



Jubilee Lecture Series

INTO FILM, with Arthur Wenk

Wednesday afternoons, 1:00 – 2:30

February 2
Stagecoach



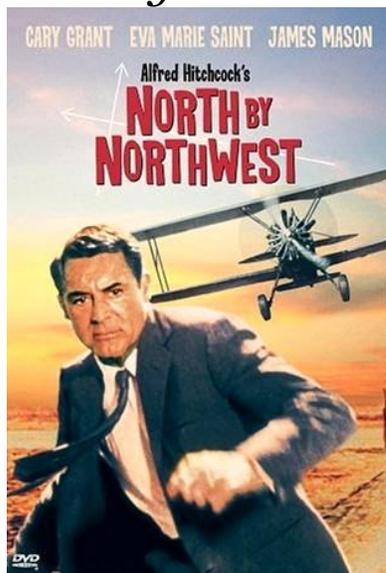
February 9
His Girl Friday



February 16
Meet Me in St. Louis



February 23
North by Northwest



March 2
Annie Hall



Stagecoach (John Ford, 1939)



What is the story about?

Nine socially disparate characters on a journey, in responding to its challenges, re-evaluate their opinions of one another and question the “blessings of civilization.”

How do you know that this is what it is about?

“Nine socially disparate characters”

Characters and Their Goals		
BUCK RICKA-BAUGH	(Andy Devine)	stage driver going to visit his large Mexican family in Lordsburg
CURLEY WILCOX	(George Bancroft)	marshal going along as guard, trying to capture the Ringo Kid
DOC JOSIAH BOONE	(Thomas Mitchell)	alcoholic, forced to leave Tonto by the Law and Order League
RINGO KID	(John Wayne)	escaped convict wants to get to Lordsburg to avenge himself on the Plummer brothers, who killed his father and brother and framed him for murder
HATFIELD	(John Carradine)	former Confederate officer and southern aristocrat who, after the Confederacy’s defeat in the Civil War, has become a drifting gambler
DALLAS	(Claire Trevor)	prostitute forced out of town by the Law and Order League
MRS. LUCY MALLORY	(Louise Platt)	pregnant wife trying to find her husband, an officer in the cavalry
ELLSWORTH H. GATEWOOD	(Berton Churchill)	bank manager fleeing with the payroll money deposited in the bank
SAMUEL PEACOCK	(Donald Meek)	timid whiskey salesman on his way home to join his wife in Kansas City

Dallas is the key character: all the characters can be defined by their attitudes toward her

Ford focuses on the relationship between the individual and the group, and the group in its larger social context. Motto for plots and for filming: “actions speak louder than words.”

“on a journey”

Stagecoach: Symmetrical Narrative Structure

Departure

- Prologue: cavalry receives word of Indian uprising
- Introduction: we meet most of the main characters and learn their class distinctions and goals for the journey

Journey

- The first leg of the trip on the stagecoach to Lordsburg
- The Dry Fork way station where the coach stops for food - includes the memorable dinner table scene
- The second leg of the trip toward Apache Wells in the snow
- The Apache Wells (Mexican) outpost, where Lucy's baby is born (night); Ringo proposes to Dallas
- The final leg of the trip to Lordsburg, including the river crossing, the exciting Indian attack and the cavalry rescue

Arrival

- Conclusion: resolution for the main characters; Ringo Kid faces the Plummers in a shoot-out
- Epilogue: Ringo and Dallas depart for Ringo's ranch

“in responding to its challenges re-evaluate their opinions of one another”

- Doc keeps filching drinks from Peacock's sample case. But he sobers up enough to deliver Lucy's baby and stands up to the Plummers in the tavern before the shoot-out. His “just one” at the end suggests that even he has been reformed somewhat by his experiences on the trip.
- Gatewood scowls, complains, and generally gets in the way. (When Peacock is shot by an arrow, Doc has to slug Gatewood to stop his interference.)
- Hatfield constantly does little favours for Mrs. Mallory, e.g. letting her drink from a silver cup rather than from the common canteen.
- Ringo constantly insists that the company regard Dallas as “the other lady.”
- Peacock keeps correcting mistakes of his name, or supplying it for those who forget it completely.
- Dallas selflessly tends Lucy's baby and gives Lucy her shawl when they arrive in Lordsburg.

“and question the ‘blessings of civilization’”

1. Doc Boone: “A proud, glorified dreg”
 - An unapologetic alcoholic
 - Kindness extended to all the characters, not just Dallas and Ringo
2. “Saved from the blessings of civilization”
 - Downward social progression: the social order seems to allow moves only down the class ladder, never up
 - Frontier Thesis (Frederick Jackson Turner, 1893): contrast between the aristocratic values of the Eastern cities and the democratic values of the Western frontier
 - Dystopic view of civilization

Clip 1 (First 20 minutes)

1. Narrative shorthand: a series of dissolves takes the riders into a cavalry camp and a telegraph office, where a group of men receive a single coded word before the lines go dead: “Geronimo.”
2. Vignette Style: brief cameos to establish stereotypical characters
 - Buck: squeaky style of speaking; other characters speak over him; as a consequence, we don't take him seriously
 - Lucy: hesitant; we suspect a link with Hatfield

- Gatewood: repeated shot with low camera angle making him look imposing, accompanied by a frown; shadows behind him in shape of cross or prison bars
- Hatfield: gambler, claims gentility (others call him “no gentleman”)
- Dallas: bows to necessity—physically compelled by army of women and the authority of the sheriff, but she protests her ill treatment, flounces her skirt at whistlers—a gesture that suggests her independence
- Curly: all business; decisive (hears Ringo Kid is headed to Lordsburg so he decides to ride shotgun on the stagecoach)
- Doc: forced out of town; drunken by grandiloquent; polite (apologizes for cigar smoke); not intimidated by gentry in encounter with Hatfield
- Peacock: comic figure—nobody gets his name right; repeatedly mistaken for a clergyman; Doc seizes his sample case
- Ringo: delayed entrance with special dolly shot; friendly (inquires after driver’s family); sure of himself (“you may need my rifle”)

Notice how little these introductions depend on content of dialogue and how much on gesture, tone of voice, or rhythm of dialogue. Clear division between the elite (Hatfield, Gatewood and Mrs. Mallory) and the lower working class (the others)

3. Contrast between the epic grandeur of Monument Valley (against which the stagecoach appears insignificant) and the constricted space of the coach interior, emphasized by tight shots with never more than two or three people in the frame.
4. Reaction shots, often wordless, tell us about both speaker and listener

Clip 2 (Personal Histories, 4:00)

1. Virtual absence of dialogue gives added weight to the occasional words
 - a. “May I find you another place, Mrs. Mallory? It's cooler by the window.” Euphemism for his actual motive, removing her from the embarrassment of sitting beside Dallas.
 - b. “Looks like I got the plague, don't it,” Ringo says as Gatewood moves to the end of the table with the other two members of the elite. He doesn't understand that Dallas is being shunned, not he.
 - c. Lucy: “Have you ever been in Virginia?”
Hatfield: “I was in your father’s regiment.” The tone of voice in which Hatfield utters these words changes our attitude toward him. He really is acting out of concern for a fellow southern aristocrat.
2. Communication by visual imagery: see how long it takes for Lucy, Hatfield and Gatewood to leave their seats and locate new ones, and how much is conveyed by glances given and received, along with their refusal to interact with Dallas. Then Ford pulls back for a long shot showing the result of the conflict. But then, just when our indignation is strongest, Ford isolates Hatfield and Lucy together for a sympathetic exchange.

Clip 3 (Sobering Situation, 7:30)

1. Precipitating crisis: Mrs. Mallory faints
2. Those who talk: Gatewood blusters about the absence of cavalry; Hatfield complains about Doc’s delay
3. Those who act: Curly and Ringo help Doc get sober; Dallas calls for hot water and the assistance of the innkeeper’s wife; together Doc and Dallas deliver the baby. Later we learn that Dallas stayed up all night keeping watch over Lucy. We see in the morning braiding Lucy’s hair. (Again, no dialogue.) Dallas has also made broth for Mrs. Mallory. The disparate group is almost completely united by the common purpose of seeing that Lucy’s baby is delivered safely.

Clip 4 (Under Attack, 9:00)

1. Cross-cutting to underline the relative weakness of the stagecoach compared with the strength and determination of the Apaches, led by Geronimo; camera angles: even on the ground looking upwards at the Apaches

2. Problem of verisimilitude: every time a passenger fires, an Indian falls; most of the Apache shots miss. And why don't the Indians simply fire at the horses?
3. Use of sound:
 - a. virtually no dialogue in the 9-minute sequence: a great example of pure cinema
 - b. Just as Doc proposes a toast, an arrow enters the coach and strikes Peacock. We hear the arrow and see Doc's reaction before we observe Peacock fall; we also hear the sound of the Apache rifles before we see the Apaches
 - c. Famous sequence in which Hatfield, down to his last bullet, plans to kill Lucy to prevent her from falling into the hands of the Apaches. Then a shot, and his hand falls. We have been hearing trumpet-like music in the background, but then Lucy says, "Can you hear it? Can you hear it? It's a bugle. They're blowing the charge." Only Lucy's line tells us that this is now a sound **within** the story, that signals their rescue.
4. Famous stunt: Apache jumps on horses; when shot, he falls beneath the carriage but stands up on the other side, showing that it is a real human rather than a dummy. (Later the same stuntman portrays Ringo jumping across the horses to regain control.)

Clip 5 (Man of Honor; Saved, total 8:30)

1. Atypical shoot-out scene: expressionist evening darkness instead of high noon on an empty main street; cross-cutting between the Plummer brothers and Ringo rather than antagonists acting within the same frame. Ford cuts away from the action: Ringo falls to the ground and we cut to Dallas' reaction to the sounds of gunfire: imagination stronger than depiction.
2. Epilogue reverses the action of the Prologue, with Ringo and Dallas riding off as Doc observes that they've been "spared the blessings of civilization."

His Girl Friday (Howard Hawks, 1940)



What is the story about?

An ace newspaper reporter, planning to quit journalism for marriage, thwarted by her editor/ex-husband, whom she unconsciously still loves, realizes she is really a “newspaperman.”

How do you know that this is what it is about?

“An ace newspaper reporter, planning to quit journalism for marriage”

Play	Film
	Part 1: Prologue: Hildy arrives at newsroom with her fiancé, Bruce Baldwin. We learn about the Earl Williams story and Hildy informs Walter of her intention to leave with Bruce on the four o'clock train. Walter takes Hildy and Bruce to lunch.
Act I: Newsroom buzzes with talk of the impending hanging of convicted cop-killer, Earl Williams. Hildy announces his intention to get married and leave the newspaper business. Ends with news of Earl Williams's escape.	Part 2: Introduction to the pressroom and the reporters, who await the hanging of Earl Williams. Ends with Earl Williams's escape.
Act II: Earl Williams appears in the pressroom and Hildy and Mollie hide him in a desk. When the reporters return and press for an explanation, Mollie jumps out the window.	Part 3: F
Act III: The Sheriff, discovering Earl Williams's gun, handcuffs Walter and Hildy. A messenger appears with a stay of execution from the Governor. Walter sends Hildy on his way with a pocket watch as a present, then calls to arrange for his arrest for its theft.	Part 4: The discovery of Williams in the desk, the arrival of Williams's reprieve, and the resolution of the conflict between Walter and Hildy.

“thwarted by her editor/ex-husband”

- offers Hildy a higher salary to return to the newspaper
- Deliberately mistakes Bruce for an old man in the waiting room, and then mocks Bruce's over preparedness for bad weather when it's a perfectly fair day
- At lunch makes fun of the couple's plan to live in Albany with Bruce's mother. Walter's veiled insults cause Hildy to kick him repeatedly under the table.

- Tells Hildy that Sweeney, his only other reporter capable of handling the Earl Williams story, is looking after his wife who has delivered triplets. (Hildy remembers that Sweeney has been married only four months).
- Offers to buy a life insurance policy from Bruce—the medical exam will delay their departure—provided Hildy writes the Earl Williams story. Hildy calculates the commission on the policy and instructs Bruce to take him up on it, but she demands a certified check from Walter.
- Bruce gets arrested for supposedly stealing a watch from Diamond Louie, Walter’s henchman. (Louie also pickpockets Bruce’s wallet, hoping to get Walter’s check back.) When Hildy learns of the manipulation, she noisily tears up the story she had drafted.
- Walter sends Louie’s girlfriend Benji to get Bruce arrested again by claiming that he was a “masher.” Then he sends Louie with \$450 of counterfeit money to deliver to Hildy.
- Walter pretends to be pushing Hildy off to Albany when Bruce telephones to say that he has been arrested again for possessing counterfeit money.

“whom she unconsciously still loves” [Telephone: Hildy’s essential link to Walter]

- In the first scene in Walter’s office we see two symmetrically placed telephones on his desk, which echo the symmetry of Walter’s and Hildy’s bodies in Hawks’s frame.
- Hildy, angry with Walter’s machinations, rips the telephone from the wall.
- In the pressroom, Hildy races back and forth between two telephones: one that links her with Bruce (in jail again) and the other that links her with Walter (in his office).
- Second episode with two telephones—after Hildy hangs up Bruce’s phone to continue speaking softly with Walter, Bruce’s phone topples over, implying the beginning of his collapse in her affections.

“realizes she is really a ‘newspaperman.’” [Hildy’s coat]

- After lunch at the restaurant, Walter, in his typical ungentlemanly way, does not help Hildy with her coat, but Bruce does.
- When Hildy asserts her farewell to the newspaper game, she is unable to put her coat on properly because she has unknowingly stuck her right arm in its left sleeve, and, rather than calmly and rationally extricate this errant arm, she irrationally continues jamming the arm down the wrong sleeve. The coat sleeve is a simple Hawks object that conveys more about Hildy’s mind and feelings—the fact that she is literally at war with herself—than all her words.
- After Earl’s escape, Hildy reveals the triumph of her newspaperman’s instincts when, her back to the camera, she slowly takes the coat off. This physical gesture conveys her decision to stay.
- In the last scene Walter hands Hildy her coat in a meretricious attempt to send her on her way

Clip 1 (#1 Start; #2 Lord of the Universe, 14:46)

- **Camera movement:** Three long tracking shots—the newsroom and its inhabitants (reporters, copyboys, switchboard operators); Hildy’s passage through the newsroom; her return following Walter. Bruce’s appearance brings the camera movement to a dead stop.
- **Action:** Hildy and Walter move the same way (“*The two apparent antagonists ... rove about the office in the same rhythm as they speak, including a masterful moment when Hildy, without missing a verbal beat, tosses her purse at Walter’s head from behind, and he, without either seeing it or missing a verbal beat, ducks the throw perfectly and tells her that her arm used to be better, then answers his telephone without losing a beat. When they sit down, they sit close to one another on a desk, shoulder to shoulder, in precisely the same attitudes their bodies touching slightly but chummily, captured by a symmetrical framing which makes them perfect physical and hence spiritual halves of the same visual frame. Everything over which Hildy has no control—the pace and inflections of her voice, the movements of her body, her posture, her physical position in the frame—refutes the surface claims of her words.*”)

- **Sound:** Hildy and Walter speak at the same rapid tempo. Rosalind Russell, playing Hildy, speaks in a baritone voice at the same pitch as Cary Grant, playing Walter. Bruce, by contrast, speaks very slowly, and clearly has no place in this environment (as underlined by gate and the “No Admittance” sign).
- **Framing:** *“In shot after shot of His Girl Friday, Hildy and Walter occupy the same frame in perfectly balanced symmetrical compositions, implying the essential harmony and complementarity of the two regardless of their verbal warfare.”*

Clip 2 (#3 Lunch with Walter, 9:23)

- **Framing:** Walter takes Bruce’s chair, then sits between Hildy and Bruce. Hawks uses two-shots to emphasize how Walter is separating the two, or three-shots in which Walter and Hildy face the same way.
- **Actions:** Walter and Hildy smoke (she lights his cigarette), Bruce does not; Walter and Hildy share a laugh about Albany and Sweeney’s imaginary twins; Walter and Hildy take rum in their coffee, Bruce does not

Clip 3 (#6 Earl Williams Interview, 2:41)

- **Angle:** high shot emphasizes Earl in cage-like captivity
- **Actions:** Hildy’s skill as a reporter (bribing the jailer in order to get the story) and her qualities as a woman (Hildy’s voice becomes soft, slow, and sympathetic, drawing Williams out in a way a male reporter might not). *“The camera frames the two of them. Neither the camera nor the characters move during the remainder of the conversation. The camera’s judicious intimacy and delicacy mirrors Hildy’s own sensitive response to this condemned man whom she is going to use (she wants her story) but not abuse or make feel used.”*

Clip 4 (#9 Watch Thief, 3:26)

Actions:

- Hildy uses telephone to make Walter listen to her tearing up the story
- Hildy proves unable to put on her coat or locate her hat, actions that betray her works
- Hildy tears the telephone (her connection with Walter) out of the wall

Clip 5 (#11 Jail Break, 6:23)

Actions:

- Hildy takes off her coat, assures Walter “I’m on the job”
- Hildy chases and tackles a deputy in order to learn how Earl got the gun that enabled his escape

Editing:

- Montage to capture the excitement of the jailbreak and the police response

Clip 6 (#12 Masher, 1:18)

Actions:

- Hildy dashes back and forth between two telephones
- Ralph Bellamy joke—Walter and the storyteller in an “in” joke—Ralph Bellamy is the actual actor playing Bruce Baldwin
- Walter’s machinations: the floozy and the counterfeit money

Clip 7 (#15 Earl Drops In, 5:34)

Actions:

- Hildy's second episode with two telephones, at the end of which the phone on which she has been talking to Bruce falls over

Clip 8 (#19 Out on bail, 2:41)

Actions:

- Verbal trio: Walter on telephone, Hildy madly typing, Bruce in the middle, helpless and useless (in fact, Hildy types his words into the article by mistake)

Clip 9 (#25 Apprehending Williams, 0:47)

Camera movement:

- *“As the police lead Earl out of the pressroom and back to his cell, Hawks accomplishes a dazzling synthesis of physical motion, visual continuity and verbal commentary. Earl's walk manages to put each of the successive descriptions by the reports into the same frame with the retiring prisoner.”*

Clip 10 (#28 Noble Walter?, 4:43)

Actions:

- Walter, trying to persuade Hildy to leave with Bruce, hands her her coat
- Hildy comes to her senses at last, but the proposed honeymoon with Walter may never happen

Meet Me in St. Louis (Vincente Minelli, 1944)



What is the story about?

A series of vignettes, observing the conventions of the Hollywood musical, depict a father out of step with his family, a story told through music.

How do you know that this is what it is about?

“A series of vignettes”

Summer 1903

- Smith family introduced, each member humming or singing sections of the title song and offering an opinion on the ketchup being made in the kitchen by Mrs. Anna Smith (Mary Astor) and the household maid, Katie (Marjorie Main).
- Esther (Judy Garland), unsuccessful at attracting the attention of neighbour John Truett (Tom Drake), sings “The Boy Next Door.”
- Tootie (Margaret O’Brien) accompanies the ice-man Mr. Neely (Chill Wills) on his rounds.
- Mr. Smith (Leon Ames) arrives and presides over dinner as Rose (Lucille Bremer) waits in vain for a long-distance proposal from her boyfriend, Warren Sheffield (Robert Sully), while the family hangs on every word.
- A going-away party for Princeton-bound Lon (Henry H. Daniels, Jr.) includes an impromptu Virginia reel and a cakewalk performed by Esther and Tootie.
- As the guests depart, John accompanies Esther in turning out all the gaslights and she sings “Over the Bannister” to him.
- A group of young people sing “The Trolley Song” en route to the fairgrounds to inspect preparations for the World’s Fair, still six months off

Autumn 1903

- Agnes (Joan Carroll) and Tootie join the rest of the neighbourhood kids in a Halloween celebration featuring a bonfire and a flour attack by Tootie on the dreaded Mr. Braukoff
- When Tootie comes home in tears, alleging that John Truett has attacked her, Esther rushes next door to beat him up. When the truth comes out—John was hiding Tootie from the police after a prank—Esther apologizes and receives her first kiss.
- Mr. Smith’s announcement that he has been transferred to New York and that the family will move just after Christmas upsets the entire family. Loyal, Mrs. Smith accompanies him at the piano as he sings “You and I.”

Winter 1903

- Rose, dateless for the Christmas Ball, reluctantly agrees to go with her brother Lon. When John Truett's tuxedo is locked in the store, Esther agrees to attend the dance with her grandfather (Harry Davenport).
- An elegant ball scene, with partners re-paired: Lucille Ballard (June Lockhart) with Lon, Rose with Warren. Eventually John arrives properly attired.
- In a moonlit scene, John proposes to Esther, their future entirely uncertain.
- Esther tries to console the distraught Tootie with a song, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," but Tootie, traumatized at the prospect of the family's move, rushes into the backyard and destroys a family of Snow People.
- Mr. Smith, witnessing the destruction, reconsiders, then assembles the family to announce that they will not move to New York after all. Warren Sheffield arrives abruptly and blurts out a proposal to Rose.

Spring 2004

- The entire family, splendidly decked out, attends the opening of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, featuring a display of electric lighting at the Palace of Electricity.

"observing the conventions of the Hollywood musical"

- Folk Art (to bridge the gap between amateur and professional, e.g., "Skip to My Lou")
- Spontaneity—the illusion of unrehearsed performance (e.g., "Under the Bamboo Tree" cakewalk)
- The Impromptu Proscenium (e.g., the window in "The Boy Next Door" or the arch in "Under the Bamboo Tree")
- The Natural Audience (the group of young people in "Under the Bamboo Tree")
- Nostalgia (period songs, instrumental numbers and dances, e.g., one-step and cakewalk)

"depict a father out of step with his family"

- Father hates the title song
- Father not told reason for family wanting to eat early
- When Tootie is hurt, a doctor is summoned rather than Mr. Smith: "What good could he do?"
- Wants to move the family to New York for financial reasons when the family is more concerned with personal relationships (Grandpa, Katie, boyfriends)
- Mr. Smith is the only one to eat Katie's Halloween cake
- Yet Mrs. Smith accompanies him in a song they have presumably sung together before

"a story told through music"

- The title song, passed from one character to the next, conveys the unity of the Smith family. Grandpa mistakes some of the words and has forgotten others. Mr. Smith's interruption of the song, which he detests, sets him apart from the rest of the family.
- The use of period music ties the film to its 1904 time frame
- In the *Skip to My Lou* sequence, the phrase "lost my partner" refers to Esther's efforts to connect with neighbour John Truett
- Mrs. Smith, accompanying her husband in the sentimental "You and I," transposes the song down to his range, a musical indication of her loyalty
- Modern songs, from 1944, convey emotions that could not be expressed either verbally or musically in the language available in 1904: Esther's affections for John in "The Boy Next Door" and "The Trolley Song," deeply felt family ties in "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"

Songs Old and New

Old Songs	New Songs
"Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis" 1904	"The Boy Next Door", 1944
"Skip to My Lou", Traditional	"Over the Banister" 1944
"Under the Bamboo Tree" 1902	"The Trolley Song" 1944
"Goodbye, My Lady Love" (Instrumental) 1904	"You and I" 1944
"Little Brown Jug" (Instrumental) 1869	"Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" 1944
"Down at the Old Bull and Bush" (Instr.) 1903	
"Home! Sweet Home!" (Instrumental) 1823	
"Auld Lang Syne" (Instrumental) traditional	

Clip 1 (Opening Credits, Meet Me in St. Louis, 5:00)

- Each section of the movie opens as a vignette
- Song passed along: Grandpa misses a few words; four-part harmony for final cadence

Clip 2 (Skip to My Lou; I Was Drunk Last Night; Under the Bamboo Tree, 7:00)

- Trumpet solo framed by door; impromptu audience; Lon on mandolin
- Choreography disguised; ends in an "error"
- Duet framed by dining room arch, serving as proscenium
- Cakewalk: Tootie's errors—this is an amateur performance

Clip 3 (The Trolley Song, 5:00)

- Young people singing "spontaneously"; Esther unable to join in until she sees John Pruett safely aboard
- Trolley as stage
- Emotions expressible in modern song lyrics (not in period songs)

Clip 4 (Papa's Announcement; Wrecking Everybody's Life; You and I, 11:30)

- Framed with family members in groups, father isolated in frame
- One by one they all desert him except for Mrs. Smith
- Mrs. Smith transposes song to his key, coaches him on words
- Other family members return, Grandpa sets up cribbage board; all eat cake

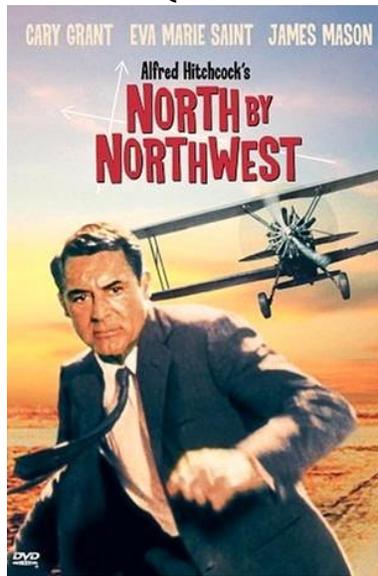
Clip 5 (Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas; Tears on the Snow; The Nicest Present, 10:00)

- Tootie's tears; lip-synching; framed in window
- Original lyrics made reference to soldiers; Judy Garland objected
- "We're all going to be together; that's what really counts."
- Bare outline of absent pictures on wall
- Father in darkness; lights match = idea; strains of title song
- Family assembles in the light
- Christmas presents opened against faint strains of "The First Nowell"

Clip 6 (Right Here at the Fair, 4:00)

- Costumes
- No computer-generated graphics: MGM back-lot
- Only Father knows the way to the French restaurant
- "Right here in St. Louis"

North by Northwest (Alfred Hitchcock, 1959)



What is the story about?

A self-absorbed man, the chance victim of mistaken identity, with his life at stake, embraces an illusion and, in so doing, discovers his true identity.

How do you know that this is what it is about?

"A self-absorbed man"

- irresponsible, inconsiderate, steals a taxi, covers it with a lie
- heavy drinker (comment by his friends)
- dominated by his mother, divorcé with two failed marriages, a man who lives purely on the surface, refusing commitment or responsibility

"the chance victim"

- favourite Hitchcock theme: universe is a scary place; don't be complacent
- Thornhill is not anybody in particular: it could happen to you
- "Within ten minutes of the start of the film, the ground is cut away from under his/our feet."

"mistaken identity"

- thought by enemy agents to be George Kaplan, a CIA agent
- thought by the police to be the murderer of Lester Townsend, a UN diplomat
- Thornhill searches for George Kaplan, believing that he can solve Thornhill's problems. But George Kaplan doesn't exist.

"with his life at stake"

three attempts on Thornhill's life

- arranged car accident
- attack by an airplane
- attack on Mount Rushmore

"embraces an illusion"

- there is no George Kaplan--fictitious decoy invented by the CIA
- Eve Kendall is not a single woman tourist, nor Vandamm's mistress, but a double agent working for the CIA--but Thornhill falls in love with her
- At Mount Rushmore, in order to save Eve, Thornhill adopts the role of Kaplan

"in so doing"

- starts with Thornhill's efforts to save his own life; ends with his willingness to risk his own in order to save Eve's
- a long chase moving *northwest*: beginning: north on Madison Avenue, then west by taxi to the Plaza Hotel; in Chicago, north on Michigan Avenue, then west to the airport; Chicago to South Dakota (via Northwest Airlines!)

"discovers his true identity"

- Thornhill at the end is not the same person he was at the beginning: implication that this marriage may do better than the two previous ones
- Hitchcock makes us identify with Thornhill so that, in a sense, we also change our identities through the course of the film. We identify with Cary Grant because he's a star, but at the beginning he's not a pleasant person. By the end, our identification appeals to our best selves.
- The three sections of the movie correspond to stages of Thornhill's involvement with Eve: unattached; involvement with Eve on train; after Thornhill learns the truth about Eve, he voluntarily accepts the role of Kaplan

What's in a name?

Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant): "hill of thorns"—Christ-reference; the man who risks his own life for another

Vandamm (James Mason): "from the damned," figure of evil

Eve (Eva Marie Saint): "the temptress" (Roger actually calls her this)

Story-Telling through images:

- Camera angle: elevated shots to indicate danger (fleeing United Nations, plan to kill Eve: "This matter is best disposed of from a great height--over water.") Recurring motif for *immanent danger*
- Point of View shots: helps to implicate audience--we identify with Thornhill (e.g., drunken auto ride; plane attack; humorous use with punch by park ranger)
- Frame composition: Thornhill between two thugs; Thornhill, disguised as a redcap, amid a sea of redcaps; Thornhill at the far edge of the frame in the crop-dusting sequence.

In film, unlike theatre, you only get to see what the director lets you see, so an important question at every moment is: **what** is the director allowing us to see, **how** are we seeing it, **why** this choice of frame, shot and angle?

Scene-by-Scene Analysis

New York City Section

(Credit Sequence. Interplay of vertical lines, representing the skyscrapers of Manhattan and anticipating the precipitous heights of Mount Rushmore. "Names fall up and down the side of a Manhattan skyscraper prefiguring the final clinging and falling from the steep rocks." Hitchcock's signature appearance: a bus door slams in his face just as we see the words "Directed by" --Hitchcock, like our hero, has less than expected control over his environment.)

Clip 1 (Exaggeration, 2:22)

First portrayal of Thornhill, emerging from an elevator: dictating to his secretary, commandeering a taxi, a man in charge, a man of power. (And not a particularly pleasant person.)

Clip 2 (Kidnapped, 2:34)

Thornhill re-enters the Plaza Hotel, joins his companions. Described as a heavy drinker. He rises to telephone his mother just as the name of "George Kaplan" is being paged. The beginning of the mistaken identity is established and Roger Thornhill's world is about to come apart. The scene ends with Thornhill, formerly the man of power, firmly entrapped between two thugs.

Clip 3 (Wrong Package, 4:05)

Roger meets Vandamm, who has taken on the **identity** of Leslie Townsend. Note the lighting and cinematography tricks as Vandamm enters and "interrogates" Thornhill--closes curtains, stands in light: sinister--violates the norm of high-key, three point lighting; high-angle shots of Thornhill, low-angle shots of thugs, "stalking" movement as Vandamm and Thornhill each trace a complete circle)

Clip 4 (Drunk Driving, 3:26)

Roger is forced to become drunk, escapes from arranged accident. (Roger sees double. Many POV shots. Characteristic of Hitchcock's manipulation of the spectator's perspective and identification with the hero during moments of danger.)

(In Plaza Hotel: Roger learns that George Kaplan is staying at the Plaza Hotel, and counts on Kaplan to clear up the misunderstanding. He searches Kaplan's room, with the assistance of his mother, when the telephone rings, and he learns that Vandamm's henchmen are back on his trail. He finds himself trapped in an elevator with his pursuers. A true Hitchcock moment: you are about to die and your own mother is laughing. Note composition of frame: everyone is laughing except Thornhill.)

Clip 5 (The United Nations; He's Got a Knife, 3:45)

Roger goes to the United Nations, hoping that Lester Townsend, the owner of the mansion where Roger was held prisoner, can straighten out the mess. The real Lester Townsend is murdered. A flashbulb goes off: a **camera image** creates Thornhill's identity as a murderer. (A major theme in Hitchcock--the innocent man, wrongfully accused.) This is the *second* case of mistaken identity afflicting Thornhill. Note bird's eye shot of Roger fleeing: the self-confident advertising man has been reduced to an indistinguishable speck.

Clip 6 (Mr. Thornhill, 3:00)

"United States Intelligence Agency" in Washington. The double dissolve tells us *through images* that:

1. time has elapsed
2. Thornhill has been identified
3. He has so far eluded capture

The images convey both Thornhill's false identity (murderer) and his current true identity (fugitive). Inside the intelligence agency, the Professor explains that George Kaplan is just a fictitious decoy, intended to throw Vandamm off the track of their real agent. Roger Thornhill has conveniently given flesh and bones to the illusion, and if he dies along the way, that isn't their responsibility. The scene ends with the words, "Goodbye, Mr. Thornhill, wherever you are." Dramatic irony: the audience now has information that the hero does not.

The Twentieth-Century Limited Section

(Meeting Eve Kendall: Roger boards a train to Chicago, George Kaplan's next intended destination. Eve Kendall helps him avoid police. Roger evades conductors. Roger and Eve meet again, apparently by chance in the dining car. They flirt. Note the ROT matchbook. What does the O stand for? "Nothing." And in his life up to this point, there had been an emptiness in the middle of Thornhill's personality. Thornhill is a man whose life lacks significance, a "rootless man, always on the move, never seen in his own home.")

Clip 7 (Beats Flying, 2:44)

Love scene in Eve's compartment. Note impossible omniscient camera angles and the kiss. Instead of having the camera circle the lovers, as in *Notorious*, Hitchcock has the actors rotate along the wall. (Message for the Lady: Porter delivers message to Vandamm and Leonard: "What do I do with him in the morning--Eve?" Impact on audience--For us, Eve's identity has changed.)

Chicago and Cornfield Section

Clip 8 (Too Many Redcaps, 2:34)

Roger escapes in a sea of redcaps. High-angle shot--danger--will the authorities rushing into the crowd of redcaps locate Thornhill? Your eye is drawn to red among all the grey flannel. Safety through loss of identity: all redcaps look alike.

Clip 9 (Prairie Stop Traffic; Catching a Bus; Crop Duster Attack; Crashing Halt, 8:00)

Note the number of POV shots. Note the editing and composition: the earlier shots are longer and seem to contain "nothing". A deliberate attempt on Hitchcock's part to induce a state of relaxation and boredom in the viewer. In the climax, the shots come machinegun-like at an explosive pace.

Clip 10 (Your Very Next Role; Bid for Survival, 4:30)

Roger learns that Eve has gone to an art auction and follows her there, where he confronts Vandamm and Leonard, who are bidding on a pre-Columbian figure containing microfilm. Vandamm: "Has anyone ever told you that you overplay your various roles rather severely, Mr. Kaplan?" Identity. "Your next role will be playing dead." Later, Thornhill does play dead. Illusion. Trapped, Roger disrupts the auction by wild bidding, hoping to get arrested in order to escape Vandamm's henchmen. Police take him away as Professor is seen making call. (An improvised escape: another role, "acting the fool." Title of film comes from Hamlet, "I am mad north by northwest," i.e., only pretending.)

(Not a Red Herring: At the airport scene, the Professor fills Roger in: Kaplan doesn't exist, and Eve is a CIA agent. Note how Hitchcock covers the Professor's explanation with airplane sound. We already know what he's telling Thornhill. Plan light suddenly illuminates Thornhill's face: enlightenment as he accepts responsibility and commitment for Eve's safety. For the first time in his life, Thornhill is doing something for someone else.)

Rapid City Section

Clip 11 (Mount Rushmore, 4:38)

Mt. Rushmore cafeteria scene. Roger finally embraces the role of Kaplan, after spending the entire movie avoiding this identity. Eve's "murder" of Roger is staged. Forest meeting scene. Note composition: Thornhill and Eve on opposite sides of screen--echo of prairie stop. "For the first time in the film we are among trees, cool calm sunlight and shade--an apt setting for a new life."

(Meeting in the Woods. Roger, resurrected, learns from Eve and Professor that Eve is to fly off with Vandamm. Roger, furious, makes a little Cold-War-and-Nice-Girls speech and then is knocked out by a stunning POV shot.)

Clip 12 (Leonard's Revelation, 3:16)

Roger overhears and sees Leonard shoot Vandamm with Eve's gun full of blanks, proving she's a CIA agent. ("This matter is best disposed of from a great height--over water." Thematic use of high-angle shot.) Roger climbs into Eve's room; uses the ROT matchbook to warn her of her discovery. Leonard touches the matchbook. High angle shot. Eve about to board plane with Vandamm when we hear gunfire; Eve and Roger escape with microfilm.

Clip 13 (Across the Monument; One Man Down; Leonard's Footwork; Sentimental Ending, 6:45)

Chase scene. Through forest, down Mt. Rushmore. Roger and Eve try to scramble down the rocks while Vandamm's henchmen try to kill them. Cliffhanger: Roger pulls Eve from cliffside into upper berth of train. "Thornhill's long and arduous journey becomes a possible voyage toward self-discovery and toward love for another."

Annie Hall (Woody Allen, 1977)



What is the story about?

A stand-up comic turned writer exercises artistic control to redeem a failed love affair, failing to recognize control as the enemy of intimacy.

How do you know that this is what it is about?

“A stand-up comic turned writer”

1. Framing device: stories addressed directly to the camera
2. Series of scenes with the cadence of comedic numbers
3. Frequent on-stage action: auditorium, night-club, TV sit-com, play rehearsal

‘exercises artistic control’

1. language

- stuttering vs. coherence (the deceptiveness of fluency)
- spoken vs. unspoken
- language links

2. narrative

- asides to the camera or to complete strangers
- dislocated narrative (flashbacks, time-travel back to childhood; fantasy transformations (Alvy becomes a bearded Hasidic Jew while visiting Annie’s anti-Semitic family))

3. cinematic technique

- split screens and conversations across two screens;
- double-exposed action (Annie’s ghost in bedroom scene);
- animation (the Snow White cartoon)

“to redeem a failed love affair”

1. Woody Allen and Diane Keaton
2. Alvy Singer and Annie Hall
3. “relationships don’t last”

“failing to recognize control as the enemy of intimacy”

1. the stand-up comic’s illusion of intimacy
2. Pygmalion relationship (Annie’s singing career and intellectual development)
3. desire for intimacy in which Allen will remain completely in control

Scenes left on the cutting room floor

1. “the element”
2. Kierkegaard on TV
3. Kafka on the court

Narrative Structure

Place	Time	Characters	Cinematic Device	Clips
		Alvy as narrator tells two Groucho Marx jokes	direct address to camera	1: “There’s an Old Joke”(35)
Doctor’s office; Coney Island; School-room	early flashback	Young Alvy	flashback, then present character interjected into scene	2: Childhood in Brooklyn (1:44); Classmates (1:21)
Manhattan street	present	Alvy and Rob: anti-Semitism conversation		
Beekman Theater; The New Yorker Theater	present	Alvy and Annie	sudden production of a real-life character	3: At The New Yorker (2:39)
Bedroom	present	Alvy and Annie		
Auditorium; bedroom	middle flashback	Alvy and Allison (Alvy’s first wife)	flashback; address to camera	4: Alvy and Allison (3:57)
Beach house kitchen	present	Alvy and Annie (lobster scene)		5: Lobster (4:15)
Movie theater; brick-walled apartment	middle flashback	Alvy and Annie observe Annie’s boy-friends	present characters interjected into past	
New York apartment	middle flashback	Alvy and Robin (Alvy’s second wife)	flashback	6: Alvy and Robin (2:54)
Tennis court	present	Alvy, Rob, Annie, Janet: first encounter		7: Meeting Annie Hall (2:46)
Lobby, then New York street	present	Alvy and Annie: first conversation		
Annie’s apartment	present	Alvy and Annie	subtitles that contradict the action	8: Family Stories (2:22)
Night club	present	Annie sings “It Had to Be You”—start of relationship	photographed from a distance—Annie portrayed as small, timid figure	
Sidewalk; deli, darkened bedroom; bookstore; Central Park; street at night; Alvy’s apartment	present	Alvy and Annie (he wants to make her like himself: a death-obsessed, intellectual, New York Jew)	park scene includes Truman Capote cameo	
Country house at night	present	Alvy and Annie	double-exposed action (Annie’s ghost scene)	9: Out to the Hampshires (2:30)
Theatrical agency	middle flashback	Young Alvy	flashback	
Theater	present	Alvy doing stand-up at college auditorium		10: At the University (1:21)
Annie’s parents’ home	present	Alvy, Annie, her family, his family	split screens and conversations across	11: Annie’s Family (2:45); Halls and

			the two screens	Singers (1:23)
Duane's bedroom, night drive	present	Alvy, Annie, Duane		
New York street; kitchen; street	present	Alvy and Annie argue	direct address to camera; animated sequence from Snow White	12: The Wicked Queen (2:10)
Alvy's bedroom; Annie's apartment	present	Alvy and Rolling Stones Report; Annie (spider scene: parallels earlier lobster scene)		13: A Big Black Spider (4:23)
Coney Island; Alvy's house	early flashback	Alvy, Annie and Rob	present characters interjected into past; yellow tinge to flashbacks	14: Return to Brooklyn (1:30); "She Stole" (:30); Joey Nichols and Tessie Moskowitz (1:09)
Apartment	present	Alvy and Annie		
Night club	present	Annie sings "Seems Like Old Times"; Tony Lacey	close-up camera contrasts with distant camera in Annie's earlier song	
Two psychiatrists' offices	present	Alvy and Annie	split screens and conversations across the two screens in two offices, one bright the other dark	15: Psychoanalytic Duel (1:21)
apartment	present	Alvy (cocaine scene)		
Beverly Hills street; TV control room; Tony Lacey's party	present	Alvy, Annie, Rob, Tony Lacey	emphasized sun and brightness	16: Los Angeles (2:30)
Airplane interior	present	Alvy, Annie	"dialogue of thoughts" voice-over	17: A Dead Shark (1:27)
Alvy's living room	present	Alvy, Annie breaking up		
Beach house kitchen	present	Alvy and girl date (lobster scene)	strangers in street enter dialogue	18: "I miss Annie" (1:58)
Sunset Boulevard café	present	Alvy and Annie		
Rehearsal hall of theatre	present	Alvy's first play		19: Art Reflects Life (1:41)
		Alvy as narrator	direct address to camera	20: Finale (:20)

Early flashback: 1940s (1942 written on schoolroom blackboard; 1945 for end of war Welcome Home party)

Middle flashback: 1960s (Stevenson rally takes place in 1960; Annie's boyfriend stands in front of a movie poster from 1961)

Present: 1970s (Alvy stands in front of a movie poster from 1975)

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