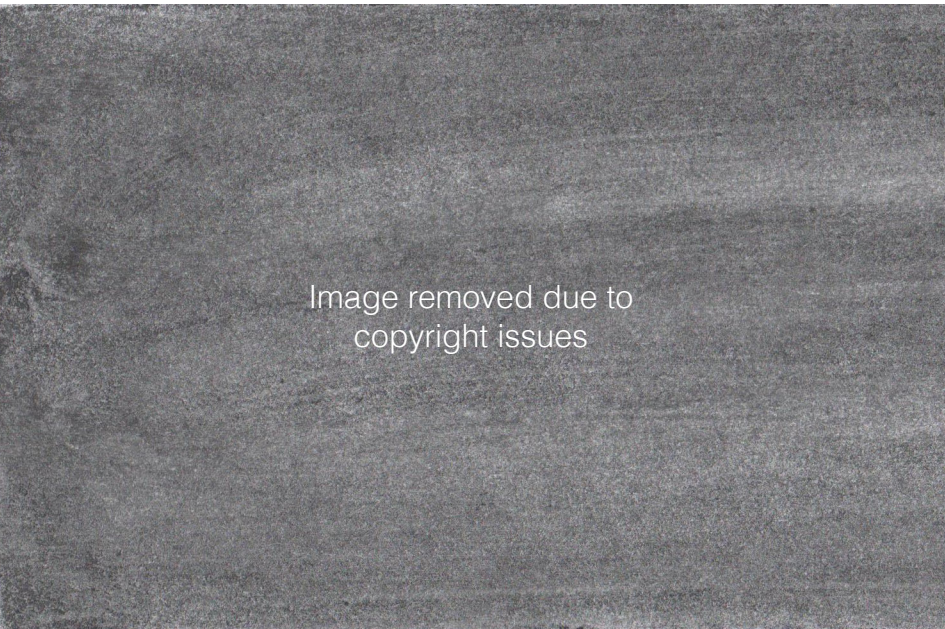


Figure 6.2 Mise-en-Sketches, *The Birds*



Figures 6.3 + 6.4 Film Stills, *The Birds* (Left / Right)

THE BIRDS

Initially portrayed as pastoral, the settings in and around Bodega Bay quickly degenerate into a dark, swirling chaos with the menacing presence of the birds. As a result of this overt horror, the human characters, previously unconscious of their everyday surroundings and taking these spaces for granted, are tossed into a state of disequilibrium whereby they gain a heightened vigilance about the world around them as they question the cause of this disharmony. Through this peeling away of layers, bucolic nature becomes a superficial image concealing the inner essence of a setting which threatens to consume and destroy them. This realization also prompts a sense of heightened consciousness that enables them to more clearly understand their own motives, as well as their surrounding environments.



Figure 6.5 *Veneer Cine-Cipher: The Birds*



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INNOCUOUS APPEARANCE

Figure 6.6 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

The first scene in San Francisco establishes Melanie as a woman completely in command of her surroundings: walking down the street with an air of control and self-assurance, she appears to be totally in sync with the world around her. Her graceful walk and pirouette in response to the wolf whistle she receives seem choreographed to a certain extent, as if she expects it to happen and knows exactly how to react. Through this sense of harmony, as well as the bright colours and bustling crowds, the city itself is represented as a very ordered, cheerful and pleasant place.¹

This sense of comfort and ease between character and setting is carried forth into the subsequent sequence

whereby Melanie drives along the coast and arrives in the small town of Bodega Bay. The rolling hills of the surrounding countryside, along with the weathered storefronts and stereotypical boardwalks of the main street, form a seemingly idyllic veneer of this place. As Melanie is directed to the residence of the schoolteacher Annie to discover the name of Mitch's sister Cathy, she drives past a series of quaint little buildings along a small road.² Upon reaching her destination, a charming cottage surrounded by a white picket fence and a lush garden, Melanie retrieves the information she needs to continue on her mission and successfully deliver her gift of the birds.³ Alighting from the small motorboat onto the Brenner's dock, the protagonist projects this same

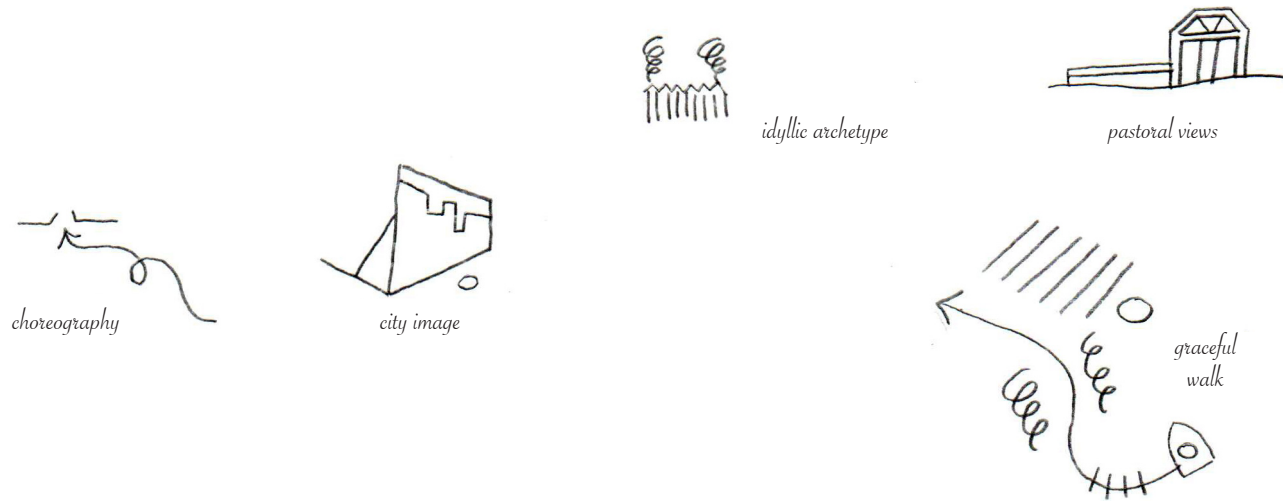


Figure 6.7 Cine-Cipher: 'Innocuous Appearance'

aura of control and confidence; managing to exit the boat gracefully wearing a bulky fur coat and high heels, she swings the awkward birdcage effortlessly onto the pier. The pastoral nature of the views towards the town as seen from the bay throughout this episode – most notably the white fencing and the red barn of the Brenner farm – also contribute to the portrayal of this setting as an innocuous, idyllic place in which Melanie easily fulfills her mischievous errand.



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SINISTER HINTS

Figure 6.8 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

While the initial settings in the film are portrayed as bucolic, there are subtle hints that point to an imminent evil bubbling below this superficial appearance which slowly rises to the surface through the landscape. This gradual emergence of a nefarious element is first reflected in a series of incidents foreshadowing the disaster to come. While the film does not remain in the friendly city for long, we are able to glimpse a hidden menace within the pet store, where cages upon cages of birds line the interior walls.⁴ If we consider these creatures to be a manifestation of evil, the fact that they are locked up represents the repression of their sinister presence. Attempting to dupe Mitch into believing that she is an employee of the shop and exert her dominance over the situation, Melanie removes a bird from its cage. When the creature accidentally escapes,

the protagonist and the store clerk reach out to catch it, and it flies up to the ceiling in order to evade their grasp. This incident is our first inkling of the caged evil awaiting the opportunity to burst forth and wreak havoc on the humans.

Further into the film, Melanie crosses the bay in a boat to reach the Brenner farm, surrounded by the picturesque coastal landscape.⁵ Upon closer approach, the house on Bodega Head is shrouded by gloomy pine trees and is thus slightly creepy. This imagery suggests a sense of overhanging darkness, a hovering menace prepared to explode. Returning to the town by boat, Melanie is the target when this sinister presence erupts: pecked by a seagull that swoops directly at her, this nefarious surge seems to indicate that Melanie is no longer in complete

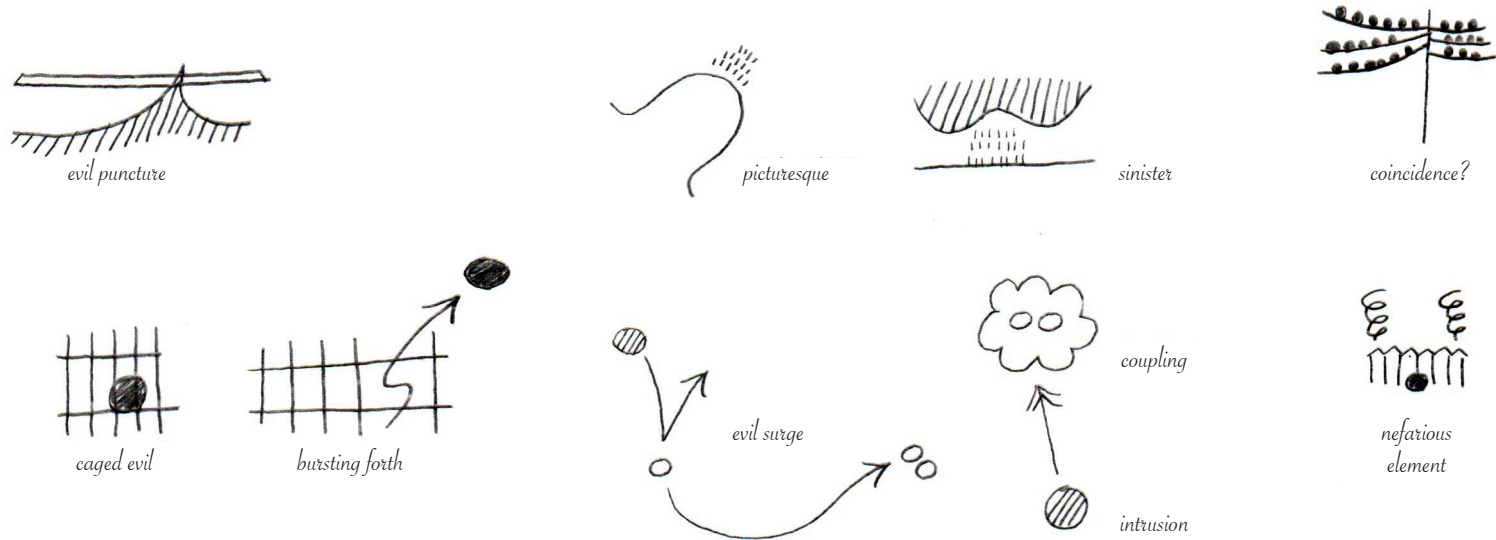


Figure 6.9 Cine-Cipher: 'Sinister Hints'

control. This initial uneasiness quickly dissipates as Mitch meets Melanie at the dock, escorts her to the quaint Tides restaurant and gazes at her lovingly from across the table after tending to her wounds.

This warm, pleasant atmosphere persists into the following scene when Melanie arrives at the Brenner farm for dinner. While initially the frame is once again dominated by the dark, eerie trees as she approaches the house at dusk, the scene inside is comfortable and snug as the protagonist becomes acquainted with the family. When the evening comes to a close, Mitch walks Melanie to her car in the darkness and watches her depart down the long driveway. While he notices the

utility lines ominously covered with birds, this view can simply be attributed to a mere coincidence of everyday life. A similar occurrence takes place subsequently when Melanie arrives at Annie's house to spend the night: the scene is equally homey as the two women chat amicably in the living room, yet their investigation of a sudden thump at the door yields the discovery of a dead bird on the front porch. Through this unpleasant sight, this familiar symbol of home introduced earlier in the film is transformed into a slightly nefarious space. While both of these incidents could also be deemed just unfortunate accidents, taken together they are sinister hints which engender an unmistakable sense that the narrative verges upon disaster.

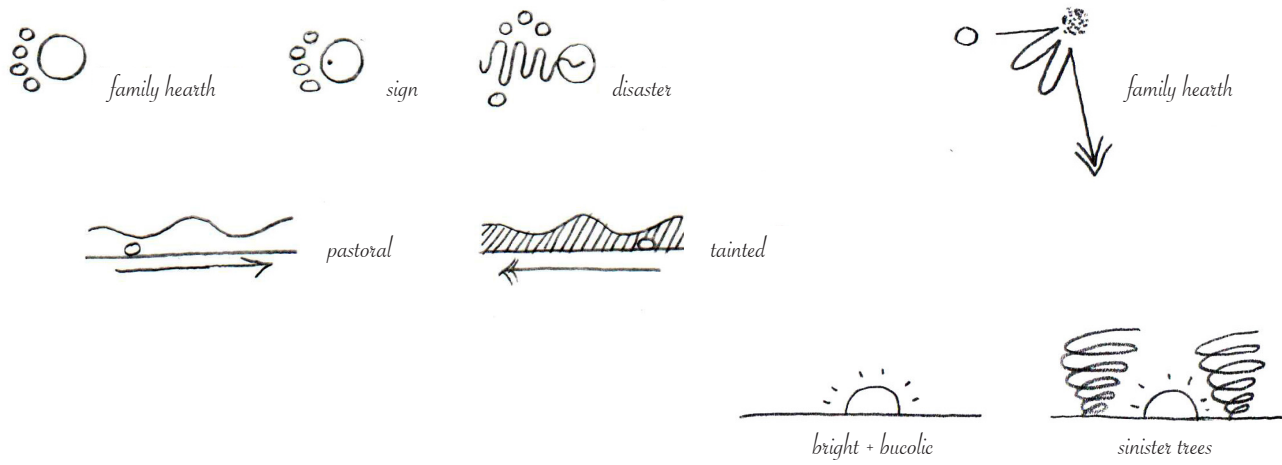


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RECOGNITION

Figure 6.11 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

The scene at the Brenner home the following evening begins with a sense of coziness when the family gathers for dinner. During this meal, a single sparrow flies down the chimney and twitters on the hearth, followed immediately by an onslaught of birds which rush into the living room: an incident both unexpected and disturbing after the charming appearance of the lone scout. While the family manages to escape this attack unscathed, their home does not: the aftermath of this chaos including broken dishes, spilled food and torn curtains as well as a profusion of feathers and a number of avian casualties.

A similar scene is discovered at the neighbouring Fawcett farmhouse, which Lydia visits the following morning. While she departs in an old truck, the camera captures the pastoral landscape of the farm but strategically omits the spooky trees in front of the

house. Driving through bucolic countryside towards the bright, welcoming yard of the Fawcett farm, these settings suggest that the situation is under control, that the previous attacks were isolated incidents, and that the landscape is a benign entity. Upon entering the house, Lydia discovers a similar aftermath to the shambles of the Brenner home; with a triple take, she discovers the grisly murder of Dan Fawcett in the back bedroom. Rushing out of the house in a dead panic, Lydia returns home. While the idyllic landscape along the highway remains unchanged, the pastoral conditions surrounding the family home have suddenly become tainted: the framing of these shots now includes the dark trees next to the house, giving the direct impression that the landscape possesses a sinister quality – the evil territory of the wicked birds that precipitated these gruesome atrocities.



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DISCONNECT

Figure 6.12 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Through the gradual layering of menace upon this seemingly ordinary landscape, the characters in *The Birds* gain a heightened awareness of their everyday surroundings. While the subtle incidents at the beginning of the narrative do not provoke much of a realization, it is the dramatic events which take place later in the film that engender a greater vigilance; the shocking incidents which seem disconnected from the settings in which they occur. In the birthday party scene at the Brenner farm, the yard is initially portrayed as pastoral: light and sunny, the site is surrounded by lush, rolling hills and enclosed by a white wooden fence. The presence of children playing amidst decorations of bright balloons and streamers further promotes this image of blissful innocence. As Mitch and Melanie climb the surrounding dunes, the beauty of the landscape surrounding the farm

is manifest. During their conversation Melanie discloses the fact that she was abandoned by her mother and for a moment her confident façade slips.

Climbing down the hill, the couple witnesses a bird suddenly swoop at a blindfolded Cathy playing a children's party game; unable to see, the young girl warns the other children to stop pushing. Abruptly, a swarm of birds appear and begin chasing the kids around the yard. Pecking and swooping, they puncture the balloons, creating a series of jarring noises. While the pastoral image of the Brenner farm is developed so vividly at the beginning of this scene, with its lush green hills and clear blue sky, this horrific attack is unexpected and surreal, a complete foil to the setting in which it unfolds; as such, we are led to believe that the

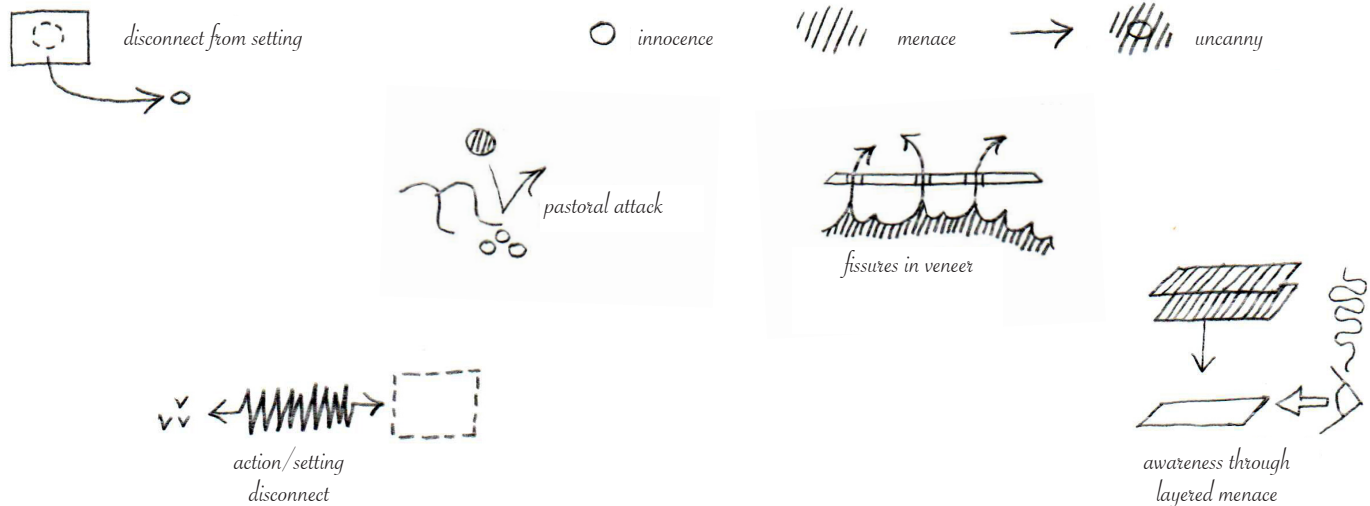


Figure 6.13 Cine-Cipher: 'Disconnect'

superficial appearance of this nature within this locale is merely a veneer for an underlying sinister presence.

Lydia's harrowing experience at the Fawcett farm stimulates her realization of this menace and prompts her to request that Melanie pick up Cathy from the town school. When the protagonist arrives at the schoolhouse, she listlessly smokes a cigarette and waits outside to speak with Annie while the kids finish their roundelay. While her back is turned to the play structure, we hear the singsong voices of the children

resonate through the landscape. When Melanie finally turns around, she utters a small gasp as she is confronted with a truly shocking sight: completely smothered in black ravens, the monkey bars are a profoundly uncanny juxtaposition between childish innocence and sinister fiendishness, a complete disconnect in the landscape. While the underlying menace presented by the birds becomes evident through their massing, cracks forming in the veneer of this idyllic town reveal the danger and potential harm for the humans choosing to inhabit this place.



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ERUPTION

Figure 6.14 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

While it has become quite obvious to the townspeople that their village is in deep turmoil, the humans begin to question this disconnection with their environment as they try to discover the true reasons for these bird attacks. In the diner sequence following the assault on the schoolchildren, the characters present different viewpoints ranging from scientific ('birds do not attack people') to logical ('they are just searching for food') to emotional ('they have simply gone crazy').⁶ While these conjectures point towards the endeavours of the people to understand their surroundings and the external forces operating within them, their efforts are too little, too late; the humans do not stop to consider the birds until disaster strikes, and furthermore seem to disregard a rather obvious explanation implied within the film –

namely the fact that our society traps, consumes and otherwise mistreats birds – and it would be logical to consider that these creatures are seeking vindication.⁷

Tensions between the people and the birds which have henceforth been bubbling below the surface suddenly erupt with the subsequent horrific attack on the gas station, a large-scale disaster unfolding in front of the very eyes of the townspeople. Their theories hang in the balance when no clear answer is found for these dreadful attacks. In fact, the situation becomes more illogical and terrifying when Melanie leaves the diner to enter a nearby phone booth where she is attacked by swarms of these malicious birds coming from all directions. At this point, the evil present within the town is

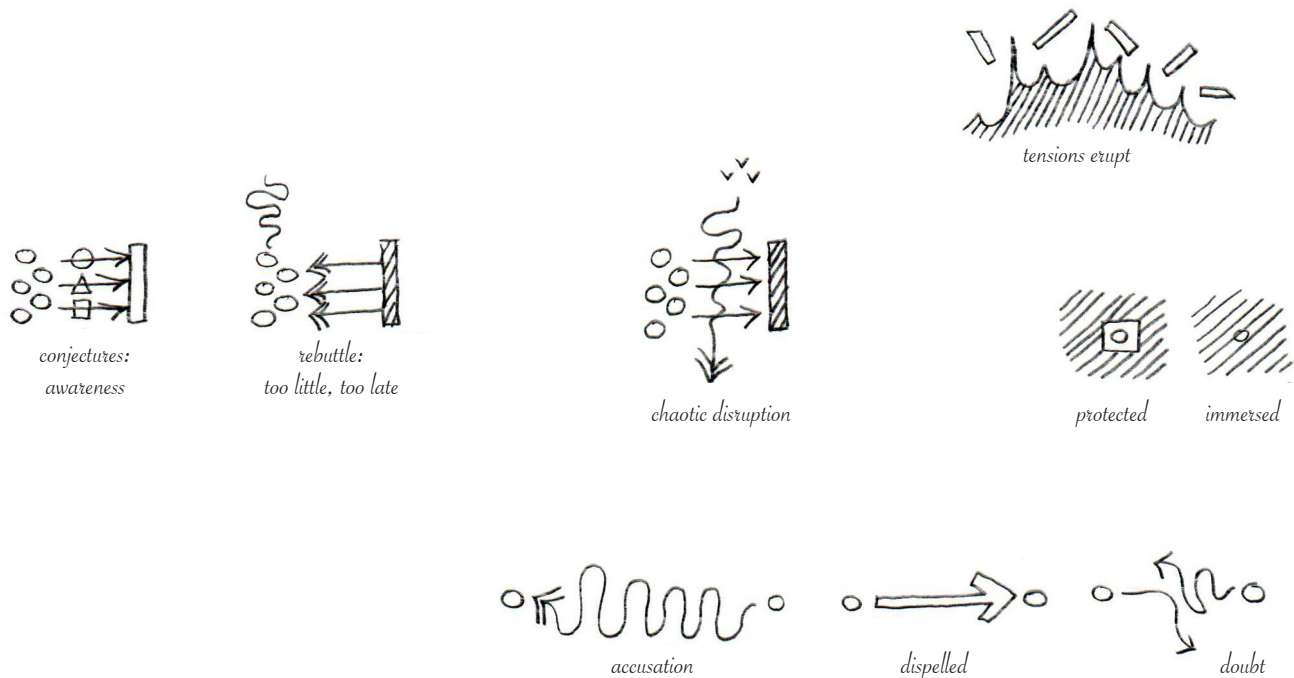


Figure 6.15 Cine-Cipher: 'Eruption'

completely revealed to Melanie, who is totally immersed within a 360-degree view of the chaos and terror wrought upon Bodega Bay. Although the everyday logic of her material world would dictate that she is protected by the glass walls of the enclosure, security cannot be for certain in this new, irrational world of animal instinct: gulls smash into the sides of the phone booth and shower her with sprays of glass. After being rescued

from this terrifying experience by Mitch, Melanie is led back into the restaurant whereby an irrational mother accuses the protagonist of inviting these evil birds into the town. In response, Melanie strikes the woman, as if to slap some sense into her accuser, but her uncertain facial expression hints that she may recognize a grain of truth in these allegations despite the fact that these assertions sound quite ridiculous on the surface.



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TRANSFORMATION

Figure 6.16 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

When Mitch and Melanie leave the diner to collect Cathy from Annie's house, the change manifest in the landscape from its previous innocent incarnation is shocking. The schoolhouse and the teacher's cottage are blanketed with hordes of birds that sit and glare in eerie silence. As the couple walks up to the house, they discover Annie's mangled body half-hidden behind the picket fence in the front yard. In an act of retaliation for inflicting such pain and suffering, Mitch picks up a stone from the flower bed and is about to pitch it at the birds on the eave when Melanie stops him. While the humans do not understand the reasons behind these horrific acts and want to punish these creatures for their cruelty, the people are ultimately afraid of the sheer power of the birds and therefore do not fight back. Instead, the characters return to the Brenner home

and begin to install fortifications against the external threat. As Mitch is boarding up the house windows, the distant landscape appears ominous; although the scene possesses a certain pastoral quality similar the bright colours and rolling hills of the previous shots, there is a hazy fog of birds in the background and dark tree branches in the foreground which point to the imminent menace of the birds and foreshadow another disastrous attack.

Sitting silently in the living room that evening, the family seems uneasy; while home was once the safest place to take refuge, a conflicting reading begins to develop based on the previous bird attacks that have infiltrated this haven. Beginning with creepy noises which gradually increase in volume, another attack ensues

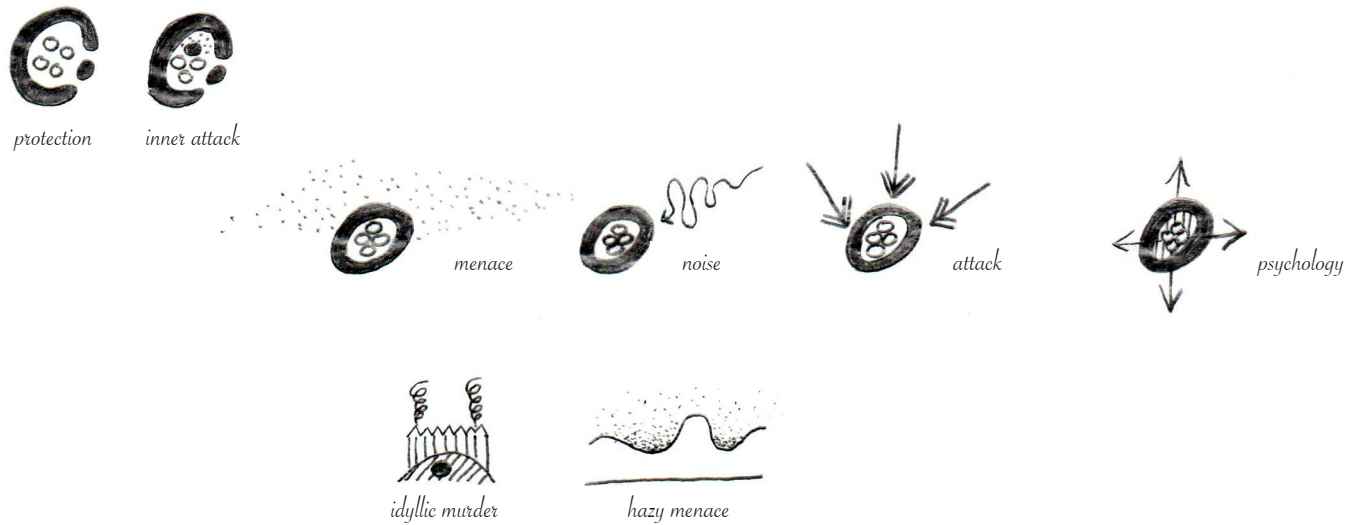


Figure 6.17 Cine-Cipher: 'Transformation'

when these creatures burst through the windows and the door. Mitch struggles to secure these apertures and protect the family from this hostile danger which seems bound and determined to enter the house as Lydia, Cathy and Melanie all cover against the interior walls. After Mitch finishes fighting off the birds and secures the perimeter of the house, the electric lights immediately extinguish; it is evident that no matter how hard the humans attempt to protect their home, this domain is no longer the sanctuary that they initially considered it to be but rather a sinister place that evil can permeate

psychologically as well as physically. The upstairs bedroom, for instance, with its romantic, frilly bed, has been completely overtaken by birds that have pecked a gaping hole straight through the roof. While Melanie is trapped within this room and barraged by these creatures, she eventually succumbs to their sinister presence within this dark space until she is rescued by Mitch and Lydia and returned downstairs to the couch. Resuscitated, she awakens and paws violent at the horrific imprint that this shocking transformation has left in her subconscious mind.



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OMINOUS AFTERMATH

Figure 6.18 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *The Birds*

Ultimately realizing that they cannot remain at home due to the presence of this omnipotent menace, the family decides to leave in order to ensure their own safety. As Mitch opens the front door to fetch the car, we are confronted with a horrific sight: the formerly pastoral farmyard introduced in the beginning of the movie is completely converted into a post-apocalyptic scene utterly blanketed with birds as far as the eye can see on the ground, the railing, the utility lines, the trees and the rooftops of both the house and barn. The clouds in the sky blanket the scene in darkness yet allow enough light protruding to lend a surreal tinge to this view. In the eerie silence, the birds sit in stillness and the family wades through the sea of these creatures in order to reach the vehicle and drive slowly out of town. In the

car, Lydia cradles the injured Melanie and gazes upon her with motherly care, seeming to suggest a resolution to Melanie's feelings of abandonment through this discovery of a maternal figure. Driving slowly down the lane, the small sports car parts the ocean of birds; along with a pervasive feeling of calm, there is also a powerful sense that the humans will never return.

While it is nearly impossible to believe the development of such dire consequences within this narrative, especially when comparing these final shots with previous pastoral imagery in the film, the birds have definitely re-claimed this place for their exclusive inhabitation while evicting the human beings. Their presence has revealed nefarious qualities lurking

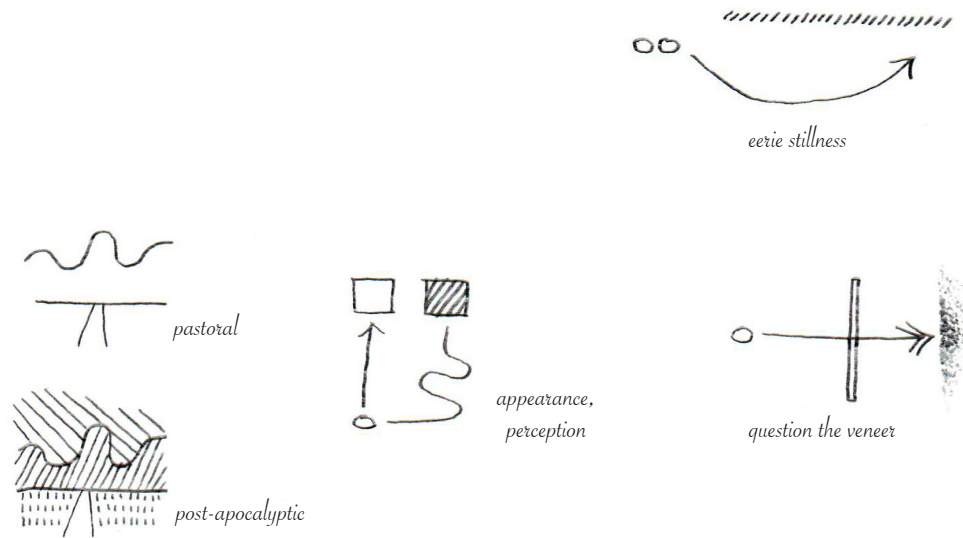


Figure 6.19 Cine-Cipher: 'Ominous Aftermath'

below the surface of the landscape and produced a palpable atmosphere of terror and fear, transforming this place into a hostile territory. While this disaster may be resolved later on, the tensions between human and non-human species emerging in the landscape throughout the film have yielded to feelings of the Sublime: while the countryside of Bodega Bay has barely changed, the attitudes of its former citizenry undoubtedly have. While people fear this place, it is not because the landscape itself has changed physically but rather the events unfolding within it which have

caused them to perceive this setting in a different light, from an idyllic veneer of light and beauty to a cold, dark place of terror and fear. While neither of these identities is necessarily correct or represent the true character of this place, the only certain fact is that the underlying nefarious character concealed by the initial bucolic appearance is indelibly imprinted in the minds of the characters as in the minds of the audience. Rather than accepting a locale at face value, the characters, as well as the audience, will instead begin to question these deceptive appearances.

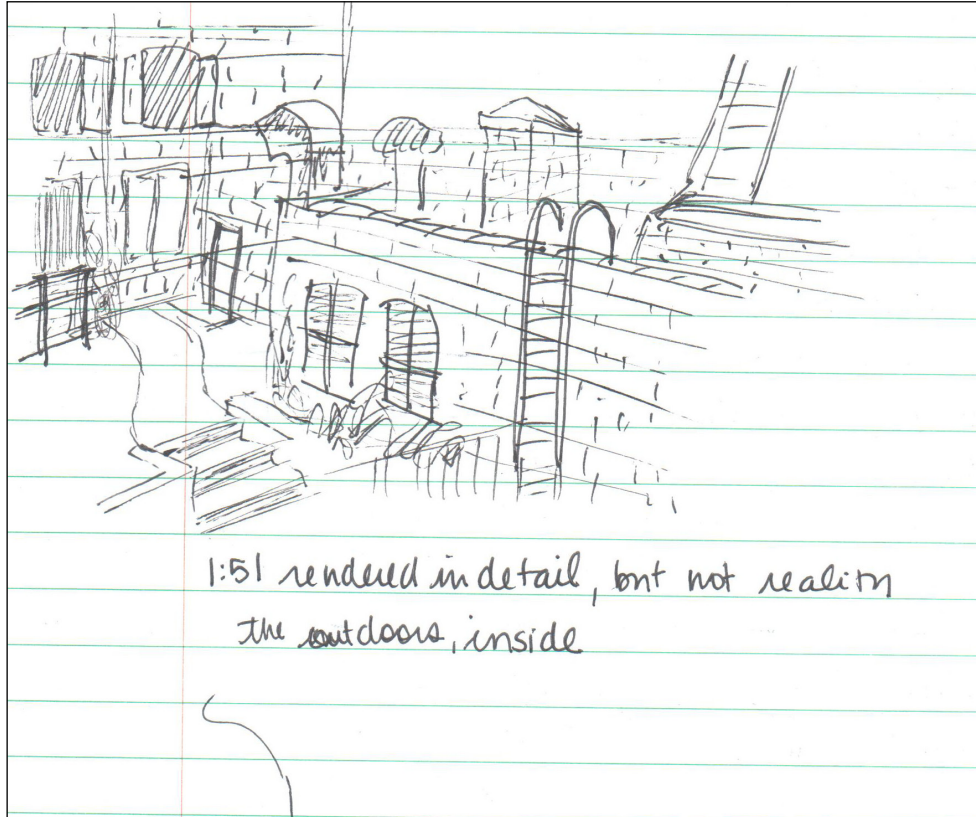
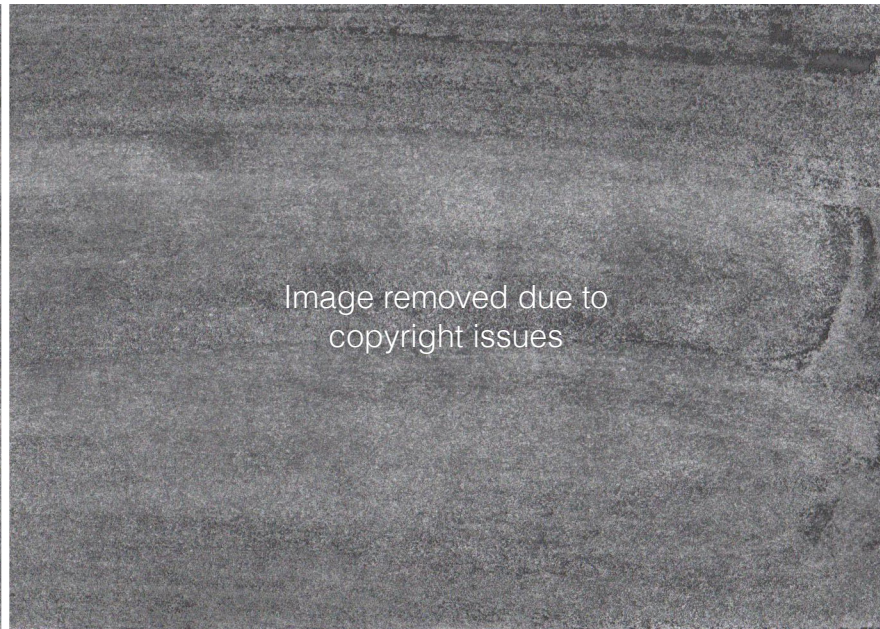
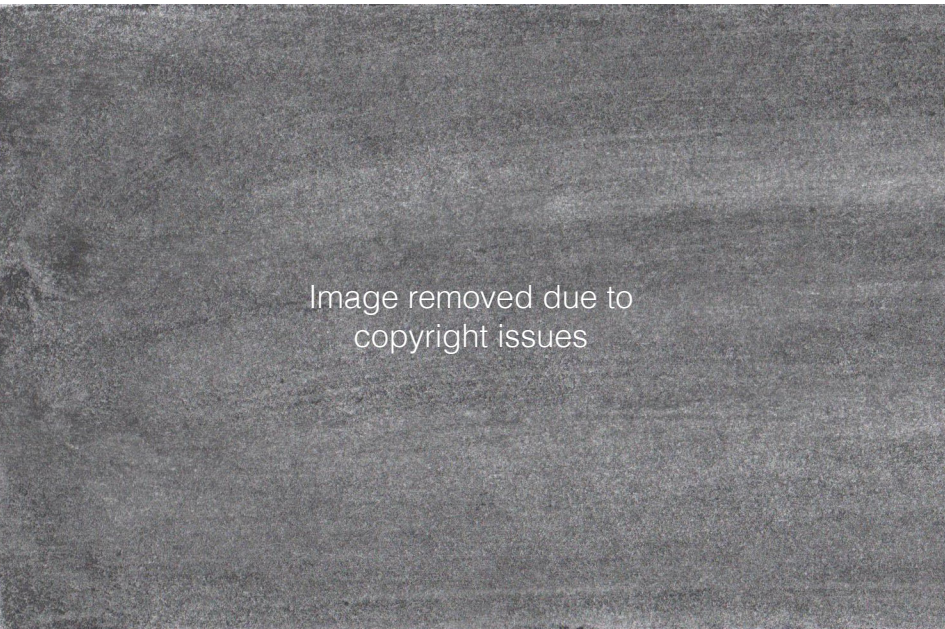


Figure 6.20 Mise-en-Sketches, *Rear Window*



Figures 6.21 + 6.22 Film Stills, *Rear Window* (Left / Right)

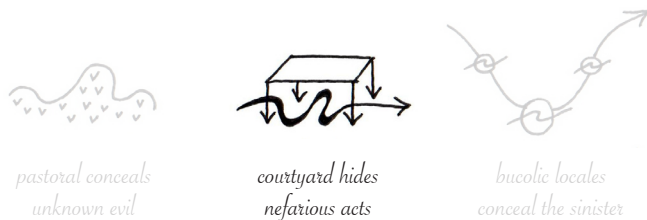


Figure 6.23 *Veneer Cine-Cipher: Rear Window*

REAR WINDOW

In *Rear Window*, veneer is manifest specifically in the courtyard garden, and unfolds over the course of the narrative. Changes to this exterior space, as Jeff watches it through his binoculars and zoom lens, are clues that provide the key to unlocking the mystery with which he is engaged. While the sinister qualities of this locale are initially hinted at, they emerge overtly partway through the film, only to seemingly recede, seemingly, at its conclusion.



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ROUTINE

Figure 6.24 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

In the first few minutes of the film, Hitchcock provides an overview of the courtyard showing its residents waking up and performing their morning routines, thus establishing this location as an ordinary, banal place. Through the notion of perceived privacy – whereby people could conceivably watch but usually do not so as to not compromise their own personal privacy – the occupants perform the most intimate of functions right out in the open: from the older couple sleeping on the fire escape to Miss Torso changing clothes in front of the unshaded window, the people of the courtyard seem to have little self-consciousness.⁸ Similarly, the protagonist Jeff has a certain degree of unawareness about the outside world: in front of the windows, his nurse Stella gives him a massage for all to see. This lack of inhibitions can be related to an overall condition

of innocence whereby the occupants are so absorbed in their own worlds that they do not even consider the potential of a nefarious presence lurking around, watching their every move, in their own ‘backyard’.

Through the boredom of being housebound with a broken leg for six weeks, Jeff begins to watch the neighbours through the open windows. Witnessing Miss Lonelyhearts pantomime a date, Miss Torso simultaneously entertain three gentleman callers and Thorwald participate in a fiery argument with his wife, Jeff is privy to a variety of private scenes which show, without censor, the difficulties that these people experience on a day-to-day basis as well as hint at the troubles concealed beneath the superficial cheeriness of the courtyard. While these stories are honest in the

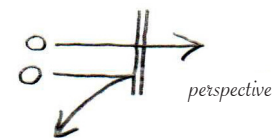
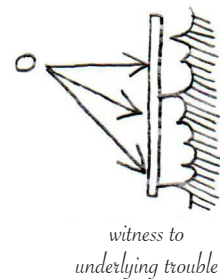
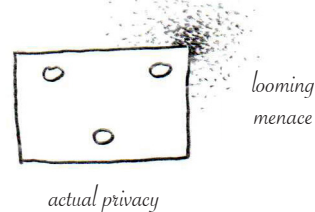
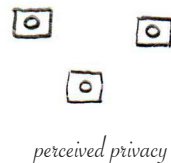
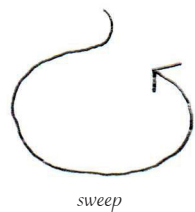


Figure 6.25 Cine-Cipher: 'Routine'

sense that no detail is consciously withheld, contributing to a sense of virtue through plain truth, they also introduce an underlying discord as the sunny veneer of the courtyard begins to develop a few cracks. When Doyle drops by to investigate the murder allegations articulated by Jeff, life in the courtyard seems normal to the detective. Thorwald's gardening appears as an

innocuous activity; perhaps the involvement of nature causes his actions to appear more innocent than the nefarious activity in which he is truly engaged within the garden. While this hobby strikes Doyle as perfectly ordinary, he does not see the ways in which it breaks from harmless routine and therefore does not understand the sinister qualities emerging within the courtyard space.



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GLIMPSES

Figure 6.26 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

While Jeff is watching the activities of his neighbours, his focus is drawn to the exterior spaces of the courtyard. While the sculptress enjoys a nap in the warm sunlight, Thorwald tends to the back garden several times throughout the film. One morning, while the artist is working on a new piece in her backyard studio, the innocent little dog belonging to the older couple upstairs is lowered down in a baby basket and proceeds to wander about the terrace. This small creature was placed outside to enjoy the fresh air and interact with nature; this undertaking, impossible inside the apartment, prompted his owners to devise this apparatus as a quick and easy way to lower their pet into the terrace. While the puppy's presence in the courtyard is innocuous on the surface, his disastrous fate is sealed as he innocently sniffs the flowerbed

and its hidden secrets, thereby arousing the anxiety of the murderer.

Later on, when Thorwald descends to work on his garden and he notices that the dog is sniffing around the plants, he gently pushes the small creature aside. While this gesture is seemingly beyond reproach in itself, as is the fact that Thorwald is engaged in gardening, a calming pursuit requiring patience and care, the atmosphere in the courtyard at this moment is sunny and banal. When the puppy is subsequently discovered dead in this exact same space, we are not led to suspect the kindly gentleman who delicately nudged this creature from the flowerbed, until Jeff introduces the notion of the salesman murdering his wife and burying the evidence of this crime in the garden. Subsequently,

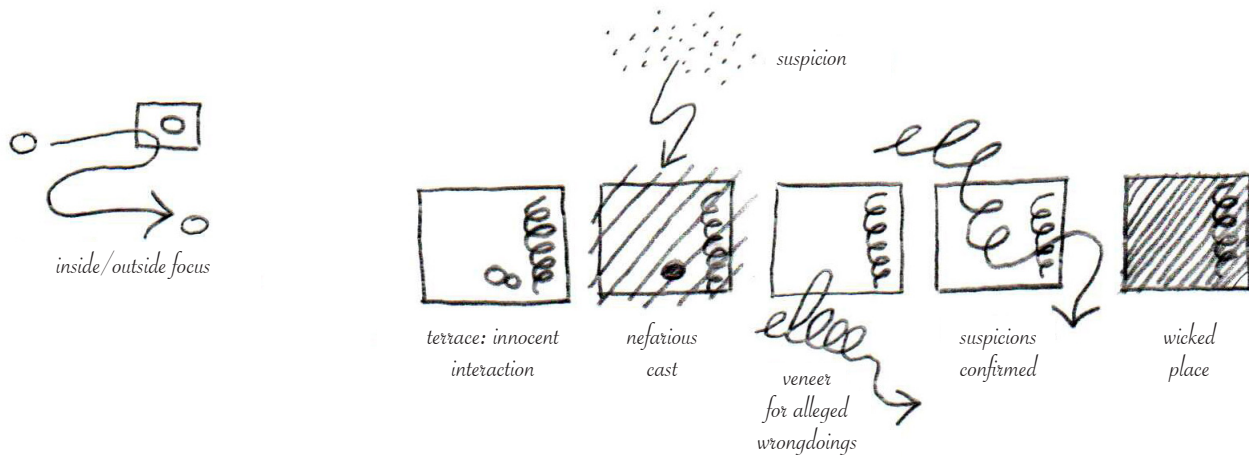


Figure 6.27 Cine-Cipher: 'Glimpses'

when Jeff, Lisa and Stella are watching the courtyard at night, they compare a slide of the terrace taken previously with the current view. Pondering the hunch that perhaps a clue is interred in the flowerbed below, Jeff begins to notice that the present-day height of the plantings is shorter than in the earlier image, and the women leave to excavate this location and discover if Mrs. Thorwald's body is actually buried there.⁹ While

this space is not only just the site of a brutal killing of an innocent dog, it is also potentially the resting place of a human victim, which engenders the impression of a more deeply-rooted evil inherent in the courtyard. These facts produce a sensation that the terrace is covering up these sinister events and sordid activities, that is, that the pastoral garden is a mere veneer for the demonic nature of this place.



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copyright issues

OVERT EVIL

Figure 6.28 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

When the death of the small dog is discovered by his owners at nighttime, the courtyard becomes a tainted place; it is no longer the innocent locale introduced in earlier scenes whose bright sunny spaces supported a variety of innocuous activities, but rather a cold, dark murder site. Although it is not certain whether or not the actual killing took place in this exact spot, it is nonetheless the location where this malicious act was discovered and wickedness clearly manifest for all of the neighbours as well as the audience to witness. In the final scene of the film, it is revealed that Thorwald murdered the puppy in order to keep his wife's body from being discovered in the terrace garden. He also admits to moving Mrs. Thorwald's remains from this spot, making the canine's death not only cruel and senseless, but also truly monstrous. Under the cover of darkness,

this locus of evil extends outward from the terrace itself to the surrounding spaces through the female owner's impassioned speech: accusing the neighbours of causing this tragedy through their apathy, this woman declares that any one of these people could have been watching and acted to prevent this unfortunate incident instead of deliberately and maliciously avoiding any involvement with each other and events occurring in the common courtyard spaces.

While this impassioned speech emerges from raw emotion and verges on the highly dramatic, the actions of the neighbours cannot be construed as completely indifferent since these people actually approach their windows during the commotion and listen compassionately to this lament.¹⁰ At this point in

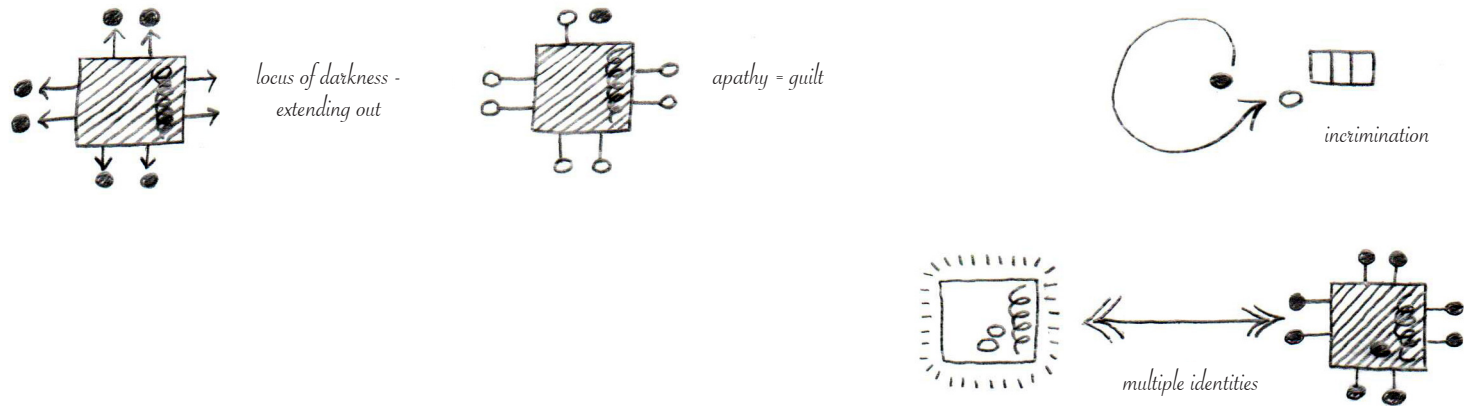


Figure 6.29 Cine-Cipher: 'Overt Evil'

the film, Hitchcock inserts the first close-up shots of these individuals, showing their sympathetic gestures and facial expressions. While most of these neighbours emerged in the windows, balconies and rooftops of the courtyard to watch and listen, the only resident that did not approach the exterior space and engage in this communal gathering is Thorwald. Sitting in his darkened apartment alone, the salesman clearly chooses not to participate in this impromptu event and thus we are unable to see his face and discern its expression.¹¹ This apathy reads to Jeff as well as the audience as a sign of guilt since Thorwald has decided to remove himself from the situation rather allowing his countenance to reveal his culpability. While there is still reasonable doubt that the salesman might still

be innocent, that he is simply just a person who keeps to himself even in the midst of a crisis, our suspicions are nevertheless confirmed in the subsequent sequence in Jeff's apartment.¹² Although the fact that Thorwald arrives in order to murder the protagonist is incriminating enough in itself, the close-up of the salesman's face and the murderous gaze upon it at this moment are proof positive of this guilt. With the clear manifestation of evil in the rear window apartment, we begin to reconsider our earlier reading of these exterior spaces, namely the courtyard terrace. As the nature of the depraved activities which took place in the garden becomes clear, so are we appalled by this seemingly innocuous place whose cheery appearance belies none of the sick horrors that it had previously hosted.



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copyright issues

COVERED UP

Figure 6.30 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *Rear Window*

The reaction of disgust towards the exposed evil presence materializes as a fleeting impression since we are quickly forced back into the action by the narrative: Jeff dangles from the window, held by Thorwald who is clearly intent on pitching the reporter out of the window at any moment. Suddenly, the police arrive with Lisa and Stella at the salesman's apartment to investigate. Noticing the struggle on the opposite side of the courtyard, they rush down the stairs and across the terrace in order to rescue Jeff and capture the murderer. While the terrace had acquired a tint of evil due to its use as a killing site and grave, its sinister atmosphere begins to evaporate at this point. As the police rush through this landscape to stop Thorwald, the courtyard becomes a mere backdrop for the cops to run through rather than a locale with distinct characteristics to

focus on in itself. When all of the characters gather in the terrace at the close of this scene, Doyle explains to Stella that Thorwald admitted to digging up his wife's body from the flowerbed and moving it.¹³ Despite the fact that two murdered corpses, one human and one animal, occupied the courtyard at certain points during the film, the fact that both bodies were removed from this space and the killer escorted to jail somehow purges it of the evils it once contained, or perhaps buries these evil deeper into the remote reaches of the past.

In the final scene, we are given one final tour of the courtyard, a pan of the camera which mimics the initial shots of the film. During this sweep of the exterior spaces, we are shown the activities of the same neighbours introduced earlier, except Thorwald and his wife, and

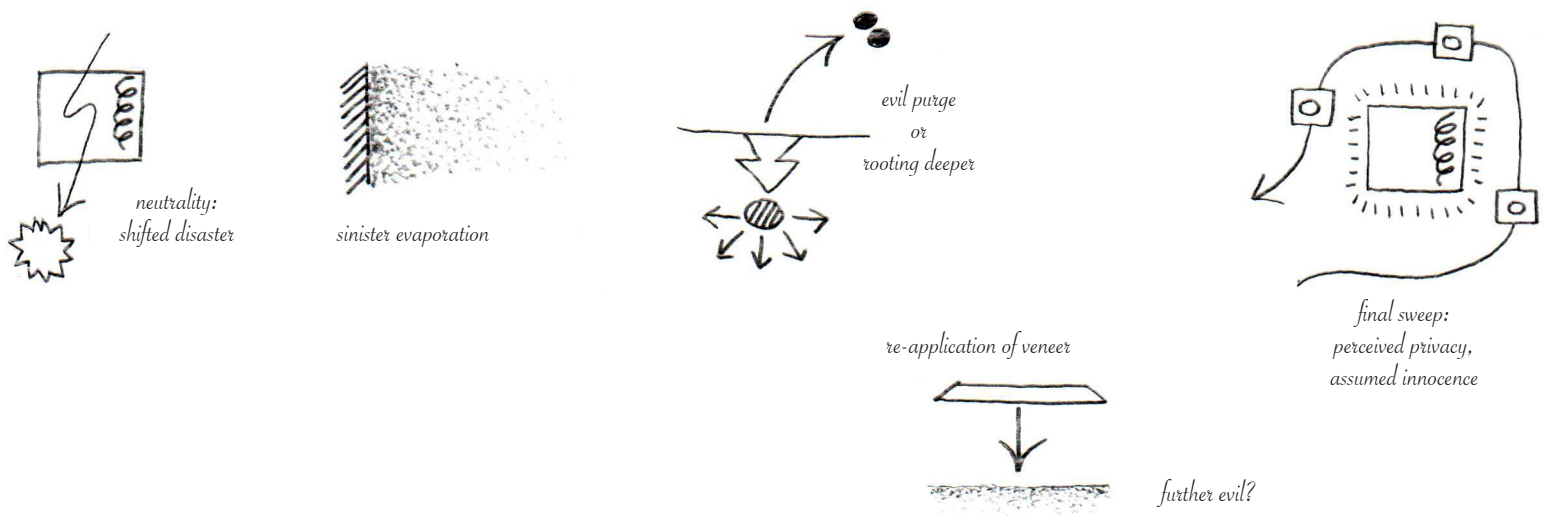


Figure 6.31 Cine-Cipher: 'Covered Up'

the surprising truth is revealed in a several cases. Miss Torso, the attractive dancer portrayed throughout the film as a social butterfly, is reunited with her true love Stanley, a scrawny nerd who has just returned from the army, and the pair embraces to form a rather odd couple indeed. The older couple on the fire escape has acquired a new dog and proceeds to lower him into the terrace using an identical basket as before. Lighthearted and without fear, they go about letting their puppy down into the courtyard once again despite the fact that their previous dog was killed in this space. This willingness to trust the terrace as a safe place to leave a cherished pet wandering around once again establishes this space as

benign. The power of such perceived innocence and comfort is so strong that this couple choose to uphold this impression rather than being wary of this space and finding another location to accommodate their dog's need to exercise. While the walls in Thorwald's apartment are being whitewashed, so is the underlying wickedness in the courtyard covered up with the cheerful banality of routine. Although the terrace has yielded no more horrible discoveries and has since shaken off its dark, foul taint, we cannot help but wonder what other evils lurk below the superficial appearance of this friendly courtyard only to unexpectedly emerge later on in its sunny spaces.

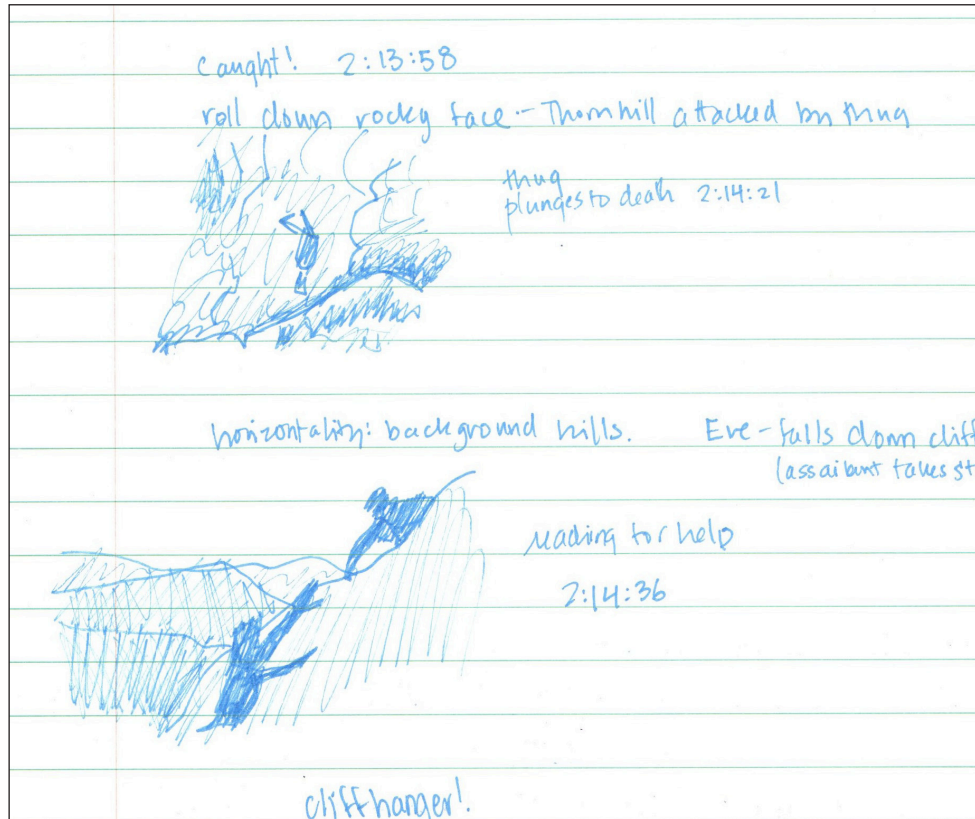
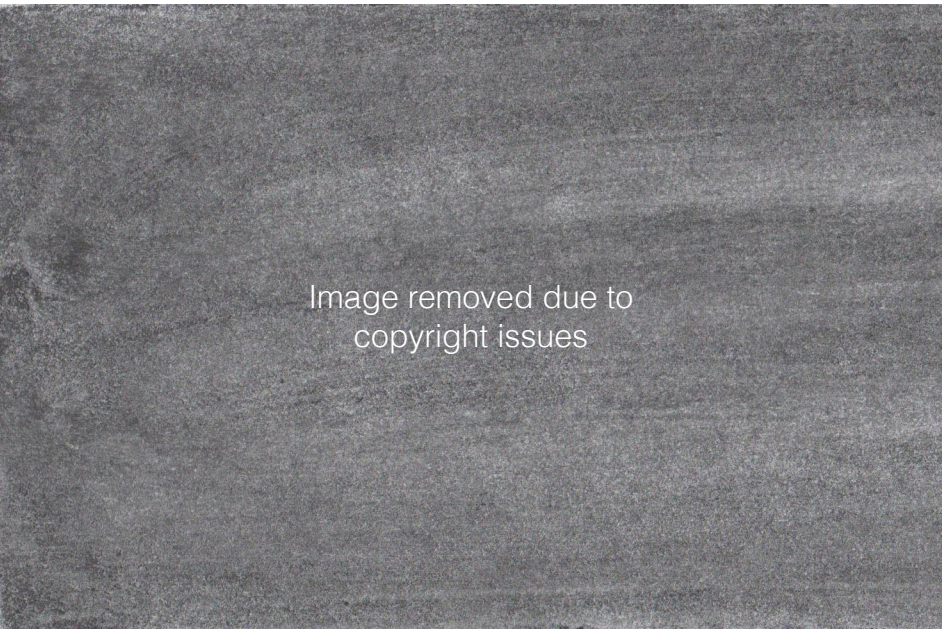


Figure 6.32 Mise-en-Sketches, North by Northwest



Figures 6.33 + 6.34 Film Stills, *North by Northwest* (Left / Right)



Figure 6.35 *Veneer Cine-Cipher: North by Northwest*

NORTH BY NORTHWEST

With a variety of locations represented in the transnational chase narrative of *North by Northwest*, many of these settings represent a pastoral condition concealing an underlying wickedness. However, rather than establish a base condition of innocence, in many cases the narrative jumps between sites and relies on pre-conceived notions of familiar spaces as well as broad cultural associations to develop the notion of veneer¹⁴; this concept unfolds in a variety of diverse ways according to the vast array of settings in the film and the sheer ambiguity of the narrative itself, in which certain places wear masks to confuse and mislead as to their true nature.



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copyright issues

REFINEMENT¹⁵

Figure 6.36 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

The first clear manifestation of veneer in *North by Northwest* is when Thornhill is forced into leaving New York City and arrives at the Townsend estate in Glen Cove. This scene marks the initial appearance of 'nature' into the film, with the unfolding Picturesque views of the manicured landscape seen from the car window.¹⁶ The rolling hills, the lush vegetation and the beautiful blue sky provide a perfect foil for the sinister threats to which Thornhill is subjected by the henchmen in the vehicle. As the house is gradually revealed into plain view from behind the trees, so too is the menace lurking within this building when the car arrives at the front door and the protagonist is led inside. After being escorted into the library near the back of the house, Thornhill peers through the French doors to see a man playing croquet on the lawn outside. This innocent afternoon game, commonly considered a leisure activity of the upper classes, lends this locale

the appearance of culture and respectability.¹⁷ As he is joined by two unknown men in the library, Thornhill is threatened into divulging valuable information or else he will meet an unpleasant fate; while the identity of these men is ambiguous, as is the knowledge they seek and the reason why they are at this particular mansion, a clear sense of danger is manifest within this scene. This atmosphere is evident in the gestures of the villain: as the anonymous gentleman closes the drapes, the room is bathed in darkness and disconnected from nature, and we obtain a glimpse of the nefarious essence of this character who chooses to hide within the refined exterior of this idyllic country estate.

This masked evil concealed beneath a veneer of refined nature is suddenly dispelled when Thornhill and his entourage re-visit the Townsend estate. While both the



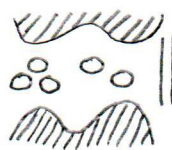
pastoral veneer for menace



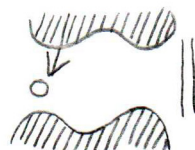
cultured façade



*disconnect
+ revealed evil*



dispelled: later visit



piercing: evil presence



*interior pastoral:
hushed confrontation*



entrapment



boorish escape



sinister veneer: flipped

Figure 6.37 Cine-Cipher: 'Refinement'

pristine landscape and the house itself have changed in no meaningful way, save for a few details such as the spotless couch cushion and the absence of the liquor bottles in the bookshelf cabinet, the atmosphere of this place is completely altered. At this point, the mansion and its surroundings feel totally banal: the superficial innocence of these spaces no longer obscures a nefarious presence, which is actually suggested to have never existed in the first place, and that Thornhill is ridiculous for implying otherwise. His insinuations would have very well been foolish had we not witnessed for ourselves the previous sequence; while the other characters in the film were not privy to these earlier scenes, they do not recognize the hidden sinister qualities beneath the refined, pastoral surface of this landscape. Hints of the evil that previously occupied this locale are also withheld from the audience itself: the series of views driving up to the house

as well as the shot from the library window which clearly established the landscape as a veneer of manicured nature shrouding a dark menace are markedly excluded from this scene. However, one final glimpse of the ivy-covered wall of the mansion as the group departs belies this superficial innocence. While a gardener is pruning the shrubs in the front beds, he slowly turns to face the camera and we can see that this is one of the henchmen who previously threatened Thornhill at the estate. This man's stony gaze suggests that the evil presence still exists, although momentarily hidden beneath the veneer of nature just as the vines obscures the façade of the house itself; this shot undoubtedly indicates that this nefarious force will once again resurface later on to inflict pain and suffering on the protagonist.

After several close calls on his life, Thornhill heads to
(cont.)

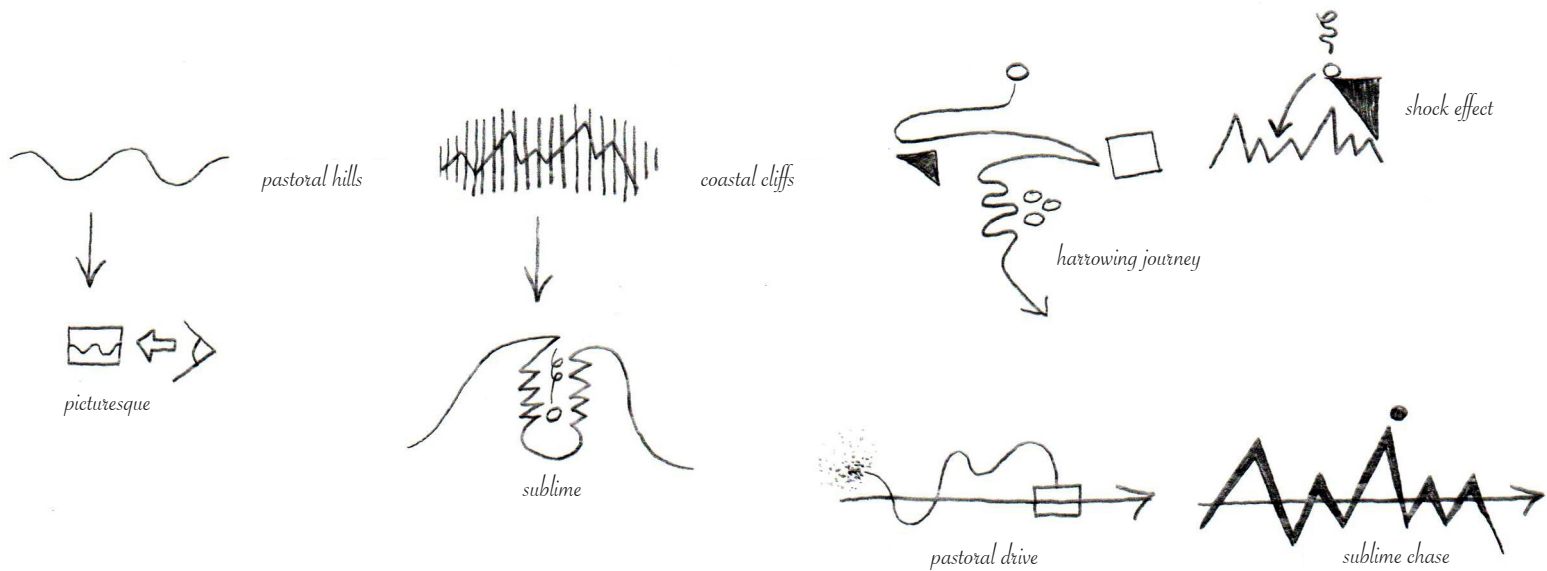


Figure 6.38 Cine-Cipher: 'Sublime Contrast'

(cont. from 'Refinement')

an auction house in Chicago and eventually learns the identity of the villain Vandamme. Directly in public view, this confrontation occurs in hushed tones as the protagonist and antagonists must behave with decorum within this sophisticated place lined with painted depictions of natural scenery. After the villain bids on an artifact, he leaves with the traitorous Eve while two henchmen cover the exits so Thornhill cannot escape: their mere presence is extremely menacing to the audience though apparently innocent to bystanders within the film.¹⁸ While the protagonist is unable to escape physically, he sits amongst the crowd and creates a disruption to attract the police and is eventually escorted from the building:

in acting completely boorish, Thornhill is able to fracture the veneer of the cultural elite in which he is trapped and remove himself from the threatening situation which lies beneath. Later on, it is revealed that the auction itself was a front for the smuggling of government secrets under the guise of cultural artifacts. Many of these artistic representations of nature concealed hidden secrets, both in terms of physically housing the stolen information tucked inside as well as serving as a pretext for the nefarious actions of the defectors in exporting this data to potentially hostile foreign entities. In this scenario, both culture and respectability serve as a veneer for the sinister moral corruption of these treasonous spies.



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SUBLIME CONTRAST

Figure 6.39 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

The sharp cliffs and inky darkness of the coastal highway sequence are a direct contrast to the earlier scenic views of the drive to the Townsend estate and represent the emergence of evil hiding below the bucolic veneer. While the initial approach to the mansion can be deemed the Picturesque, a sequence through a deliberately designed landscape culminating in a carefully composed view, by contrast the danger inherent in the coastal scenery along the highway is more closely related to the Sublime.¹⁹ The dark expanse of Long Island Sound in the film is presented as a vast, perilous ocean which the henchmen are relying upon to devour Thornhill and his car when the latter drives off the cliff in a drunken stupor.²⁰ As the characters motor along this highway, the protagonist experiences

a series of harrowing incidents and near-misses: driving recklessly, Thornhill comes dangerously close to flying off the steep ledge adjacent to one side of the road, running into the rock face on the other and crashing into oncoming traffic on the roadway itself. The sheer drop of the precipice and the violent crashing of the waves below when the car wheel skips over the edge of the cliff provide a sufficiently strong blow to shock Thornhill from his heavily inebriated state into correcting the position of the vehicle and driving to safety. While both sequences at the Townsend estate and the coastal highway represent a drive through nature, evil is clearly manifest in the Sublime landscape of the latter whereas the bucolic presence of the former serves as a veneer to disguise the sinister quality of the villain's intentions.



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NATIONAL SECURITY²¹

Figure 6.40 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

Nature re-emerges within the film when the plot moves to Washington, D.C., introducing the professor and his US Intelligence Agency cronies who have orchestrated the development of Kaplan, a false identity intended to misdirect Vandamme and his henchmen from the trail of the actual government agent. While the initial shot in this scene is reflected in a shiny plaque, we can clearly see the Capitol Building framed by lush greenery.²² This juxtaposition between pastoral nature and classical architecture portrays the national capital and the United States government as the epitome of honesty and stability.²³ As the camera enters the room, a group seated around a conference table begins to discuss Thornhill's accidental involvement in the situation; it is ultimately their decision to take a *laissez-faire* approach to these dangerous circumstances and leave the protagonist to

fend for himself. While the professor walks to the window and pauses to contemplate the scenery presented in the initial shot, there is a sense of disjointedness whereby the bucolic view outside representing morality and integrity is completely at odds with the deception, treachery and espionage of the interior world. While we expect, partially through the image we are presented, that the government will act swiftly to rectify this mistake, we are appalled to learn that the general consensus in dealing with this problem is to sacrifice Thornhill in the name of national security, to continue on with the original plan as if he did not exist. This veneer of a respectable, protective leadership represented in the exterior spaces of the nation's capital is completely dispelled by the shocking betrayal of this committee in failing to defend Thornhill from the nefarious forces which threaten his life.

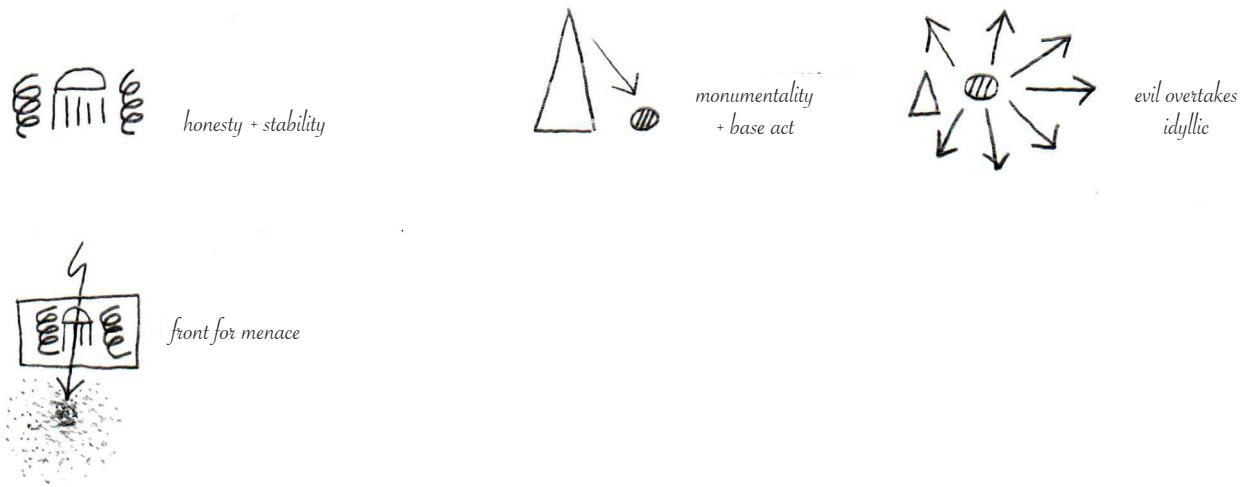
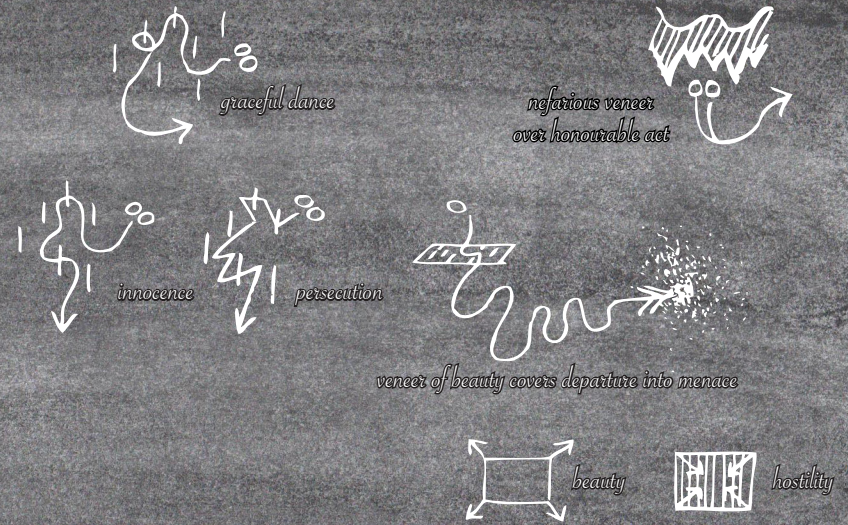


Figure 6.41 Cine-Cipher: 'National Security'

This notion of the idyllic veneer is also carried forth into exterior scenes later on in the film. The first shot of the Mount Rushmore monument represents the typical, glorified view of this landform framed by lush greenery at its base. As the camera pulls back we see that we have been looking through a pair of binoculars with the protagonist, brought into artificially close proximity with this artifact; in actuality we stand quite remote from the monument itself, that is to say that we are removed from its presence. While the professor and Thornhill converse as to the details of their scheme, involving intentional misdirection and trickery in order to save Eve, the distant stone faces of the presidents embodying honesty and trustworthiness overlook this conversation of immorality

and corruption; once again this contrast provokes us, as well as Thornhill, into questioning the methods undertaken by the government to ensure national security.²⁴ While the Mount Rushmore monument is a place of great natural beauty, it also becomes the site of a ghastly murder when Eve subsequently shoots Thornhill in the observatory: through the large wall of windows, this sinful, base act is juxtaposed against the exalted presence of the former leaders.²⁵ Through this disparity between the scenic beauty of the landscape and the wicked actions committed inside, this idyllic veneer begins to crack as we are directly exposed to the insidious evil inherent in the actions taken by the government in the name of national security.²⁶

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SHIFTING WILDERNESS

Figure 6.42 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

In actuality, we soon discover that the sinister murder was just an act executed to dispose of the Kaplan identity and put Vandamme at ease in order to ensure Eve's safety, effectively an evil front meant to deceive the villain while concealing the honourable intentions of the protagonist beneath. This virtue becomes reflected in the landscape itself during the subsequent reunion between Thornhill and Eve. In this tender moment, the forest is established as a place of ethereal beauty in which the couple apologizes to one another and it seems as if the entire situation is put right, and their rendezvous becomes a graceful dance amongst the trees.²⁷ While this scene is incredibly poignant as the landscape itself speaks directly to the sense of love between these two individuals, it is unfortunately also a veneer which misdirects Thornhill into believing that he will soon reunite permanently with Eve.²⁸ Soon after this pair embrace,

Thornhill is informed by the professor that his beloved will be leaving the country that night with Vandamme, never to return again. Rushing off to complete her assignment, Eve quickly drives away as Thornhill is punched in the face by a park ranger while attempting to pursue her.

The atmosphere of gentle innocence initially presented in this forest quickly declines into terror and fear through the representation of this landscape in the subsequent scenes. When Thornhill arrives to rescue Eve, we learn that this forest actually comprises the back end of the property obscuring Vandamme's compound from the road. After the dramatic scenes unfold inside the house, the couple finally escapes with the statue containing the stolen government information and the henchmen proceed to chase them through the forest. Through the perception of comfort and safety established in the previous reunion scene, we read

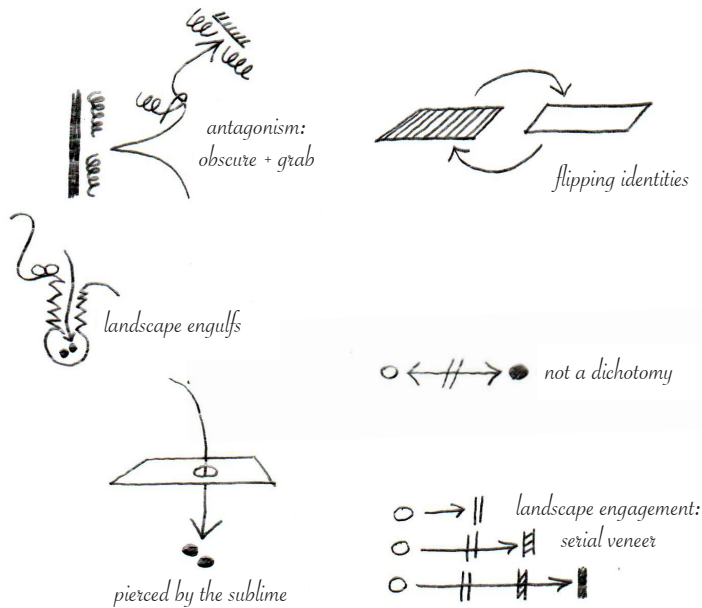


Figure 6.43 Cine-Cipher: 'Shifting Wilderness' (Both Pages/Overlay)

the forest as a benign entity; however, the landscape in this sequence is portrayed as an antagonistic presence which subverts the couple's efforts to flee. The vegetation in the forest, which obscures the wall blocking the path of the getaway car and grabs Eve's clothing as she is running, also covers up the sharp drop of the cliff and causes the protagonists to suddenly stop short as they nearly tumble right off the edge with momentum. While the forest was first established as an innocent, ethereal place, a pastoral veneer, we initially believe that they will be saved. In the emergence of a landscape agency which hinders their flight, these woods are transformed into a hostile place where the couple is hunted down and the atmosphere

becomes stifling. In the following chase sequence across the face of the monument itself, the natural beauty of this location barely veils the inherent danger of this steep landform which in itself proves fatal when both of the villain's henchmen are swallowed up by a chasm as they fall to their deaths; the veneer wears thin at this moment as nature once again materializes as a Sublime entity which can easily consume these insignificant human beings.

Such is the impression that we are given when Thornhill and Eve cling to the cliff for dear life, that they too will soon fall victim to the lethal nature of the mountain in this exterior scene. Through brilliant editing of several close-up shots, the sequence is resolved in the interior space of a train compartment and order is seemingly restored with the marriage of this couple: a lighthearted mood is once again set in place. While the pastoral veneer throughout these scenes represents a condition of innocence and a presumed sense of both comfort and beauty, this atmosphere was often established through the appearance of wilderness in the film and subsequently subverted through underlying nefarious aspects usually associated with the villain or his henchmen. With this constant flipping between each of these identities, the veneer and the underlying condition/s, we become uncertain as to which is actually correct. In reality, both readings are accurate since they each represent a different degree of engagement with the landscape instead of a strict dichotomy between two discrete conditions: accepting the veneer results from a superficial glance whereas understanding the latent character is derived through a more critical review of the landscape. While the pastoral mask obscures a deeper evil, it also speaks to the character of this malevolence in choosing not to reveal itself in plain sight.



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EXPOSURE

Figure 6.44 Matrix of Frames: Detail, *North by Northwest*

While the evil presence in *North by Northwest* is often concealed by bucolic scenery and lush vegetation, there are also several barren landscapes in this film whereby the veneer of nature slips and as a result the evil truth of the narrative is laid bare for Thornhill as well as the audience to see. In the Prairie Stop scene, where the protagonist awaits his meeting with Kaplan, the initial views of this dusty desert-like landscape exude a palpably hostile atmosphere, as if the lack of vegetation in this scene does not buffer this antagonism.²⁹ From behind a stand of brittle, dried-out corn, a car emerges to drop off a lone man at the side of the road. When Thornhill meets this individual waiting for the bus, the nature of the interaction between these two characters contains a hint of confrontation despite the fact that they are perfect strangers: while normal social convention

would dictate a veneer of politeness, no such niceties take place between these two men who seem to glare at each other from across the road before Thornhill crosses and asks the fellow a few curt questions.³⁰ After the bus arrives brusquely and spirits away the stranger, Thornhill is suddenly attacked by a crop duster from the distant horizon which arrives on the scene to eliminate him. As he runs to evade this airborne attack, he dives into the shelter of the adjacent cornfield. Although the sharp, scratchy stalks within the field serve to obscure Thornhill from view, they do not protect him from the powdery chemicals which are dropped on the field and eventually force him from his hiding place. While the animosity between the protagonist and the antagonists has risen to the surface in this scene, the veneer represented by pastoral nature has receded to reveal the malicious intentions of the villain in trying to dispose of Thornhill.

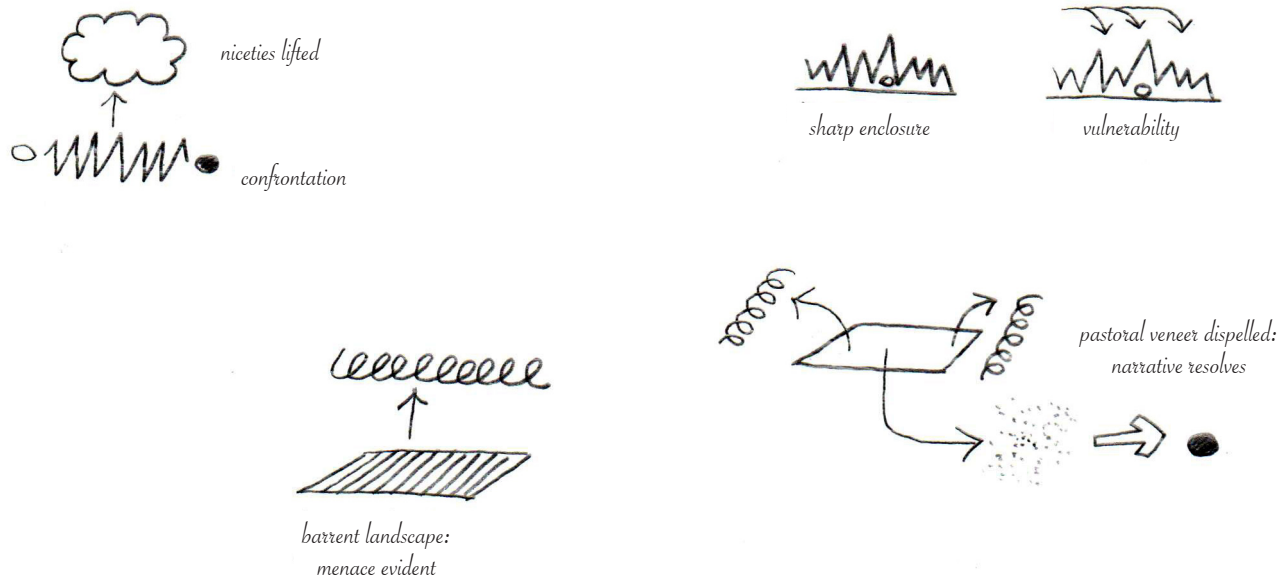


Figure 6.45 Cine-Cipher: 'Exposure'

A similarly arid landscape exists in the scene where Thornhill and the professor rush through the tarmac at the Chicago airport. The barren pavement upon which these characters walk echoes the drama unfolding in the scene as the dialogue progresses. As the professor reveals to Thornhill the truth of the situation, that Kaplan was a complete fabrication to mislead Vandamme and his henchmen from the real operative, he also divulges the fact that Eve is acting on the part of the US Intelligence Agency as a double agent and that she is wholly in harm's way due to Thornhill's interference. As the facts of the story are laid bare through this explanation, so too is the exposed, asphaltic landscape through which the characters move: no such veneer exists to confuse or mislead and at this moment Thornhill realizes exactly what he must do in order to ensure Eve's safety.³¹

Similarly, the cliff upon which the police stand with the professor and Vandamme at the close of the film also represents an extremely exposed condition atop the Mount Rushmore monument. While the layers of vegetation associated with the mounting threat in the previous chase sequence through the forest have been stripped away, the sense of danger evaporates and the plot is resolved as the sniper shoots Leonard, enabling Thornhill and Eve to climb from their precarious position on the edge of the cliff. In each of the aforementioned instances, the veneer created by pastoral conditions is withdrawn and the genuine facts are allowed to emerge, permitting the narrative to become resolved for the characters as well as in the minds of the audience members.



Figure 6.46 Avian Haze + Dump Topography, Brady Road Landfill

Brady Road Landfill: Avian Haze

With the development of these concepts, I began to consider the Brady Landfill site. Frequently driving past the Brady Landfill over the years, I have always considered the dump to be a repellant eyesore whose scattered trash and vile stench pollute the surrounding areas. While *Veneer* in each of the three films is manifest as pastoral nature concealing insidious evil, an atmosphere intended to deceive or shock, I considered the landfill as neither bucolic nor sinister. In fact, for the majority of the time I did not even consider it at all.³²

When I first began to ponder the notion of veneer during my drives, I was struck by the swarm of birds overhanging the landfill which could be seen from several kilometers away. This hazy cloud, glimpsed from afar, recalled for

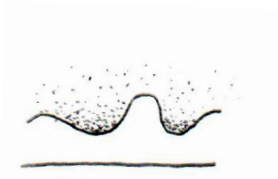
me the sinister atmosphere of *The Birds*, and seemed to hover nebulously over the landform of the dump (Figure 6.46). Each time I passed by, I watched this hill as I was curious if the creatures were flying about in a frenzy on that particular day. Mesmerized by this dramatic event superimposed onto the landscape, the grotesque identity of the Brady Landfill began to dissolve as fissures formed in this veneer. Through my sustained observation and developing interest, I began to doubt my earlier dismissal of the landfill and was inspired to look more closely at the dump and its surrounding spaces in order to discover their underlying qualities.

Arresting [Sight/Site]

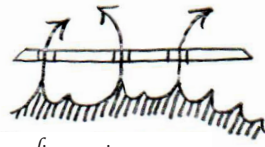
Approaching the site, I discovered that it was secured with



Figure 6.47 Soaring Gulls in the Autumn Sky 239



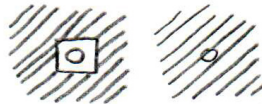
hazy menace



fissures in veneer

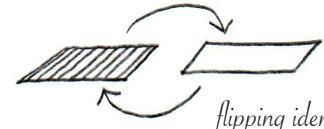


tensions erupt

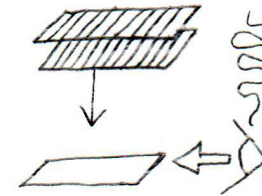


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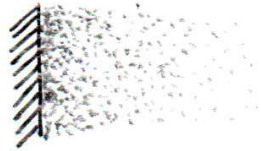
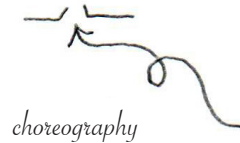
immersed



flipping identities



*awareness through
layered menace*



sinister evaporation

chain link fencing and signage prohibiting trespassing. While I was unable to gain access to the landfill itself, I pulled onto the service roads adjacent to the Perimeter Highway and was able to safely experience the interstitial spaces between the site and the surrounding plains occupied by the roosting birds. As I exited the car, I became immersed in the landscape adjacent to the dump. One particular autumn day in 2011, gulls were flying overhead between the landfill and the nearby fields: their white bodies floating gracefully against the crisp blue sky was simply an arresting sight (Figure 6.47). Similar to the terrace garden in *Rear Window*, whose sinister atmosphere begins to dissipate towards the end of the film, the repugnant appearance of the dump yields to an underlying sense of serene beauty.

Beautiful Chaos: Appreciation of a Waste Landscape

Standing at one of the locked gates, I began taking photos and realized how the patterns created by the flock of birds is echoed in the landscape: while these creatures form eerie striations in the adjacent fields, the hills strewn with rubbish are juxtaposed against a sky equally scattered with frenetic birds (Figure 6.49). This harmony between setting and action, whereby events are synchronized with the spaces in which they occur, relates back to the initial scene in each of the films whereby the protagonist emerges from pleasant circumstances in a comfortable setting, prior to being thrust into a horrific, dissonant situation.

In contrast, my experience with the Brady Landfill was the exact opposite of the films: I felt as if I had to discover the drama and recognize the sinister aspects of such a repellant setting in order to appreciate its underlying charm. While this realization about my everyday landscape was contrary to the burgeoning consciousness of the characters in the films, both journeys pertain to a reversal of the identity of place and the discovery of latent atmospheres through the dissolution of pre-conceived notions. As a result of this experience, I began to reconsider the Brady Road Landfill as a landscape of incredible grandeur.

Veneer Composite

I created this composite image of the Brady Landfill to convey this notion of *Veneer*, to remove the stigma around this waste landscape and reveal the hidden beauty associated with the topography of the rolling hills and flat plains as well as the captivating, harmonious presence of the birds.





NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

NOTES

- 1 Laurent Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*, Film. (Culver City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2000).

Donald W. Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes: Some Idealizations of American Communities," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. Donald W. Meinig. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.167-168.

In Bouzereau's film, critic Robin Wood considers this poised persona a "protective covering" which Melanie uses "to get through life," yet it is also a mechanism which separates her from other people. I must note that while the urban environment that she passes through also reflects this self-confident attitude, a veneer for an underlying nefarious condition, this façade is instead based upon the archetype of 'Main Street America' described by Meinig rather than a pastoral representation of nature.

- 2 Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes," p.165.

The initial views of the town, including the large open lawns, white houses and prominent steeple of the local school, are evocative of Meinig's 'New England Village', a powerful symbolic landscape which is "widely assumed to symbolize for many people the best we have known of an intimate, family-centered, Godfearing, morally conscious, industrious, thrifty, democratic *community*."

- 3 Jean Mottet, "Toward a Genealogy of the American Landscape: Notes on Landscapes in D.W. Griffith (1908-1912)," in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre. (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.64.

In reference to the films of D.W. Griffith, Mottet discusses the use of the picket fence as an emblem of home within the landscape. Citing David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* as a contemporary example, this author suggests that although this symbol has strong associations with certain familiar places, it is quite often in cinema "only a façade."

- 4 Neil Badmington, *Hitchcock's Magic*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), p.134.

In this scene, Badmington states, the *mise-en-scène* essentially is birds.

- 5 See 'Innocuous Appearance'.

- 6 Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*. (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p.241-249.

Krohn book presents a detailed discussion of these explanations. See also Chapter 5, Note 26.

- 7 Badmington, *Hitchcock's Magic*, p.143.

In his chapter on *The Birds*, Badmington points out that "birds are dished up as food in the film" as three portions of fried chicken served at the diner immediately following the vicious attack on the town school; had the humans been aware of this terrible irony, surely they would have changed their ways.

- 8 James Sanders, *Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), p.232-233.

- 9 Stefan Sharff, *The Art of Looking in Hitchcock's Rear Window*. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), p.66.

- 10 *Ibid.*, p.65.

Sharff indicates that this is the first time in the film that the neighbours are simultaneously drawn outside into the common exterior space.

- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

In his analysis of the film, Sharff notes that Thorwald is smoking alone in the dark apartment, and that "only the faint glow of a cigarette can be seen behind the blinds." While this character has retreated to the remote recesses of the set, Hitchcock's camera cannot provide the same sort of telling close-ups which were captured for the rest of the neighbours.

- 12 David G. Meyers. *Social Psychology*, 10th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), p.486-493.

It occurs to me that in hindsight, Thorwald might not have approached the courtyard due to a psychological phenomenon called the "bystander effect," a particular syndrome whereby onlookers do not offer assistance during emergencies since they assume that the situation is not critical or that another observer is already providing the necessary help. Citing social psychologists Bibb Latané and John Darley (1970), Meyers states that "as the number of bystanders increases, any given bystander is less likely to notice the incident, less likely to interpret the incident as a problem or emergency, and less likely to assume responsibility for taking action" (p.487). While

this attitude may often result in tragic consequences for the victim, it is not necessarily motivated by a malevolent desire to inflict harm: thus Thorwald's indifference cannot conclusively be construed as a clear sign of guilt.

13 Sharff, *The Art of Looking*, p.97.

Sharff notes that in this scene, Stella is "informed that some part of Mrs. Thorwald that was originally buried in the garden, until the dog sniffed it out, is presently up in the apartment, in a hat box."

14 Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes," p.164, 184.

Steven Jacobs, "Sightseeing Fright: Alfred Hitchcock's Monuments and Museums," in *The Journal of Architecture* 11, no.5 (2006), p.593-601.

While Meinig states that certain landscapes hold particular deep-seeded associations for a specific cultural group, he adds that these 'symbolic landscapes' are "part of the iconography of nationhood, part of the shared set of ideas and memories and feelings which bind a people together" (p.164). After reading Jacobs' observations on Hitchcock's films, I began to notice that this director relied heavily on these widely held pre-conceptions of the American landscape to establish a false sense of security, effectively a veneer in itself, in order to build suspense and deliver sudden shocks in *North by Northwest*, a film whose storyline moves quite rapidly through a sequence of diverse locales.

15 James Naremore, "Spies and Lovers," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.14.

In his introduction to the continuity script of *North by Northwest*, Naremore remarks that it was characteristic of Hitchcock's films to "suggest that civilized life was but a protective veneer covering a 'reality' of sordid violence." This observation crystallized the development of the sub-concept 'Refinement' wherein artistic, cultivated representations of nature conceal an insidious evil brewing beneath.

16 Technically, the first manifestation of 'nature' in the film is Central Park through the rear window of the cab en route from Thornhill's office on Madison Avenue to the Plaza Hotel. However, since the landscape beyond the cab is hazy, indistinct and completely overshadowed by the forceful dialogue of the characters in the back seat, it is reasonable to

consider the scenes at the Townsend Estate to be our earliest contact with landscape in this film.

17 Marian Keane, "The Designs of Authorship: An Essay on North by Northwest," in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.212.

Although this civilized hobby appears rather harmless, Keane notes: "this initial view of Leonard (Martin Landau), croquet mallet upraised in one hand, implies his potential for violence," that is to say his gestures reveal the true danger lurking below this veneer of this beautiful, ordered landscape.

18 The heavy in front of the doorway is particularly sinister in this particular scene, as we have already witnessed him murder a man quickly and quietly in a respectable setting earlier at the United Nations building in Manhattan. Clearly, these henchmen would not hesitate to apply such methods to the current situation at hand.

19 Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton, *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*. (New York: J. Wiley, 1998), p.137.

Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*. (New York: Knopf, 1995), p.450.

Potteiger and Purinton describe the establishment of suspense in historic Picturesque gardens through "a series of revelations that would sometimes climax at a high point with an overall view," citing the estate of Stourhead as a prime example of this landscape aesthetic with its "winding path around the lake [which] reveals in stages distant temples, grottoes, artifacts, and other visual climaxes." In contrast, the historian Simon Schama describes the Sublime as "shadow and darkness and dread and trembling, in caves and chasms, at the edge of the precipice, in the shroud of the cloud, [and] in the fissures of the earth."

20 Claudia Bell and John Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism and Identity*. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), p.72, 74.

In their book, Bell and Lyall introduce a specific sub-type of the Sublime, namely the "oceanic horizontal sublime" which they describe as a condition "of vast distance and unknown depths" (p.72). While the first maritime voyagers explored uncharted waters purportedly rife with strange monsters, violent storms

and other such perils, they lacked the technology required to determine the depth of the ocean and therefore considered the high seas to be bottomless. This fear of the dark, oceanic abyss emerged through the “unthinkable dangers” which consumed sailors and precluded their return to land (p.74). It is through these connotations that the coast highway scene in the film derives much of its Sublime power, and thus its strong quality of suspense.

- 21 Maurizia Natali, “The Course of the Empire: Sublime Landscapes in the American Cinema,” in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre. (New York: Routledge, 2006), p.92.

David Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema: From Wilderness to Wasteland*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p.37.

The sub-concept of ‘National Stability’ was inspired by the notion that the American identity stems largely from the vast tracts of wilderness which originally covered this country, and the endeavours to capture these landscapes using artistic media to promote this spirit. According to Natali:

During the nineteenth century, landscape paintings, photographs or prints, large panoramas or small postcards played a large ideological and ‘nation-building’ role within American visual culture. They illustrated religious utopias and political projects concerning the expanding frontier and the wars against Natives, stimulated the birth of ‘landscape taste’ in modern urban spectators, and translated in myriad images long-lasting slogans such as ‘the American destiny,’ ‘the American dream,’ or ‘the American way of life.’

While this type of imagery was first harnessed in order to represent the American identity, Melbye also explains that it was also employed as a type of propaganda to justify expansionist efforts into the wilderness of the West:

For Americans, these uncharted landscape spaces were idealized, and yet these depictions were also specifically intended to inspire the common American who had yet to discover wilderness that was not so imaginary after all. This call for expansionism was *itself* spiritualized – the contemplation of a sublime, beautiful, or yet-to-be-discovered landscape was a divine justification for expansionism. For Americans, Manifest Destiny was ordained by God.

In contemporary times, and especially in cinema, I believe that we return to these types of images to promote a glorified sense of the American identity, that is to say a stable sense of

‘National Security’ when perhaps in actuality this appearance belies underlying conditions of chaos, disorder and even danger. This is precisely the case in *North by Northwest*, where Hitchcock uses iconic views of the White House and Mount Rushmore, which incorporate vestiges of wilderness, to promote the honour and solidity of the American nation when in fact the events of the narrative clearly indicate that this is merely a veneer superimposed atop a more nefarious presence or situation.

- 22 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.213.

- 23 Meinig, “Symbolic Landscapes,” p.164.

Meinig notes that images of places such as the White House are intended to “evoke responses which have little to do with the appreciation for their specific architecture as buildings; rather they are assumed to prompt some connection with... national institutions and history.”

- 24 Robin Wood, “*North by Northwest*,” in *North by Northwest: Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.209.

In his essay on this film, Wood points out the ironic use of this ‘solid’ setting in this final scene: “The climax is played out on and around the imperturbable stone faces of the presidents, with their suggestion of stability and order forming a background to Thornhill’s desperate struggle to save himself and Eve for life.”

- 25 While my reading of this scene within this particular analysis is based upon the perception of the monument as a glorification of the United States government, as well as the disconnect between these leaders and the immoral transgressions of the characters in the film which occur immediately adjacent to this site, Marcy pointed out an additional layer of meaning inherent within this landscape. In her written comments on this project, she suggests that perhaps the monument itself is wicked manipulation, a type of propaganda devised by the leaders to commemorate their power and authority into the landform itself. Although the devious nature of the scheme unfolding at the base of Mount Rushmore is perhaps not so incongruous with the surrounding landscape when this alternative reading is taken into consideration, however, we must not discount the relative strength of the honourable veneer emerging from popular cultural associations with this particular site.

- 26 Meinig, “Symbolic Landscapes,” p.173.

While Meinig suggests: “perhaps we have been deluded by the very power of the symbols,” he adds that “we may be startled at how narrow and uneven the foundations upon which these stereotypes rest.” Taking this comment into consideration, it is therefore apt that such a strained conflict, initially stemming from a case of mistaken identity, occur upon the monument of a nation whose stability and honour has been brought into question.

- 27 Ernest Lehman, “Commentary by Screenwriter Ernest Lehman,” Disc 1, *North by Northwest*, 50th Anniversary Edition, DVD, Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. (New York: Turner Entertainment Co., 2009).

Wood, “*North by Northwest*,” p.207.

Whereas Lehman describes the forest reconciliation scene as the moment in the film when masks are cast aside and the characters are finally able to reveal their true selves, Wood attributes the beauty of these shots to this event rather than the “intrinsic beauty of the scenery” itself.

- 28 Just as Thornhill is misled into thinking that this situation will soon be resolved and he can embark on a normal life with Eve, so too is the audience deceived by the setting itself: while the forest appears genuine, it was actually constructed on a Hollywood soundstage. It is actually somewhat upsetting to realize that a moment of such beauty and emotional resonance could be captured in a pseudo-landscape actually located within the interior of the studio, just as Thornhill is shaken by Eve’s confession that she must continue on with the ruse with which they are both involved and thus they cannot be together.

See Chapter 2 for additional details as to the production of this particular scene.

- 29 Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*, p.211.

This tension is heightened by the fact that Hitchcock chose to “keep the action on the ground and anchored to Thornhill’s point of view” rather than incorporate aerial shots from the attacker’s perspective in the crop duster plane as was originally planned.

- 30 Badmington, *Hitchcock’s Magic*, p.88-92.

While the dialogue between these two men is seemingly innocuous, Badmington observes that the remarks of this strange man are antagonistic in the manner which they subvert

Thornhill’s efforts to discover the facts about his unfortunate situation:

Thornhill is searching for closure, searching for the truth about the events that have overtaken his life and, crucially, set the film’s narrative in motion. His questions, accordingly, push in the direction of an ending, of the dissolution of the dramatic enigma from which *North by Northwest* emerges. The stranger’s replies, however, deviate, drift elsewhere, stall the narrative flow from mystery to clarity (p.89).

A detailed discussion regarding this exchange and the veiled hostility of the lone stranger’s ambiguous replies can be found in Badminton’s chapter entitled “Stories of ‘O’: *North by Northwest* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.” Wood, “*North by Northwest*,” p.207.

- 31 As Wood notes, when Roger accepts responsibility for his actions and Eve’s wellbeing, “his face is suddenly illuminated by the light of the plane” which marks this moment of realization, this exposure of the truth and a clear course of action.
- 32 This is perhaps indicative of a trend within society as a whole in which people are too pre-occupied or rushed to notice the world around them, much less the unwanted debris of daily life. Rather than consider this a negative phenomenon, to me this simply emphasizes the need for devices of ostranenie to jar us out of this complacency in order to truly see and appreciate our surroundings. Conversely, if it were not for this state of collective unconsciousness, there would be no opportunity to engage in ostranenie, and arguably less of a challenge to produce truly unique and evocative landscape architectural design.

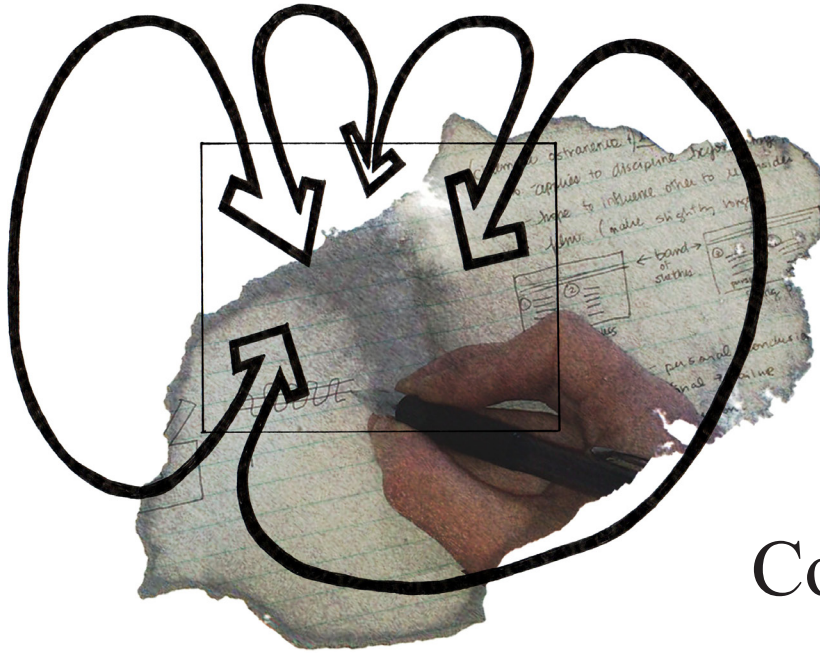
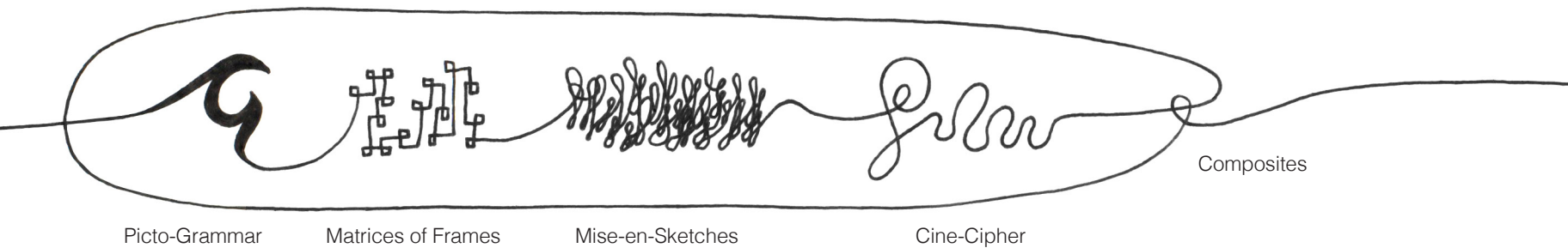


Figure 7.1 Consolidation Picto-Gram

Consolidation

This final chapter is an amalgamation of the concepts developed over the course of this practicum project through the processes of writing, drawing and creating composite graphic imagery. Since it is nearly impossible to draw unequivocal conclusions on this extremely vast and slippery topic at the nebulous crux between two complex fields – landscape architecture and film studies – and by no means do I hold the final word on the subject, I have chosen to label this section a ‘consolidation’ since it represents a synthesis of ideas derived from the study of cinema and the extraordinary power of this medium to serve as a device of ostranenie within the landscape.¹ Stitching together these diverse notions, this chapter serves as a starting point for further explorations of the rich chasm between landscape and



film, through a brief survey of real-world projects which manifest concepts introduced in this document, as well as a short list of personal lessons gleaned throughout the application of the composite images onto canvas. The remarks included in this closing chapter are intended as reflections to inspire other designers within the profession of landscape architecture to re-consider the effect of cinema upon their own perceptions, in addition to informing my own personal practice in the future.

The Drawing Process

Prior to delving into the potential applications of this work and my personal reflections, I would like to briefly discuss the role that the drawing process has played in this project and the contribution of the particular types of drawings towards the consolidation of these cinematic concepts in relation to the realm of landscape architecture.²

Drawing and other related image making processes have been absolutely crucial to the development of this project. The *Picto-Grammar* included in Chapters 1 and 2, and at the introduction of Chapters 3, 5 and 6, was vital in assisting me to sort through the concepts I encountered in my various investigations and provided a sense of clarity to this work: these diagrammatic drawings helped to organize my research and my reactions as well as to communicate these explorations with my advisors, and essentially drove the practicum

process. While the *Matrices of Frames*, emerging in Chapter 2 and featured throughout Chapters 3, 5 and 6, enabled me to engage with each film as an entire oeuvre through the provision of a visual overview, they also facilitated an in-depth analysis of the selected features since a closer examination was necessary in capturing the individual frames. The *Mise-en-Sketches*, a loose, freehand drawing type also found in Chapters 3, 5 and 6, encouraged me to remain enthusiastic for the work and dive directly into the cinematic imagery of the films, in addition to prompting a more thorough reading of the mise-en-scène within the key scenes of each feature selected for this project.

Perhaps the most abstract type of drawing incorporated into this practicum, the *Cine-Cipher* empowered me to perceive and understand the films spatially, thus completing my textual analyses of the mise-en-scène in terms of the sub-concepts introduced, returning these 'Reel World' concepts back to the domain of landscape architecture, i.e. the 'Real World' and rendering them more accessible to designers. Finally, the *Composites* were the essential culmination of the entire process, digital collages that permitted me to visually consolidate the themes and the sub-concepts emerging from the films in relation to the everyday landscape, and to provide an appropriate conclusion to this project as the final submission for my graduate degree.



Figure 7.3 The Process of Drawing: Tracing Picto-Grammar



Figure 7.4 The de Young Museum: Stairwell Adjacent to Fern Court / *Stairs and Fern Court* © Jiat-Hwee Chang, All Rights Reserved (Left)
 Figure 7.5 Window Detail / *DeYoung Museum* | 2006 © Methanie Dempsay Binder, All Rights Reserved (Right)

Applications in Landscape Architecture

Beyond the application of these concepts to my personal everyday landscapes, as described in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, the themes introduced within this document are relevant to the discipline of landscape architecture as a whole, and can be applied in a variety of different ways. In this section, I will review the motifs introduced in the aforementioned chapters and discuss a selection of sub-concepts which relate directly to three contemporary projects which can be considered as devices of ostranenie for the ordinary landscape.³

Seamless (Chapter 3): The de Young Museum

Throughout my education on the history of designed environments, I have always understood the creation of a seamless connection between interior and exterior

spaces to be an avant-garde gesture which invites nature into the home.⁴ In my personal design work and many other projects that I have encountered over the years, this sense of seamlessness is automatically considered to offer calming sensations through the presence of the exterior environment within interior living spaces. However, after watching and analyzing these three Hitchcock films, I began to realize that this linkage can also be characterized by a sinister atmosphere which was perhaps not originally intended by the designers, stemming from the voyeuristic events engendered by the configuration of these spaces.

The sub-concepts of *Seamless* relate primarily to the attitudes and activities of the occupants within these designed spaces, which can occasionally be



Figure 7.6 Landscape Wedge / *Terrarium with Eucalyptus* © Joe Fletcher Photography (joefletcherphoto.com), All Rights Reserved (Left)
 Figure 7.7 Observation Tower / *Through the Looking Glass*, Thom Watson, CC NC-BY-SA 2.0 License (Right)

less than innocent in their intentions, and the role of designed spaces in supporting these actions, namely reciprocal watching and physical movement between two discrete positions in space. Through my research, I discovered a project which embodies an acute sense of seamlessness: the de Young Museum in San Francisco, California, designed by architects Herzog and de Meuron with landscape architect Walter Hood. Playfully subverting pre-conceived notions of inside/outside in a 'Reversal of Expectations', the museum building is punctured by several courtyard gardens which draw the exterior "deep into the building" through wedges of vegetation and light.⁵ Features such as "windows that have no frame at the base, overhangs that push one's view beyond the edge of the building, reflective

glass which blurs the edge, and the punctured copper skin which reveals its permeability as blue sky pierces through the holes" serve to draw interior and exterior spaces into a seamless condition (Figures 7.4 + 7.5).⁶ These unexpected elements enliven the plan, causing the viewer to look twice and re-examine familiar elements in a gesture of ostranenie: walls of glazing capture the surrounding landscape and place it on display as an exhibit within the museum, despite the fact that this greenery is relatively commonplace in this locale (Figure 7.6). The observation tower at one corner of the building provides a dramatic opportunity to see and be seen; while this feature is in itself a vertical landmark on the site, it also provides an extraordinary panoramic view over the city (Figure 7.7).⁷



Figure 7.8 Elevated View of Public Seating
Roundabout Seating (M.H. de Young Museum)
 © Mike Cotter, All Rights Reserved

Moving between the public areas of the museum, the building unfolds to reveal “a range of unexpected and captivating spaces” which engender reciprocal watching and effectively a condition of ‘Crossing Narratives’ when visitors change levels and eventually occupy positions that they had formerly observed (Figure 7.8).⁸ Within this extreme seamlessness, the designers also created moments for people to pause and contemplate this intense sense of de-familiarization inherent in the architecture and surrounding landscape: these quiet nooks of ‘Suspenseful Stillness’ allow the user to withdraw, ponder and appreciate this rich and slightly overwhelming experience of this space (Figure 7.9). While it is uncertain whether or not iniquitous voyeurism



Figure 7.9 Private Nook with Reader
Reading © Frances Hui, All Rights Reserved

actually occurs between the visitors of the de Young museum, it is my belief that these seamless spaces definitely induce a sinister atmosphere which could eventually trigger the development of such potentially nefarious activities.



Figure 7.10 Parc Diderot Overview / *Cascade au Milieu des Tours* © Sébastien Lucas / Archiref.com, All Rights Reserved (Left)
 Figure 7.11 Visitor Descending the Steps / *Parc Diderot* © Defense-92.fr, All Rights Reserved (Right)

Pursuit (Chapter 5): Parc Diderot

In landscape architecture, the concept of pursuit is a relevant topic rarely considered within the discipline. In academic projects and history courses, we often discuss movement through the landscape as a leisurely saunter, perhaps a holdover from the 18th century Picturesque gardens in which members of the English gentry strolled around their magnificent private country estates.⁹ While this type of motion does represent a crucial factor in the aesthetic development of landscape architecture, it is not always prevalent in contemporary cities where urban dwellers are driving by their busy lives to rush through their surroundings without paying much attention. Through the rise of suburbia, the personal automobile, freeways and rapid mass-transit systems such as subways and trains in the past century, as well as technological developments such as the Internet which enable the fast-paced gathering of information,

people seem to be perpetually on the move, both in body and mind.

Drawn from the actions of Hitchcock's characters, the sub-concepts of *Pursuit* illustrate alternative ways that we move through an array of different landscapes, the variety of motives pulling us through these spaces and the manner in which designed environments can help, hinder or transform this motion in an act of *ostranenie*. One particular landscape which epitomizes the pursuit is Parc Diderot in Courbevoie, designed by landscape architect Allain Provost. Located in the heart of a business district, this site represents a flowing connection between two levels of the city separated by a nearly twenty-meter difference in elevation "where neatly trimmed box hedging and a sculptural slate cascade swoop in waves down a hillside" (Figure 7.10).¹⁰ Considering the notion







Figure 7.14 Detail of Cascade / *Détail de la Cascade* © Sébastien Lucas / Archiref.com, All Rights Reserved (Left)

Figure 7.15 Undulating Steps / *Escalier le long de la Cascade* © Sébastien Lucas / Archiref.com, All Rights Reserved (Right)

of ‘Peeling Ambiguity’ from the films, we can clearly see the multiple identities that this place represents for the diverse users of the site: a professional hurrying between appointments may rush through the site, a foreign tourist may arrive upon this green oasis by chance as a place of relaxation, and a family with small children may plan to visit this park on the weekend to play (Figures 7.11 – 7.13). Understanding these types of movement and different levels of engagement with the landscape, and that a place can hold several meanings simultaneously without one trumping the rest, Provost created a functional design incorporating a pair of long staircases to allow for efficient movement while inserting subtle features to satisfy the ‘Innate Curiosity’ of users who choose to undertake a more thorough exploration of the site.¹¹ While one variety of visitor moves hastily through the site and responds to the overt features of the design concept, such as the boisterous cascade

fountain located at the centre of the site and the tall yew hedges along the sides, the designer also drew upon the notion of ‘Nuance’ to introduce underlying features for people to discern during more extended trips, including the curved benches and the uneven steps which mimic the rhythmic undulation of waves (Figures 7.14 + 7.15). Whether these hidden clues are noticed by those who linger within the site or those just dashing through, these underlying traces are intended to encourage the reconsideration of transitional spaces that are normally ignored and taken for granted. The fact that these types of sites tend to be experienced briefly and at a rapid pace – in pursuit – should not discount the need for vibrant, good-quality design: even just a single experience of a landscape at a slower pace can colour a person’s perception during subsequent trips, enhancing her overall experience of the urban environment as well as her daily life.

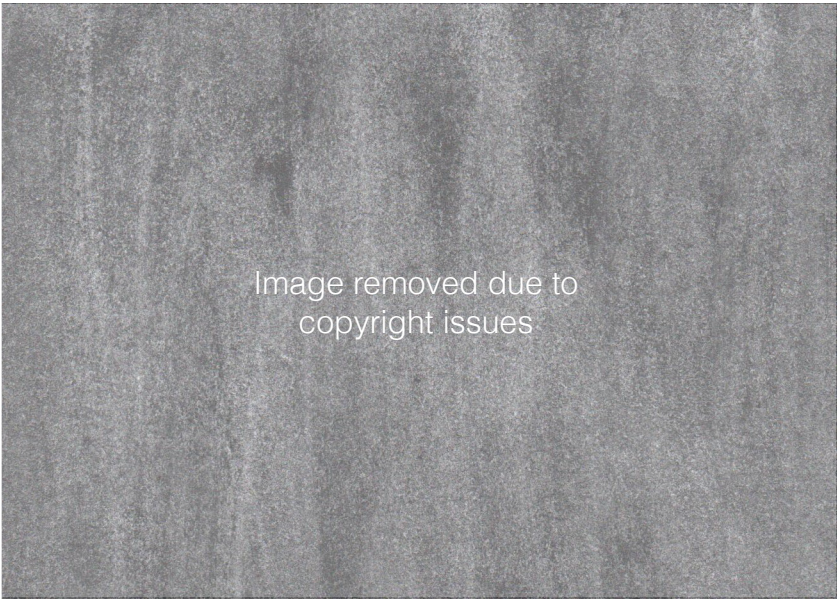


Figure 7.16 Fresh Kills Landfill (Left) / Figure 7.17 Freshkills Park: Rendering of Proposed Design (Right)

Veneer (Chapter 6): Freshkills Park

Veneer – the notion that objects or situations are not always as innocent as they appear on the surface – is a curious concept in relation to landscape architecture since professionals in this discipline are highly engaged with the application of new concepts to pre-existing sites in urban regions. With the movement of certain industries away from inner-city areas, as well as “changes in public policy, concern about suburban sprawl and urban undercrowding,” the redevelopment of brownfields has become much more commonplace.¹² As a result of this shift, designers have been prompted to respond to degraded landscapes often possessing special challenges due to underlying contamination such as hazardous waste or heavy metals in the soil. Inaccessible to the public during former periods of operation, these sites are generally considered as undesirable dumping grounds or simply ignored.¹³ As such, landscape architects are charged not

only with the task of proposing a vision to transform the existing polluted landscape into a vibrant, ecologically-diverse space, but also with the mission to alter public perception. Designers must attract visitors to these sites by removing the ‘dump’ stigma through engaging presentations and marketing campaigns while reveal the true potential of the landscape in question.

The sub-concepts of *Veneer* fundamentally pertain to pre-conceptions of designed exterior spaces which are subsequently revealed as mere façades for an underlying condition in direct contrast to the initial superficial appearance. In the three films that I examined, the external mask of the pastoral landscape recedes to uncover a nefarious presence, which in several cases is covered back up at the conclusion with the pleasant veneer. Freshkills Park, a competition awarded to the

Image removed due to
copyright issues





Figure 7.20 Diagram of Layers

entry entitled 'Lifescape' by landscape architect James Corner and his firm Field Operations, is a contemporary project which embodies these complex notions of veneer.¹⁴ While this site once represented the largest urban landfill in the world, it has a long history of being reviled and stigmatized by the public (Figure 7.16).¹⁵ 'Lifescape' manifests the sub-concept of 'Eruption' through a dramatic gesture, namely placing a recreational park atop a former waste landscape, thereby shattering pre-conceived notions that this barren 'dump' is a place to be experienced and enjoyed rather than avoided and disdained.¹⁶ Through the use of vivid, colourful renderings, the design team was able to communicate a vision which totally immersed potential users into the unique recreational opportunities it could provide in the midst of this highly urbanized area (Figures 7.17 + 7.18).¹⁷ Although this strategy can be considered a 'Cover Up', that is a glossy design superimposed atop a repugnant landscape to render it palatable to the masses, this approach is vital to the success of the project in rousing the requisite public support, encouraging visitors to venture into areas which they would not normally spend time by convincing them of the vibrant park that this site could eventually become (Figure 7.19).¹⁸ As in the sub-concept 'Shifting Wilderness' in *North by Northwest*, in which the forest simultaneously possesses multiple identities that Hitchcock gradually reveals, Corner's



Figure 7.21 Incorporation of Industrial Equipment On-Site

proposal establishes several programmatic layers which emerge progressively over time (Figure 7.20).¹⁹ An attractive veneer represented by the gorgeous views and extensive trail systems promised within the "extensive community outreach program" initially lures visitors to the park, while vestiges of the site's former role as a wetland and subsequently a landfill proffer naturalized spaces which serve as habitat for nonhuman species while at the same time provide educational opportunities in the form of active industrial processes for human visitors (Figure 7.21).²⁰ Through the careful integration of recreational programming with complex ecological processes such as environmental remediation within a single massive site, the 'Lifescape' proposal for Fresh Kills Park is an appealing project which caters to a variety of different uses, both human and non-human, which employs the notion of veneer to attract attention and garner support for a previously loathsome waste landscape.



NB: Image altered due to copyright issues.

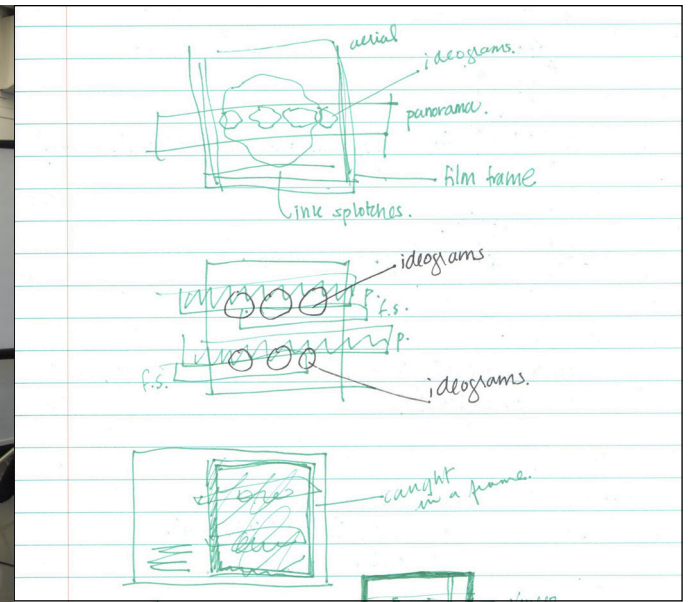


Figure 7.22 Presentation Setup (Left) / Figure 7.23 Composite Preplanning Drawings (Right)

Canvas Composites: Personal Reflections

With the film analysis phase completed in autumn 2011, I prepared for my final presentation at the beginning of November (Figure 7.22). On this occasion, I planned to review a selection of the work completed for this project, including the themes devised and illustrated through ideograms as well as the composites generated to describe the manner in which my perceptions of the everyday landscapes had been altered through my analysis of Hitchcock's films. While compiling these materials into slides, I was suddenly struck with the exciting idea to apply the composites onto canvas and silkscreen the ideograms on top: rather than simply plotting this imagery, which was standard practice for presentation work among students within the faculty, I decided that I must invest additional care and consideration in constructing these images in a final act of ostranenie, thus removing them an extra step from the ordinary for the audience.

In order to follow through on these ambitious plans, I prepared the necessary arrangements: from collecting the necessary supplies – the canvases, the acrylic medium, and the personal silkscreen machine – to making extensive sketches in order to plan the assembly of these pieces, I thought that I had anticipated all the details in a similar fashion to Hitchcock's meticulous pre-production efforts (Figure 7.23). Throughout this process, I had a vision of these canvases hanging on the wall during presentation day, appearing not only exquisite yet also unique and slightly mysterious.²¹

While I had endeavoured to produce these canvases for the final presentation, the factor I did not include in my preparations was sufficient time to execute this task.²² Unfortunately, I was forced to rush the process and ultimately committed several hasty blunders that

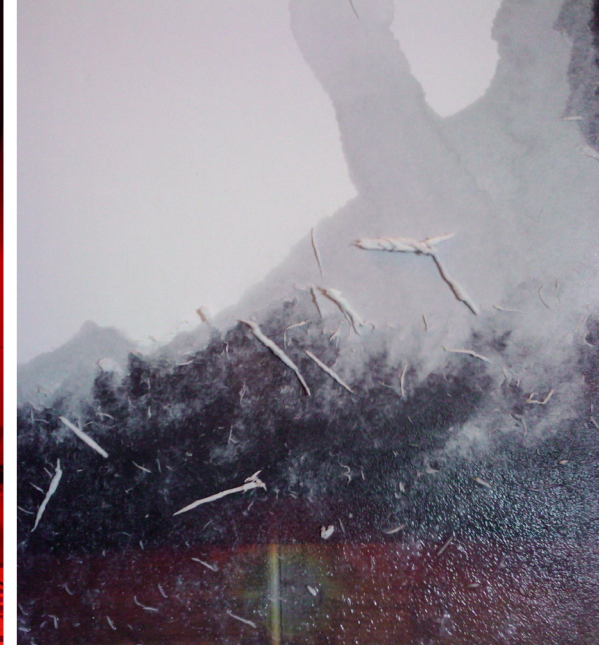
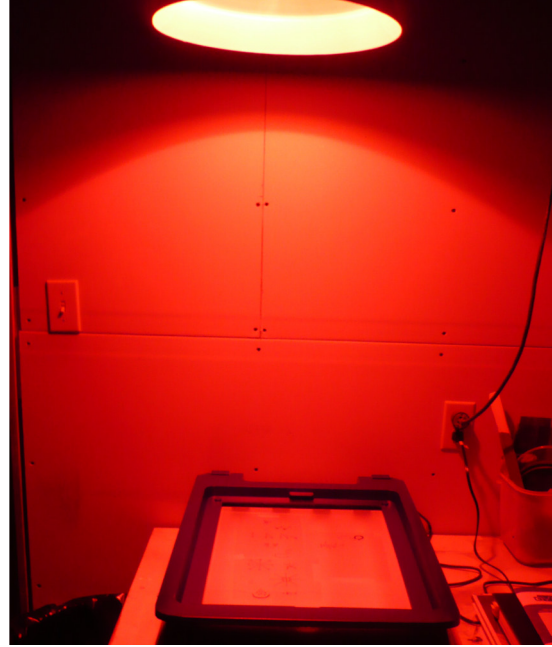
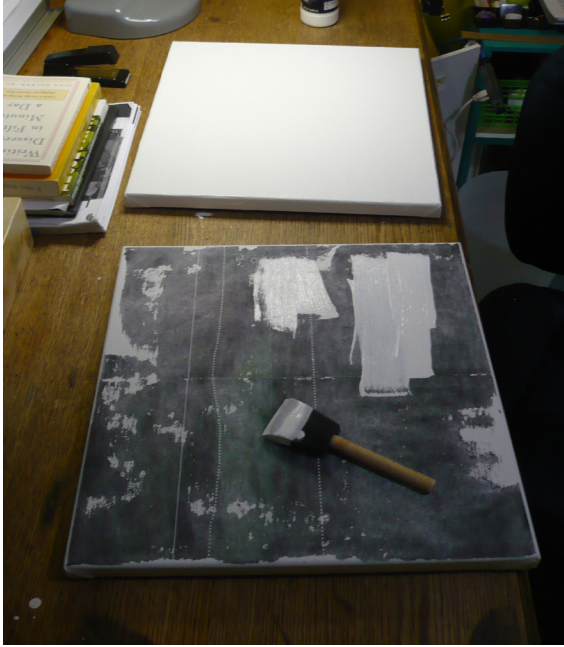


Figure 7.24 Re-Coating Canvases with Gesso (Left) / Figure 7.25 Darkroom (Middle) / Figure 7.26 Acrylic Transfer Detail (Right)

would have probably not occurred had I taken my time to properly complete this undertaking.²³ Even though the results were far from the resounding success that I had initially envisioned, I did learn a few crucial lessons from this particular exercise which I would like to share as concluding remarks to this practicum journey.

The Importance of Vision

Throughout this process, I have discovered the significance of developing a mental image of the final product for a project: even if the design exercise does not proceed as planned, such as my initial attempt to apply the composites to canvas, the creative vision is crucial in achieving a certain level of satisfaction with the work. For this practicum in particular, which focused on the application of theoretical concepts to real-world site through drawing rather than the development of a practical design, I am personally comfortable with the

level of completion I have attained due to the power of the vision that I hold in my mind for this work. Hitchcock himself even commented that a film was finished in his mind prior to shooting.²⁴ Although this remark was cheeky, off-the-cuff banter in an interview, it is still testament to the crucial importance of visualization in driving a concept forward, as well as providing materials, inspiration and mettle for subsequent projects.²⁵

Appreciate the Detours

Often in design, I have found that undertakings – including recalcitrant canvases and onerous practicum documents – require sufficient time to come into being. In the words of graphic designer Bruce Mau, it is important to drift aimlessly at times and allow ideas to percolate on their own.²⁶ While I had initially hoped that this practicum adventure would begin smoothly, unfold efficiently and finish quickly, in hindsight I realize that I appreciate these unplanned

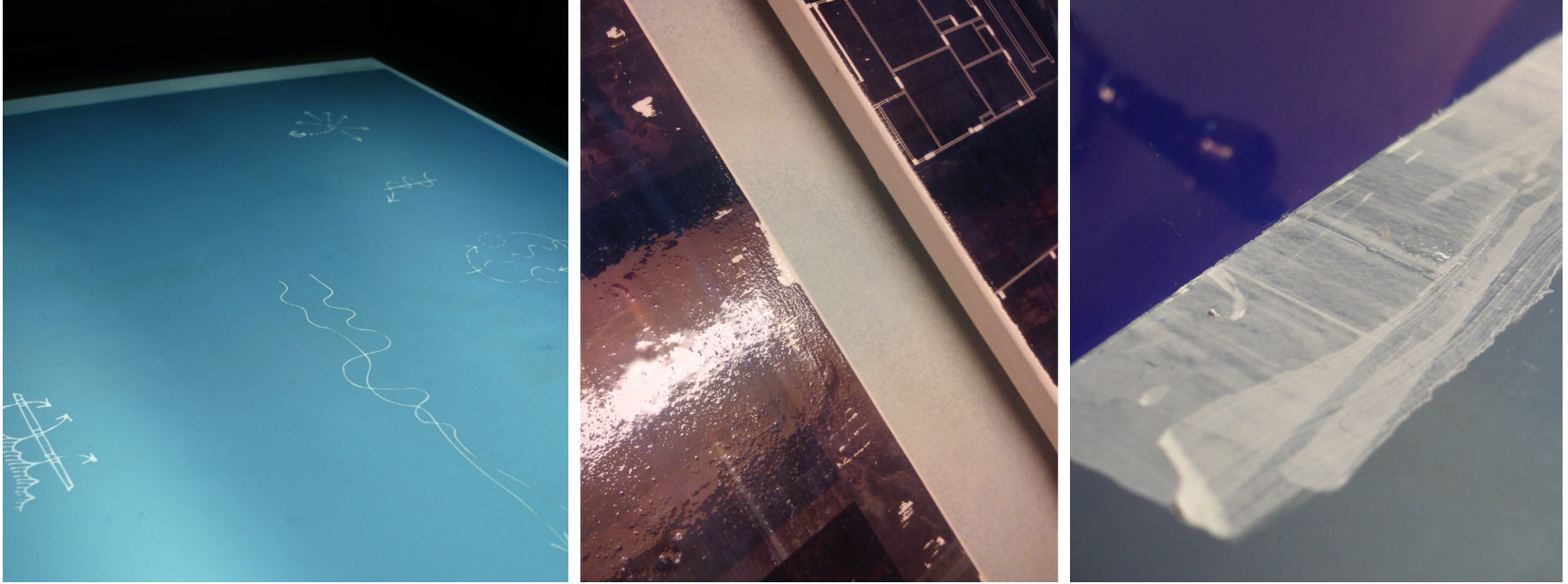


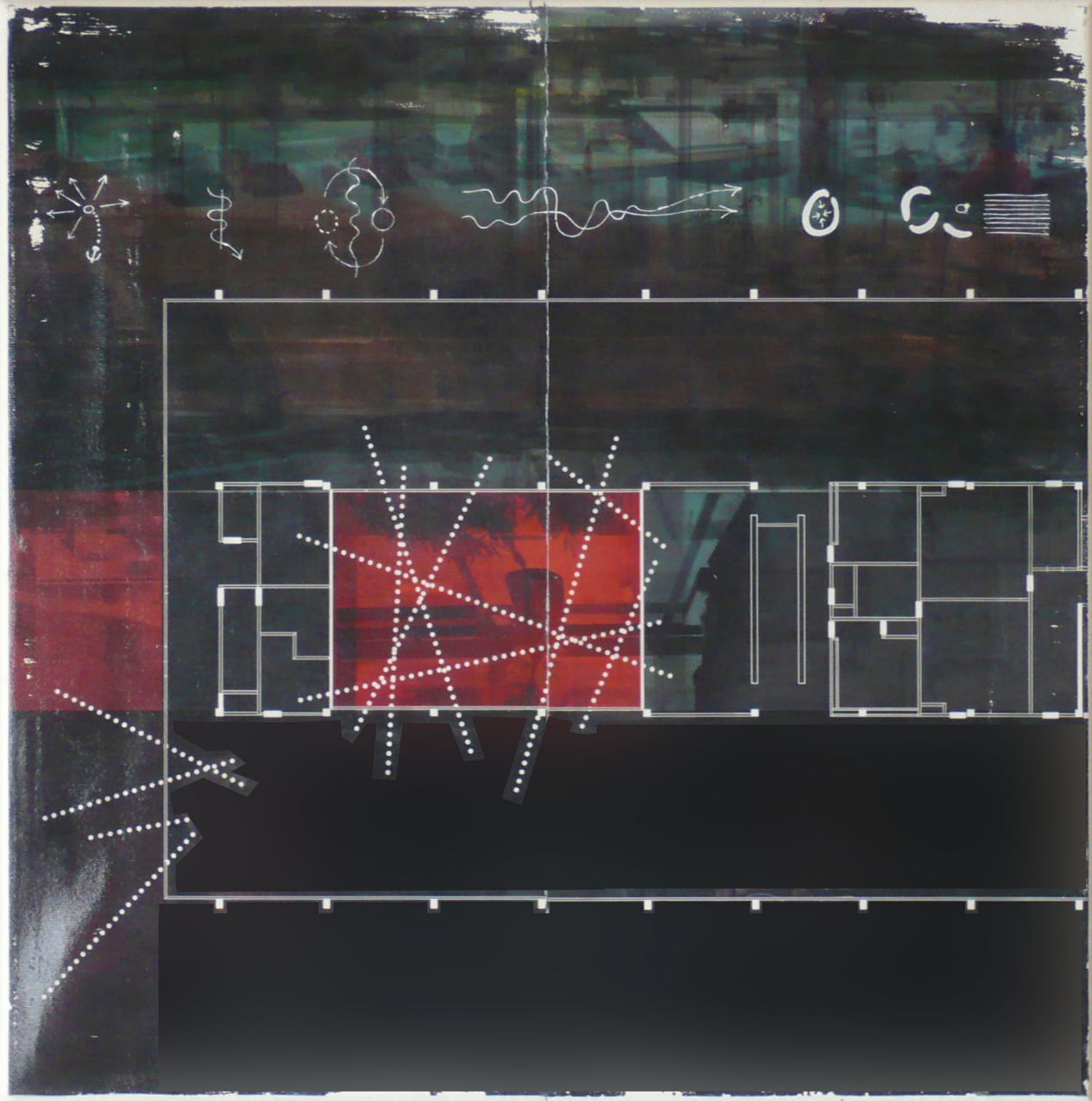
Figure 7.27 Silkscreen Detail (Left) / Figure 7.28 Glazed Canvases with Transfers (Middle) / Figure 7.29 Silkscreen Printing Detail (Right)

detours along the journey. Although intensely frustrating, these digressions proffered the most valuable learning experiences; in cursory readings on film only slightly related to my topic I would often stumble upon a quote which would crystallize the concepts floating in my mind, while conversations with my advisors frequently departed on tangents which resulted in the most extraordinary realizations.²⁷ While much of this information is not directly applied within the work, I have found that through compiling this document that I was covertly influenced by all of these sources. This project owes much of its richness to taking 'the scenic route', and in the future I am fully committed to embracing the detours which cross my path.

The Necessity of Persistence

During this process, there were definitely times when I was ready to completely resign from this project. After

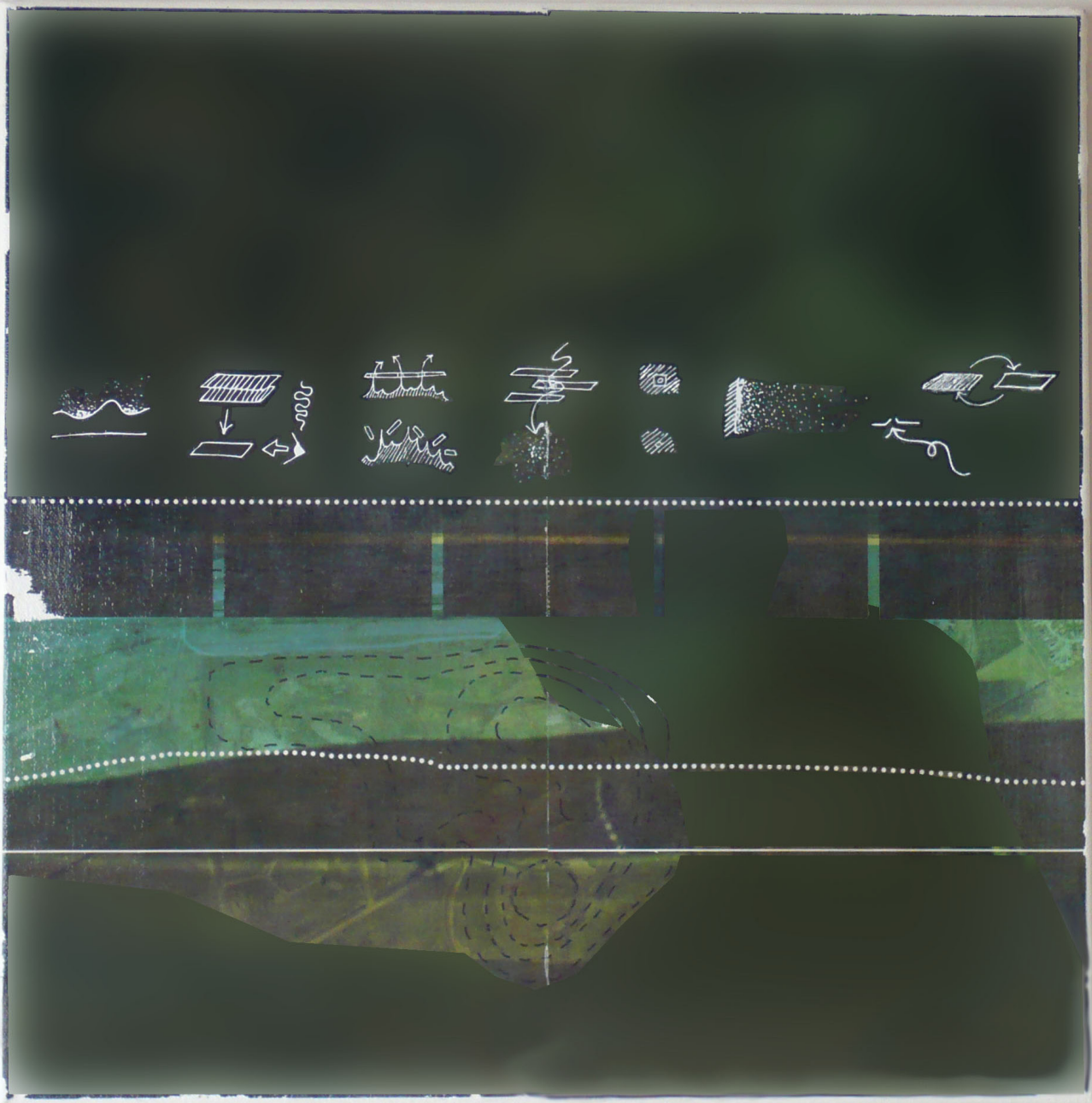
working through countless readings, classes, committee meetings and group seminars, I still felt scattered with a broad topic much too unwieldy to manage. Although this process became rather daunting and depressing at certain points, the most useful remedy was just to keep engaged through writing, drawing or even researching imagery on the Internet.²⁸ Eventually I found my way through the tangled webs of landscape and film: when I decided to focus on Hitchcock and his films, everything just made sense one day and the rest of the work seemed to fall into place. Through continual engagement with the topic during difficult times, I was able to access ideas deeply buried within my subconscious mind: sketching was an incredible, intuitive tool for drawing out these concepts. I truly believe that persistence has been an invaluable tactic for the completion of this arduous project.



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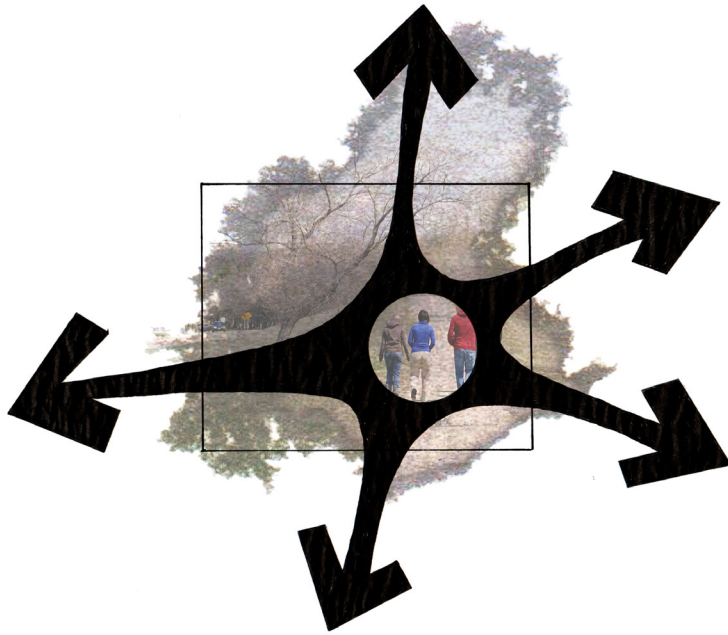


Figure 7.33 Coda Picto-Gram

Coda

At the beginning of this project, I was confused and utterly overwhelmed at the possibilities that cinema held for the realm of landscape architecture. The influence of film is pervasive and insidious, as movies are a common means of entertainment and escape, and a source of covert inspiration for designers whether we aware of this effect or not. This project represents an endeavour to deconstruct this powerful imagery through the use of drawing and composite graphics. Comprehending the manner in which these haunting atmospheres are translated into the material reality of familiar landscapes is the key to unlocking the creative potentials which lie dormant in the cinematic *ostranenie* of the everyday.

NOTES

1 My difficulty in grasping this immense topic is evident in the fact that it took over two years for me just to pinpoint a particular course of study prior to actually beginning work on this project.

2 An introduction to these drawing types is included in Chapter 1.

3 While each of the sub-concepts can be applied a variety of landscape in a number of different ways, I have decided to focus on a select few for the sake of brevity, namely those which were crucial in the generation of the composite graphic imagery.

I would also like to note that although I have studied these three interventions intensively throughout my education and I understand the major design features, I have not visited any of these sites. Relying on accounts largely drawn from academic journals and books, online articles and blogs, I have sought to understand these interventions to the best of my present abilities yet perhaps certain aspects of these sites may elude me. In the future, when I am able to travel to these projects and experience them firsthand, I will have the means to present a more thorough and well-informed discussion. For now, I must remain content to experience these places vicariously through the photographs and textual descriptions available through the library and over the Internet.

4 Susan Close, "The Uber Architect: Frank Lloyd Wright." (unpublished lecture from Design Since 1800 (79.269), University of Manitoba, October 20, 2003).

Susan Close, "Le Corbusier & International Style." (unpublished lecture from Design Since 1800 (79.269), University of Manitoba, October 29, 2003).

Charlie Thomsen, "A New Landscape Expression for Modernist Designers." (unpublished lecture from History of Landscape Architecture (LARC 7260), University of Manitoba, October 16, 2009).

Two predominant sources which lent this impression were history classes I took during both my undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Manitoba. While Close's course referred to the architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier in relation to this desirable inside/outside connection, Thomsen discussed the influence of landscape architect Thomas Church in promoting "the idea that the garden was an outdoor living room and the landscape features were to be designed to enhance the living room experience."

5 Barrett Feldman, "Tropolism Buildings: The De Young Museum of Art," *Tropolism*, updated 27 March 2006, <http://tropolism.com/archives/2006/03/tropolism-buildings-the-de-young-museum-of-art.php>.

6 Ibid.

7 Andrew Blum, "The Peace Maker," in *Metropolis* 25, no. 1 (2005), p.157.

8 Feldman, "Tropolism Buildings."

9 Seiko Goto, "English Gardens." (unpublished lecture from History of Landscape Architecture to 1900 (79.375), University of Manitoba, February 28, 2005).

10 Michel Racine, *Allain Provost: Invented Landscapes*. (West Flanders, Belgium: Stichting Kunstboek, 2005).

Quoted from Jens Balsby Nielsen, Torben Dam and Ian Thompson, "Introduction," in *European Landscape Architecture: Best Practice in Detailing*, eds. Jens Balsby Nielsen, Torben Dam and Ian Thompson. (New York: Routledge, 2007), p.3.

11 This group includes the busy, preoccupied user who is slightly curious and returns to the site later on when she has more time to spend there.

12 Thomas H. Russ, *Redeveloping Brownfields: Landscape Architects, Site Planners, Developers*. (Blacklick, OH: McGraw-Hill Professional, 1999), p.vi.

13 Linda Pollak, "Matrix Landscape: Construction of Identity in the Large Park," in *Large Parks*, eds. Julia Czerniak and George Hargreaves. (New York: Princeton Architecture Press, 2007), p.96-97.

14 Julia Czerniak, "Legibility and Resilience," in *Large Parks*, eds. Julia Czerniak and George Hargreaves. (New York: Princeton Architecture Press, 2007), p.223.

15 Vicky Plestis, "From Garbage Dump to Energy Source", *Gotham Gazette*, updated 5 July 2011, <http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/environment/20110705/7/3556>.

Pollak, "Matrix Landscapes," p.96-97.

Describing the scale of the Freshkills Park project in a recent

article on the subject, Plestis states:

For years, popular urban legend on Staten Island held that there were only two things you could see from space – the Great Wall of China and Fresh Kills Landfill. For over 50 years the landfill served as New York City's receptacle for trash, receiving approximately 29,000 tons of waste each day and spawning mounds reportedly taller than the Statue of Liberty.

Citing historian Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, Pollak explains that this site's "historical identity" as a wetland contributed to the public distaste for Fresh Kills "long before it became a landfill" (p.96, 97). She concludes that: "such sites, commonly called swamps, were not only undesirable, they were also largely inaccessible, operating as huge barriers to different kinds of urban movement" (p.97) and thus a huge stigma against this landscape must be surmounted prior to drawing visitors to this site.

16 While finalizing this document, Marcy remarked that perhaps this concept is not entirely new and has even occurred in Winnipeg. Although this idea is not completely novel – in fact, it is often the role that landscape architects assume within a project by addressing unsavory exterior spaces – the manner in which Field Operations has approached this rather deplorable brownfield site, and shifted deep-seeded perceptions, is rather innovative.

The renderings of the proposed interventions within the Freshkills Park project are completely captivating in relation to the perspective images I have seen for other projects dealing with the remediation of former waste landscapes. When first introduced to these illustrations during a presentation in an elective course on urban parks, I was entranced by the vibrant colours and intrinsic vitality of these digital collages. Utterly convinced not only of the viability of this potential solution, I also thought that perhaps these graphics had begun to take on a life, and an existence, of their own beyond the two-dimensional surface of the computer screen.

When I did eventually search for photographs of the existing Fresh Kills landfill on Flickr.com, I was completely disenchanted by these images and the disconnection between reality and Field Operation's vision for this landscape. I cannot think of any other project, in Winnipeg or elsewhere, for which the conceptual renderings marketed towards the public, i.e. the veneer, have started to transcend the physical site to such an extent that subsequent exposure to the landscape itself has

produced a rather extreme sense of shock. While it is certainly astonishing to compare the gap between what exists and what could potentially be, I think this type of strategy – one in which the proposed scheme attains an almost mythic status due to the accessible, yet vivid depictions – is perhaps necessary for any project to garner popular support in the current age of visual mass-marketing and instant gratification.

17 "Fresh Kills Park Project: Draft Master Plan," Accessed 3 January 2012, *New York City Department of City Planning*, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/fkl/fkl4.shtml>.

The compelling promotional materials and vision statement for this proposal are easily accessed from the website for the NYC's Department of City Planning.

18 Pollok, "Matrix Landscapes," p.93, 97.

Noting that although it is impossible to revert this landscape to a naturalized, pre-industrial state, that is to cover the landfill and pretend it did not exist, Pollock adds that: "any design approach to Fresh Kills must address the inversion from undesirable space to public amenity" (p.97). Thus, any proposal submitted in relation to this site must comprise a certain amount of captivating allure.

19 Plestis, "Garbage Dump."

It is reported in this article that: "the city officially closed Fresh Kills Landfill in 2001 and has since begun a 30-year process of reclaiming it as a park."

20 Czerniak, "Legibility and Resilience," p.223, 226.

Quoted from p.226.

Czerniak also reports that: "Technologically, [Freshkills Park] complies with all landfill regulations while creating phased public use that responds to significant landfill processes, not merely time. Aesthetically, the scheme reveals the unique character of a site that performs as a land-regeneration project" (p.223).

21 Specifically, my vivid imagination convinced me that people would pause to contemplate the canvases, then turn to ask me: "How did you do that?"

22 I must admit that part of this delay was caused by unrealistic expectations, namely the fact that I was still generating the

digital collage for the composites during the week prior to the presentation and, short of a miracle, could not possibly have achieved the production tasks that I had set out to accomplish in the limited time available.

23 While I had successfully worked with both acrylic medium transfers on canvas and silkscreens in the past, I had never attempted such a large-scale transfer and I had never used a Yudu machine. Essentially, both of these processes were first attempts which regrettably failed: while I applied too thin a layer of acrylic medium to the canvas and the image transfer did not adhere properly, I also managed to wreck one of the two Yudu screens I was preparing due to an excess of water which essentially disintegrated the emulsion sheet and consequently the drawings on it.

24 David Alan Robertson, "Casting Alfred Hitchcock: An Art Historical Perspective," in *Casting a Shadow: Creating the Alfred Hitchcock Film*, eds. Will Schmenner and Corinne Granof. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007), p.ix.

Jean Domarchi and Jean Douchet, "An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock," in North by Northwest: *Alfred Hitchcock, Director*, ed. James Naremore. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), p.182.

Citing writer Larry Gross, Robertson eloquently describes the mythic vision of this director and his attitude regarding the 'formality' of production:

Hitchcock announces that nothing about the physical fact of filmmaking interests him. All the essential creative work has been wrapped up before he comes to the set. Making the film is tedious, nearly impertinent necessity, grafted on to the authentic creative work that has already been done.

Hitchcock himself phrases this more succinctly, stating that due to extensive pre-planning efforts, "my film is finished before being shot."

25 "Season 1, Episode 14: It Creeps," *Degrassi High*, DVD, directed by Kit Hood (1990; Boston: WGBH Boston Video, 2007).

Having recently watched this episode, I became aware of a significant lesson offered within the storyline which relates to this notion of creative vision. In this particular scene, high school student Lucy Fernandez (Anais Granofsky) exits the

classroom where her first film, a short horror picture, is being screened for her peers. While sitting dejectedly in the hallway, Lucy is joined by her teacher Mr. Walfish (Adam David), who follows her outside to offer his support.

WALFISH: Hey, what's wrong?

LUCY: They hate it.

WALFISH: They love it!

LUCY: They're laughing at everything. They're not even listening to the dialogue. It was supposed to be scary.

WALFISH: Hey. It's your first film. I think it's terrific. It was a big project and you guys did very well. I'm impressed Ms. Fernandez

LUCY: I wanted it to be perfect

WALFISH: So now you've got a goal for your next film. There's always a gap between what you set out to do and they way it finally turns out. You look at what you've done, and you see where you think you could do better and you do that in your next one. That's how it works. The key is to keep trying. Now come on back in and see your film.

Despite the fact that this message comes from a children's television show, this is an amazingly positive lesson which ultimately validates the creative process and encourages future explorations and that I personally find inspirational.

26 Bruce Mau, "An Incomplete Manifesto for Growth," *Bruce Mau Design*, updated 2011, <http://www.brucemaudesign.com/4817/112450/work/incomplete-manifesto-for-growth>.

27 In retrospect, I do not think I ever left a meeting with Richard without accepting a recommended book to peruse from his amazing library. I am deeply grateful for the worlds of beautiful imagery and fascinating thoughts that I found within these particular sources.

28 During times of decreased creative activities, I resorted to Googling images for various cinematic concepts as well as various contemporary landscape architectural projects to re-ignite my passion for this project.



Illustration Sources

All images in this document, unless otherwise noted, are solely the work of the author.

Chapter 2

Figures 2.4, 2.27 + 2.54

Original works comprising:

USA Map Silhouette, Vector. From RF Clipart. EPS, <http://rfclipart.com/free/usa-map-silhouette-246-vector-clipart.html> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figures 2.5, 2.11, 2.13, 2.15, 2.17, 2.19, 2.21 + 2.23

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Figures 2.6, 2.7, 2.9 + 2.25

Film Stills. From Laurent Bouzereau, 'Rear Window' *Ethics: Remembering and Restoring a Hitchcock Classic*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 2000).

Figure 2.8

Production Still. From Bill Krohn, *Hitchcock at Work*. (London: Phaidon Press, 2000), p.138-139.

Figures 2.28, 2.30, 2.32, 2.34, 2.36, 2.39, 2.41, 2.42, 2.43, 2.46 + 2.49

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Figures 2.29, 2.40, 2.44, 2.45 + 2.50

Film Stills. From Peter Fitzgerald, *Destination Hitchcock: The Making of North by Northwest*, Film. (West Hollywood, CA: Fitzfilm, 2000).

Figures 2.30 + 2.33

R. Dian Durant. *Plaza 3 + UN 1*. Personal photographs commissioned for this practicum project through email correspondence (February - March 2012).

Figure 2.35

Mike Fleming. *Grand Central Station*. From Flickr. JPG, http://www.flickr.com/photos/flem007_uk/2927903962/sizes/o/in/photostream/ (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 2.37

Gryffindor. *Old Westbury Gardens 4*. From Wikimedia Commons. JPG, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Old_Westbury_Gardens_4.JPG (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figures 2.38, 2.48, 2.55 + 2.60

Original works comprising:

Maps. From Google Maps. JPG, <http://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&tab=wl> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figures 2.52, 2.53, 2.56, 2.58, 2.61, 2.63, 2.65, 2.67 + 2.69

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film. (Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figures 2.57, 2.59, 2.62, 2.64, 2.66 + 2.68

Film Stills. From Laurent Bouzereau, *All About The Birds*, Film. (Culver City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2000).

Figures 2.72 + 2.76

Original works comprising:

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film. (Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figure 2.73

Original work comprising:

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film. (Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figures 2.74 + 2.87

Original works comprising:

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Figure 2.75

Original work comprising:

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Chapter 3

Figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.9, 3.11, 3.13, 3.15, 3.17, 3.19 + 3.21

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Figures 3.23, 3.24, 3.27, 3.29, 3.31, 3.33, 3.34 + 3.36

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Figures 3.39, 3.40, 3.43, 3.45, 3.46, 3.49, 3.50 + 3.53
Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film.
(Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figure 3.60

Original work comprising:
Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film.
(Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Atlis Geomatics. *Aerial Photograph (Tiles L13A & L13B)*.
From the University of Manitoba Library. TIFF (2005).

201 Russell Building (Architecture): Third Level Floor Plan.
From the University of Manitoba Physical Plant.
PDF, http://umanitoba.ca/campus/physical_plant/fortgarry/pdfs/201B.pdf (2005; accessed January 13, 2012).

Chapter 4

Figures 4.4, 4.6 + 4.17

Original works comprising:
Aerial Photographs. From Google Maps. JPG, <http://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&tab=wl>
(accessed January 13, 2012).

Figures 4.8, 4.10, 4.12, 4.14, 4.16 + 4.28

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film.
(Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figures 4.24 + 4.26

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*,
Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Chapter 5

Figures 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.8, 5.10, 5.12 + 5.14

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*,
Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Figures 5.17, 5.18, 5.20, 5.22, 5.25 + 5.27

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film.
(Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Figures 5.29, 5.30, 5.33, 5.34, 5.36, 5.39, 5.41 + 5.43

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film.
(Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figure 5.51

Original work comprising:
Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*,
Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Aerial Photograph. From Bing Maps. JPG, <http://www.bing.com/maps/> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Chapter 6

Figures 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.8, 6.11, 6.12, 6.14, 6.16 + 6.18

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film.
(Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Figures 6.21, 6.22, 6.24, 6.26, 6.28 + 6.30

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film.
(Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Figures 6.33, 6.34, 6.36, 6.39, 6.40, 6.42 + 6.44

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*,
Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1959).

Figure 6.50

Original work comprising:
Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film.
(Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

Atlis Geomatics. *Aerial Photograph (Tiles N11C, N11D, P11A & P11B)*.
From the University of Manitoba Library.
TIFF (2005).

Chapter 7

Figure 7.4

Jiat-Hwee Chang. *Stairs and Fern Court*. From Flickr. JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jiathwee/3086303528/> (December 4, 2008; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.5

Methanie Dempsay Binder. *De Young Museum | 2006*. From Flickr, JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/methanie/92702217/> (January 28, 2006; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.6

Joe Fletcher. *Terrarium with Eucalyptus*. From PushPullBar: Architecture + Design Forum. JPG, <http://www.pushpullbar.com/forums/showthread.php?1010-The-New-de-Young> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.7

Thom Watson. *Through the Looking Glass*. From Flickr. JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thomwatson/3249397700/> (July 18, 2008; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.8

Mike Cotter. *Roundabout Seating (M.H. de Young Museum)*. From Flickr, JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/emptyseas/4011357766/> (October 2009; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.9

Frances Hui. *Reading*. From Flickr. JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/79375823@N00/98512314/> (January 15, 2006; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.10

Sébastien Lucas. *Cascade au Milieu des Tours*. From ArchiRef: The Visual Source of Architecture. JPG, <http://www.archiref.com/image/cascade-au-milieu-tours>

(accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.11

Parc Diderot. From Défense-92.fr: Le Site “Actus” de La Défense. JPG, <http://www.defense-92.fr/lesespacesverts.html> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.12

Tomas Sklenar. *Paris 2007: Parc Diderot*. From Flickr. JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/piranu/499251415/in/photostream> (December 2, 2005; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.13

Giacomo Spagnoli. *Cascade (Waterfall), Parc Diderot*. From Daily Photo Stream. JPG, http://dailyphotostream.blogspot.com/2008_03_01_archive.html (March 30, 2008; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.14

Sébastien Lucas. *Détail de la Cascade*. From ArchiRef: The Visual Source of Architecture. JPG, <http://www.archiref.com/image/detail-cascade> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.15

Sébastien Lucas. *Escalier le long de la Cascade*. From ArchiRef: The Visual Source of Architecture. JPG, <http://www.archiref.com/image/escalier-long-cascade> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.16

The Fresh Kills Dump in New York. From The Telegraph. JPG, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-reviews/8390859/Dirt-the-Filthy-Reality-of-Everyday-Life-Wellcome-Collection.html> (accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.17

James Corner/Field Operations et al. *Arc Path*. From Freshkills Park: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. PDF, <http://www.nycgovparks.org/park-features/freshkills-park/design-and-construction> (April 9, 2008; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.18

James Corner/Field Operations et al. *Plateau and Seed Farm*. From Freshkills Park: New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. PDF, <http://www.nycgovparks.org/park-features/freshkills-park/design-and-construction> (April 9, 2008; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.19

Jamie Allen. *Fresh Kills*. From Flickr. JPG, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/heavyside/2049547254/> (October 12, 2007; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.20

James Corner/Field Operations et al. *Fresh Kills Park: Schematic Design Diagram Showing Systems of Habitat, Program and Circulation*. From Linda Pollak, "Matrix Landscape: Construction of Identity in the Large Park," in *Large Parks*, eds. Julia Czerniak and George Hargreaves. (New York: Princeton Architecture Press, 2007), p.101.

Figure 7.21

James Corner/Field Operations et al. *Freshkills Park*. From Eating Bark. JPG, http://covblogs.com/eatingbark/archives/2008/11/field_operationsfresh_kills.html (November 20, 2008; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.22, 7.30, 7.31 + 7.32

Original works comprising:

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window*, Film. (Hollywood: Paramount Pictures, 1954).

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *North by Northwest*, Film. (Culver City, CA: MGM Pictures, 1954).

Film Stills. From Alfred Hitchcock, *The Birds*, Film. (Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 1963).

201 Russell Building (Architecture): Third Level Floor Plan. From the University of Manitoba Physical Plant. PDF, http://umanitoba.ca/campus/physical_plant/fortgarry/pdfs/201B.pdf (2005; accessed January 13, 2012).

Figure 7.33

Original work comprising:

Joy Aquino-Javier. *Pathway Image, Minnedosa, Manitoba*. Private collection. (May 22, 2009).

NB: Entries which appear in grey have been removed from this document prior to submission due to difficulties in securing copyright permission to include this imagery. Within certain graphics created expressly for this project (labelled as "original work") this copyright-sensitive material has been blurred and covered to retain the original photographs produced by the author of this practicum.



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Filmography

A select list of feature films which were viewed and/or discussed and/or contemplated over the course of this practicum project. Information includes their original release date, studio or distribution company and director as well as their genre classification according to the *Internet Movie Database* (www.imdb.com).

28 Days Later (2002), DNA Films: d. Danny Boyle
[horror, sci-fi, thriller]

American Beauty (1999), DreamWorks: d. Sam Mendes
[drama]

Annie Hall (1977), United Artists: d. Woody Allen
[comedy, drama, romance]

L'Atalante (1934), Jean-Louis Nunez: d. Jean Vigo
[drama, romance]

The Big Lebowski (1998), Polygram Filmed Entertainment: d. Joel & Ethan Coen [comedy, crime]
Blade Runner (1982), Warner Bros: d. Ridley Scott [drama, sci-fi, thriller]
Blue Velvet (1986), Paramount: d. David Lynch [crime, mystery, thriller]
The Boat (1921), First National Pictures: d. Buster Keaton & Edward F. Cline [short, comedy, family]
Brazil (1985), Embassy International Pictures: d. Terry Gilliam [drama, sci-fi, fantasy]
Breakfast at Tiffany's (1961), Paramount: d. Blake Edwards [comedy, drama, romance]
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920), Goldwyn Distributing Company: d. Robert Wiene [horror]
Casablanca (1942), Warner Bros: d. Michael Curtiz [drama, romance]
Citizen Kane (1941), RKO: d. Orson Welles [drama, mystery]
The Count of Monte Cristo (2002), Touchstone: d. Kevin Reynolds [action, adventure, crime, drama, history, romance, thriller]
The Draughtsman's Contract (1982), United Artists: d. Peter Greenaway [drama, mystery]
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (2004), Focus Features: d. Michel Gondry [drama, romance, sci-fi]
Eyes Wide Shut (1999), Warner Bros: d. Stanley Kubrick [drama, mystery, thriller]
The Fifth Element (1997), Columbia: d. Luc Besson [action, sci-fi, thriller]
The Graduate (1967), MGM: d. Mike Nichols [comedy, drama, romance]
Groundhog Day (1993), Columbia: d. Harold Ramis [comedy, drama, fantasy]
I Am Legend (2007), Warner Bros: d. Francis Lawrence [drama, sci-fi, thriller]

The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus (2009), Sony Pictures Classics: d. Terry Gilliam [adventure, fantasy, mystery]
The Immigrant (1917), Mutual Film: d. Charlie Chaplin & Edward Brewer [short, comedy, drama]
Inception (2010), Warner Bros: d. Christopher Nolan [action, adventure, sci-fi]
The International (2009), Columbia: d. Tom Tykwer [action, crime, mystery]
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956), Allied Artists: d. Don Siegel [horror, sci-fi]
La Strada (1954), Trans Lux: d. Federico Fellini [drama]
The Lady Eve (1941), Paramount: d. Preston Sturges [comedy, crime, romance]
Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1977), Paramount: d. Richard Brooks [drama]
Manhattan (1979), United Artists: d. Woody Allen [comedy, drama, romance]
The Matrix (1999), Warner Bros: d. Andy & Larry Wachowski [action, adventure, sci-fi]
Midnight Cowboy (1969), United Artists: d. John Schlesinger [drama]
My Best Friend's Wedding (1997), Tri Star: d. P.J. Hogan [comedy, romance]
The Navigator (1924), MGM: d. Buster Keaton & Donald Crisp [comedy]
Night on Earth (1991), Fine Line Features: d. Jim Jarmusch [comedy, drama]
Nights of Cabiria (1957), Paramount: d. Federico Fellini [drama, romance]
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer (2006), Constantin Film: d. Tom Tykwer [drama, thriller]
Pleasantville (1998), Warner Bros: d. Garry Ross [comedy, drama, fantasy]
Punch-Drunk-Love (2002), Columbia: d. Paul Thomas Anderson [comedy, drama, romance]

The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985), Orion Pictures: d. Woody Allen [comedy, fantasy, romance]
Requiem for a Dream (2000), Artisan Entertainment: d. Darren Aronofsky [drama]
Rocco and his Brothers (1960), Astor: d. Luchino Visconti [crime, drama, sport]
Rosemary's Baby (1968), Paramount: d. Roman Polanski [drama, horror, mystery]
The Royal Tenenbaums (2001), Touchstone: d. Wes Anderson [comedy, drama]
Run Lola Run (1998), Sony Pictures Classics: d. Tom Tykwer [crime, thriller]
Satyricon (1969), Produzioni Europee Associati: d. Federico Fellini [drama, fantasy]
The September Issue (2009), Roadside Attractions: d. R. J. Cutler [documentary]
Soylent Green (1973), MGM: d. Richard Fleischer [drama, mystery, sci-fi]
The Squid and the Whale (2005), Samuel Goldwyn Films: d. Noah Baumbach [comedy, drama]
The Stepford Wives (2004), DreamWorks: d. Frank Oz [comedy, sci-fi, thriller]
The Stolen Children (1992), The Samuel Goldwyn Company: d. Gianni Amerlio [drama]
Sunset Blvd. (1950), Paramount: d. Billy Wilder [drama, film-noir]
Surrogates (2009), Touchstone: d. Jonathan Mostow [action, sci-fi, thriller]
The Swimmer (1968), Columbia: d. Frank Perry [drama]
Synecdoche, New York (2008), Sony Pictures Classics: d. Charlie Kaufmann [comedy, drama]
Touch of Evil (1958), Universal: d. Orson Welles [crime, film-noir, thriller]
The Tracey Fragments (2007), THINKFilm: d. Bruce McDonald [drama]
The Truman Show (1998), Paramount: d. Peter Weir [comedy, drama, sci-fi]

Two Weeks Notice (2002), Warner Bros: d. Marc Lawrence [comedy, romance]
Umberto D. (1952), Criterion: d. Vittorio De Sica [drama]
Valley Girl (1983), Atlantic Releasing: d. Martha Coolidge [comedy, romance]
Vanilla Sky (2001), Paramount: d. Cameron Crowe [mystery, romance, sci-fi]
Videodrome (1983), Universal Studios: d. David Cronenberg [fantasy, mystery, sci-fi, thriller]
The Village (2004), Touchstone: d. M. Night Shyamalan [mystery, thriller]
The Wicker Man (2006), Warner Bros: d. Neil LaBute [horror, mystery, thriller]
Zombieland (2009), Columbia: d. Ruben Fleischer [action, adventure, comedy]

Hitchcock Films

Mr. & Mrs. Smith (1941), Warner Bros
Saboteur (1942), Universal
Shadow of a Doubt (1943), Universal
Spellbound (1945), United Artists
Notorious (1946), RKO
Rope (1948), Universal
Strangers on a Train (1951), Warner Bros
Dial M for Murder (1954), Warner Bros
Rear Window (1954), Universal
The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956), Universal
The Wrong Man (1956), Warner Bros
Vertigo (1958), Universal
North by Northwest (1959), MGM
Psycho (1960), Universal
The Birds (1963), Universal
Marnie (1964), Universal



PHEWPH.

that was intense.