

## TO ANALYZE, TO SEGMENT

Raymond Bellour

1/47

The film begins. Paris, Bois de Boulogne Avenue des Acacias. The coryphaeus (commentator) of the musical comedy presents himself and half-speaking, half-singing, announces his theme: "Little Girls." A theme soon centered on the apparition which calls it into being. "This story is about a little girl in particular. . . Her name is Gigi." Gigi enters and floats off, opening the theme of the narrative which takes her name.

The film ends. The theme is repeated: same game, same place, same shot. But this time, behind the commentator a couple appears; it appears in another time, a mythic time, as if beyond the narrative, since it is in fact its solution: Gigi, accompanied by her husband Gaston.

The classic cinema (especially the classic American cinema) knows well these rhyming effects; they are, to be precise, what constitute it. These effects sustain the difference of the narrative across an ordered reservoir of similarities; they flash, by the unfolding of symmetries (more or less refined as the case may be), the dissymmetry without which there could be no narrative. From beginning to end, the classic film ceaselessly repeats itself because it leads to its resolution. This is the reason why its beginning and its end often reflect each other with ultimate insistence. The film acknowledges itself as a result, by inscribing the systematic condition of its itinerary, by giving us its signature with a final flourish, presenting the operation which built it piece by piece.

The effect of repetition-resolution has a specific nature, although it is very common—therein resides all its force. It operates globally, and very precisely, from segment to segment, that is to say from one large narrative unit to another, from one syntagmatic unit to another.

But what constitutes in reality a segment for the analysis of a film? Which is to ask, with what truth or with what practicality do the "large syntagmatic categories of the image track" endow the definition of the segment and the act of analysis?

### Concerning Syntagmatic Categories

Much has been written about the Large Syntagmatic. For it, against it, growing out of it. For it: in France and especially in the U.S. with what is perhaps excessive servitude. Against it: most recently with a real lack of intellectual generosity or of intellectual imagination. I will not go over the debate. I will assume you are familiar with the Large Syntagmatic. Still, I wish to retrace, in order to better situate my own direction, the movement which the Large Syntagmatic effects in the thought of Christian Metz.

The establishment of the Large Syntagmatic blends two complementary movements, determined by the logic of discovery: we are in 1966, only two years after the striking point of departure of "Cinema: Language or Language System?" *First Movement*: the attempt is made, through a code, *this* code, to show that there are codes; that codicity, in cinema, has no less efficiency than in other fields, and that one can try to master it there, to put it into play. A point which none of the classifications, taxonomies, or charts of types of montage, etc., either far too formal or informal, could show before then. In this way, the Large Syntagmatic is a sort of theoretical operator: it actualizes the concrete possibility of a semiotics of cinema, since it potentially materializes it. *Second Movement*: this specific code seems to be, from a logical as well as a historical point of view, the code which permits to bring to light (through a closed series of commutable syntagmatic types), the cultural establishment of film as the support of fiction.

The combined force of these two movements explains how Metz could fall partially into the trap, or the illusion (soon to be exposed), of having found *the* code of cinema. Almost immediately (thereafter) the Large Syntagmatic is no longer *the* code, but simply a specific code among others (this will be the position repeatedly taken in *Language and Cinema*). But this ambiguity is crucial; for if the Large Syntagmatic is not more or less than a code among other codes which are juxtaposed to it and run through it, it envelops the other codes; and in a literal sense, this code is superior to them: forcibly, as the consequence and condition of the fiction.

Ever since the beginning, or almost, the Large Syntagmatic comprised a

patient and rigorous self-criticism on Metz's part; its elaboration was submitted to internal contradictions which (according to an ultimately improbable logic) undermine, in a sense, the initial positivism of the code, but which add to its potential force. From his very first writings in *Film Language*, Metz confronted three fundamental objections. First, the distinction between the autonomous shot and the seven other syntagmatic categories: the shot-sequence (as its name indicates) contains within itself, through a sort of spatio-temporal expansion, all the possibilities contained in the seven other types; the shot sequence therefore imposes the necessity of reworking the initial chart, dividing it into two branches. Secondly, there is a discrepancy in the seven other syntagmatic types between those which are "hard" and "fast" and those which are "less clear." (This discrepancy becomes evident in the syntagmatic analysis of *Adieu Philippines*.) For example, the bracket syntagma and the diegetic insert are said to be "distinct" configurations which are easily recognized and unmistakable, while the ordinary sequence and the scene are said to have "vague contours"—Metz says it is sometimes difficult "to isolate them from the general filmic flow." Thirdly, and this seems to me the most important point: "all the problems raised by alternation" which can not simply be resolved by the two complementary formulas—the a-chronological formula of the alternating syntagma. Metz writes: "The solution would be perhaps the introduction of a semiotically rigorous theory which would take into account two facts which are both very evident in films, but as yet poorly accounted for: First, the phenomenon which we can call the transformation of an insert (an autonomous segment with a single insert can be 'transformed' into an autonomous segment comprised of multiple inserts and thus into a type of *alternating syntagma*). . . Secondly the distinction between *true alternation* (which establishes a narrative branching, or doubling in the film) and *pseudo-alternation* (which is only a visual alternation within a unified space, or else is derived from a vaguely alternating aspect inherent in the film subject under certain circumstances)."

Finally, we come to a *Third Movement*, which logically grows out of the first two: through the methodical, expanded study which comprises *Language and Cinema*, this code really becomes a code; that is to say, radically detached from the filmic text, the various categories become only abstract entities evidenced in the film in the concrete form of the autonomous segment.

This concept was integral to the formulation of the three criteria of demarcation of the autonomous segment, which Metz undertook in an article written soon after the one on the Large Syntagmatic. He says: "The

analyst of the classic film is correct to consider as a single autonomous segment any passage from a film which is not interrupted by a major change in the course of the intrigue nor by a sign of punctuation nor by the abandonment of one syntagmatic type for another." Thus the question of the autonomous segment has been deliberately transposed to consideration in the text, that is to say, towards its imperative intercodicity, towards textual analysis.

Having recently discussed this with Metz, I know that he now feels that a new version of the Large Syntagmatic is possible. (You will ask: "Why not do it then, if it's possible?" I think, simply, because science always rests on desire, and desire is displaced—as Freud discovered. Only the scientific utopist can believe that one always attempts to finish—at least within a practical time—everything which is begun.) This new version of the Large Syntagmatic would have to overturn the positivist illusions which often accompany formalization in its initial stage. It would equally guard against the new positivism that the evolution of linguistics could throw over film theory by trying to substitute too simplistically the generative and transformational model for the structural model. By protecting itself equally against both, the new version would be able to combine their advances. It would challenge the plurality of levels which forbids the strict Chomskyan model from ever rejoining its object, the film, in the singularity of its textual system. Cinema will never be a language, nor film a grammar. It's not by chance that the poetic and musicological analyses of Nicholas Ruwet owe so much, if not more, to the structural model than they do to the generative and transformational model. But on the other hand, this new version of the Large Syntagmatic should possess increasing abstraction which would permit it to definitively erase any structural effect of flattening, of descriptive application between the code and the text, and finally to mitigate the insufficiencies of the previous effort. The new Large Syntagmatic would have to constitute a collection of spatio-temporal matrices where the present syntagmatic types would be arranged with their necessary complements and modifications in an ordered series.

The surface level, the textual actualization, would then alone merit the name of autonomous segment, offering the analysis the singularity, continually renewed, of an exact decomposition of the filmic chain.

This very particular situation of the Large Syntagmatic, this problematic code, unfinished, in one sense first and foremost code, in another a code among others, seems to have had two opposite consequences in the field of filmic analysis. First, numerous studies have been formulated which developed directly from the Large Syntagmatic sometimes strictly

applying the code, sometimes seeking to perfect it, by trying to diversify, to enrich or to make more flexible one or another of the categories (but always remaining within the bounds of Metz's own self-criticism, which implies a transformation). These studies have reaffirmed the determining richness of the code, its capacity for stylistic and historic induction, its specific instrumentality, its practical and analytical function in textual study of large narrative units.

Also, several textual analyses which have been developed as part of the effort to establish a semiology of cinema, with more or less explicit references to Metz, found themselves not ignoring, but skirting the proof of the syntagmatic categories. Some of them, because they isolate a segment or fragment of a film in order to consider smaller units. Others, because they evaluate, taking into account several segments or fragments, their functioning in the productivity of the text as a whole.

Efforts which consider an entire film situate themselves more or less intentionally in the perspective defined by Metz as that of the global textual system. Here I am purposely grouping together works of varied intentions and nature. *Foetus astral* by Jean Monod and Jean-Paul Dumont, the collective text by Cahiers du Cinema on *Young Mr. Lincoln*, the book by Claude Bailblé, Michel Marie and Marie-Claire Ropars on *Muriel*, Stephen Heath's long study of *Touch of Evil*, and my own analysis of *North by Northwest*. The detour is remarkable in these last two examples as the development of the analyses (otherwise quite different) both depended on segmentation; a sort of rough, or at least partially rough segmentation, which justifies Heath's note following his *decoupage*: "The segmentation here operates at the level of the narrative signified according to the simple criteria of unity of action, unity of characters, unity of place; it has no analytic status other than that of allowing reference to the film as narrative." What is evident in these two analyses is the fact that they do not cease to touch the Large Syntagmatic without seeking to constrain it and certainly without running the risk of being constrained by it.

This is the risk I shall try to take now. Working from the syntagmatic categories and well beyond them, it seems to me I can show you the systematic modelization of narrative units in the classic American film. Perhaps *Gigi*, which I present here, does not aim at filling the gap between the present state of the Large Syntagmatic and a second still unrealized state. Certainly this analysis will situate, and project the gap through the logic of its own movement. But nothing more. The Large Syntagmatic is thus fully used here (this is to say through its lacks) as

operator in the analysis: first, through the effect of descriptive logification operating within it; and then, through the syntagmatic solicitation which it opens, by the fact it incites to a generalized diegetic segmentality. Segmentation, as we shall see, is a *mise-en-abyme*, a process which theoretically is infinite—which is not to say that it lacks meaning. By the shifted play which operates between its different levels, segmentation permits us to sense the increased plurality of textual effects.

But this analysis is only a beginning and by definition, in the limited form of this presentation, it is much more the framing of an analysis, its placing into perspective, than the analysis itself. I am largely limited (and on the level of small units, very minimally limited) to the enumeration of rhyming effects, that is to say the effects of differential repetition which structure the development of the narrative. Previous analyses have shown me the fundamental determination of these effects in the constitution of the classic film, on the level of the fragment, the segment, or the entire film.

It seems striking to me to have them appear, in this crossing of the levels which is done here. But, things being as they are, I can only classify the rhyming effects, enumerate them; cannot produce them within the logic of their textual progression, the material work of their unfolding: analysis is not reducible to its frame. Intellectual imagination, mine, yours, must give to the elements which I will decompose the space which forms and constitutes them: their textual volume.

### Segmental

The syntagmatic decomposition of *Gigi* which causes 47 autonomous segments to appear in the image-track of *Gigi* (numbers 1-47 in the summarizing table at the end of the article) calls for certain remarks:

- a) The major effect of redundancy between the three criteria of demarcation manifests here a high degree of classicalness.
- b) In this sound film, this musical film in particular, the image is sovereign as concerns the segmental demarcation. The sung numbers are smaller or equal to the segmental limits, with one exception: *Gigi's* song ("I don't understand the Parisians") which crosses segments 9 and 10, creating a sort of autonomous sound segment. The voice, the dialogues are strictly submitted to the phenomenology of the image, its temporal

partition. As for the music, if the musical dissolves sometimes do not coincide with the visual dissolves of segmental demarcation, they still globally reinforce, since they are tied to the songs, the dominance of the autonomous segments of the image-track. The Large Syntagmatic of the image-track in the classic film, due to the force of the diegesis (story) itself, is, therefore, not far from being *the* code, the one which permits the others.

- c) This strict application of the Large Syntagmatic is confronted by one major difficulty: the impossibility of taking into account, in a film which significantly contains no alternating syntagmas, of the alternances which structure numerous segments. These segments (1, 8, 13, 15, 17, 21—an episodic sequence which is at the same time an alternating syntagma, but without simultaneity between the temporal series as in the example of an alternating syntagma in *Adieu Philippines* from which Metz raises the question of alternation) 24, 25, 26 (in which the segmental level loses a true scene by Honoré and Mamita) 30, 35, (a bastardized episodic sequence, of which the first two episodes are a brief form of alternating syntagma) and 47.

As for the autonomous shot, despite its frequency (9 segments) it does not pose severe problems here because these particular autonomous shots fully remain within the classical model.

This decomposition manifests two arrangements essential to the development of textual logic.

First, the large number of repetitions, of rhymes which operate from segment to segment, inside the mirror effect of segments 1 and 47. This obviously, does not concern their syntagmatic forms. The syntagmatic type, on this level, is only one characteristic among others, even though profoundly different: as is a specific index of the textual surface it affects, the form through which pertinences of relative importance are inscribed in the cinematic signifier. These pertinences are such that their systematic arrangement in each segment carries the narration from segment to segment.

- a) One only has to look at the summarizing diagram to recognize the operations which bring unity, a sort of repetition full of differences, between the segments:

4 and 37

6, 16, and 20

7 and 31

8, 28, and 29

14 and 40

15 and 41-42

19, 27, and 32

23 and 46

24, 25, and 26

36 and 39

- b) Some of these operations, starting with segment 36, concern many of the last segments of the film (37, 39, 40, 41-42, 46, 47). This concentration is notable: it shows how the film, through its segmental partition, resolves by repeating, by a sort of generalized narrative condensation, which carries it formally towards its end.

But these effects of repetition-resolution are inscribed within the limits of the autonomous segments in order to overcome them in many ways. Even if the classic film, as Metz points out, leans towards the sequence (the autonomous segment) rather than the shot, it does so in favor of an equally profound tendency, which inscribes the segment in a system of narrative commutation with units both larger and smaller than the segment, decoupling the effects of segmentation of the filmic chain. These two simultaneous movements attract and repulse, contradict and complement each other: it's what makes it necessary and yet difficult to distinguish them; their confusion (which is nonetheless decomposable) which turns film into the space of a generalized segmentality, is a fundamental condition which transforms the filmic surface into a textual volume.

### Suprasegmental/Subsegmental

The classic film is thus marked by a tendency towards units which are often superior to the segment (suprasegment or macrosegment). These units are often called sequences (in every day as well as professional language), and they often correspond to units in the scenario. They are generally determined by a global unity of time, place, and action—for example, in *Gigi* all three segments (24, 25, and 26) take place in Trouville, in the course of one day, with the same characters (creating a kind of episodic suprasegment). Segments 12 and 13 constitute another kind of suprasegment. Segment 12 is a short autonomous shot depicting the facade of the ice-skating palace (we see neither Gaston nor Gigi but know that they are



going towards the building and are about to enter); segment 13 is a scene taking place inside. But the unity of place does not necessarily determine a segment, when narrative movements prove too dissimilar despite the transitions which bind them. Thus it seems justifiable not to combine segment 27, which depicts Alicia talking Mamita into speeding up Gigi's education, and segments 28 and 29 (VII) which are devoted to these pedagogical sessions. The suprasegment is a single minor dramatic flow; this explains how it can in other cases encompass several different locations: thus segments 3, 4, 5, and 6 (III) which concern Gaston's and Honore's meeting, or segments 30 and 31 (XXVI) which present in continuity the contradictory reactions of Gaston to Gigi's transformation.

The determination of suprasegments is obviously less rigorous than the determination of autonomous segments, because it is not indicated by any cinematic specificity, but rather depends on the force of the textual system. Thus it is totally derived from the singularity of each film, and conditioned by the analysis which turns it into an intermediary function between the segments and the major divisions (A, B, C, D, E, in the case of *Gigi*) which block out the overall dramaturgy of the narrative. As is the case with all efforts of textual *decoupage*, the interest of suprasegments is primarily descriptive; they serve to isolate rhyme effects which otherwise are merged or superimposed with the functioning of the autonomous segments. Following a sort of internal tautology, segments connected in a suprasegment rhyme strongly within this new unit. What is notable about this operation is how it concentrates the rhyming effects in the narrative succession. This is the case in the examples cited above: segments 24, 25, and 26, the "sequences" which all take place at Trouville, held together by the same characters; and segments 28 and 29 which group together the two episodic sequences of Gigi's education in Alicia's apartment. But more eloquent examples of suprasegmental rhyme are built over the course of the film from one suprasegment to another: the only clear example is the two groups of segments occurring in Maxim's, which combines in suprasegment VIII, segments 14 and 15, and in suprasegment XV, segments 40, 41, and 42. Other effects function between suprasegments, but those are more partial and can be analyzed in the complementary work of subsegmentation.

In this film as is generally the case with classic film, the level of units smaller than a segment is where the multiple play of echoes which structures and defines the progressive resolution of the textual system is systematized. Let's first look at what I call *elementary* subsegmentation: that which refers to two or more successive times within the continuity of

a single segment, each one of which forms a sort of small scene—but in a dramatic and not a syntagmatic sense of the term scene, obviously.

Recall the third criterion invoked by Metz to determine the demarcation of autonomous segments: “a major change in the course of the plot.” Obviously this criterion lacks precision: what is a *major* change? But this is the wrong way to pose the question, since this demarcation by the plot itself is practically always evident: the limitations of the other two criteria almost automatically lead to the transparency of the third. This grows out of the fact that the classic film determines its segmental units by a series of ruptures in the signified of temporal denotation: when punctuation and variation of the syntagmatic treatment do not indicate the rupture, only a change in the course of the plot can do so. That’s why this imprecise criterion is the most dependable: by a sort of tautological reasoning, a narrative change which does not lead to segmentation can only be a minor change. However minor changes are often less “minor” than many other changes in the course of the plot, others which are elevated to the status of segmental demarcation only by the intervention of one or both of the other two criteria (this is obviously not the case when the inscription of multiple criteria is purely redundant, which is quite common). Compare, for example, the mutation introduced in the narrative by the appearance or disappearance of a character with the slight change which is denoted by the punctuation between the autonomous shot of the facade of the ice-skating rink and the scene which follows inside. Which is to say that the segmental demarcation determined by the multiple inscription of the signified of temporal denotation within the filmic signifier only half corresponds (though sometimes more, sometimes less) with the unfolding of the plot, the succession of narrative actions. These dissociations make it necessary to introduce an operation of subsegmentation.

The episodic sequence (as is the case of the bracket syntagma) is singularly privileged in this perspective, as a result of the precise demarcation of each episode. Thus demarcation occurs at this smaller level as a sort of subdemarcation, both by the diegesis (story) and for the most part by an internal punctuation. The episodes are almost always linked (as are some segments within a suprasegment) by an effect of successive rhyme: this is the case with the episodic sequences 14, 21, 28, and 29 (that is to say, all the episodic sequences except 35, which, as I have emphasized, is somewhat bastardized). But a given episode may form a distanced rhyming effect, as in the 4th episode of segment 1 where Gaston and Liane enter Maxim’s, which rhymes with segment 40 where Gaston and Gigi enter it.

Inversely, the subsegments of other syntagmatic types are determined

without specific inscription within the cinematic signifier. Their indisputable "vague" demarcation is not a problem—some real scenes are less clearly marked. These subsegments are defined by the entries and exits of characters, particularly evident in this genre film, which is very strongly marked by theatrical representation. The location, actions, musical and sung motifs, obviously powerfully reinforce these scenes which are organized between characters. But these other elements do not have the same degree of significance: the musical and sung motifs, because their boundaries are almost always smaller or equal to the segment, only partially coincide with those of the subsegments; the actions, because they cannot be segmented in the same way, tend to dissolve into the global mass of signifiers; the locations, because the temporal form which determines them is already taken into account by the syntagmatic categories.

Thus, scenes appear and provide numerous rhyming possibilities. From the beginning, in segment 1, the 15 shots which occur before Gigi appears, put Honore in the role of commentator (1a), as he will be again in the first episode of segment 14 (14a), then again in subsegment 34b after the disappearance of Gaston. In the same way in segment 32, the disappearance of Gaston in shot 15 opens a short scene between Mamita and Gaston which corresponds to one which occurred earlier in segment 7, and one which will occur late in subsegment 30b before reappearing in segment 31.

Subsegmental divisions also permit new commutations to be performed between intermediary groupings: they go from subsegments to segments and from segments to suprasegments. Thus, the first group concerning "education" which includes segment 8 and subsegment 9a which follows it, finds its exact echo in suprasegment XVII (28 and 29). In the same way, the extremely long subsegment 30c, subsegment 43b, and the short segments 44 and 45 respectively indicate a very exact repetition of Gaston's two voyages which serve as preludes to his decisions first to keep Gigi, then to marry her. Thus, a global rhyming effect is established between subsegment 30c plus segment 31 on the one hand, and segments 43, 44, 45, and 46 on the other, which is suprasegment XXVI. This last rhyme largely builds the effect of condensation, uniting in the final part of the film (E) a series of elements which appeared earlier in the four other parts.

But in order to expose this productive circulation of the text, it is necessary to go much further in the decomposition of its elements: it is necessary to subsegment the subsegments.

## Segmental (Sub-supra) Textual

Subsegmentation goes far beyond what I've done so far. Until now, I've restrained it to scene effects corresponding to one or more shots; and always, in the case of the single shots, to very long ones (like 43b) or to the more specifically determined units in the episodic sequences. Also, I have only performed successive dissociations, in a linearity which sometimes corresponds to the true presentation within the fact, but often only does so partially, mimicking its truth with a representative approximation which is neither altogether false nor altogether true.

This is why I qualified this first subsegmentation as elementary. Complex subsegmentation goes far beyond this. It can be termed microsegmentation to indicate a movement, a progressive work of the textual and analytical force. There is no longer anything on this level corresponding to the strict distinction, there are only degrees of narrative expansion. Therefore, complex segmentation has nothing to do with the shot as a limit: even though the demarcative boundary of the shot constitutes in (and of) itself a textual pertinence and a stylistic index.

I can give only two very summary examples here.

a) *Segment 33*—Shot 302, which shows Gigi in her bedroom (the decor is visible for the first time); she is alone, lying on her bed, stroking her cat, and gets up to let Gaston in, within the continuity of the same shot. This very fragmentary scene is soon echoed by a fill scene, a long autonomous shot which comprises segment 38, where Gigi is singing in her bedroom, holding her cat in her arms. In its simplicity, this effect shows very well the process of the film, a process of varied reduplication of its successive elements. It completes the condensation which operates between the fifth part of the film and the four preceding parts: from segments 37 through 47, there is not one which does not rework a segment, a subsegment, a moment of the four others, deepened by the differentiation which carries the film towards its conclusion.

The three completely unequal subsegments which follow (33b, c, d) are inscribed along three axes which the lack of subsegmental development prohibits working out completely: the first which takes up the large part of the segment (shots 302-307) is one of the series of scenes between Gaston and Gigi; the second, determined by the appearance of Mamita in shot 308, is part of the multiple scenes or fragments of scenes between Gigi, Mamita, and Gaston (this microsegment announces

in particular the dramatic and equally very short microsegment, scene 43a); the third, after Gigi has fled into her bedroom, is inscribed by a second, interior rupture in shot 308, in the series of scenes, either peaceful or dramatic, between Mamita and Gaston.

- b) *Segment 47*—here again, a division in the shot creates three minuscule subsegments in the two last shots of the film: in shot 348, Honore sings, leaning against a tree in medium shot; in shot 349, Gigi and Gaston diagonally cross the grass towards a carriage, which they enter. Their movement is accompanied by a camera movement which loses them to return, in the continuity of the same final shot, to Honore in the same fixed framing as in the previous shot.

This last example shows how the progressive decomposition of dramatic occurrences in the filmic chain, opened by the decomposition of the Large Syntagmatic, leads more or less inevitably to the internal analysis of segments and to a comparative analysis of echoing segments. This final segment which displays a refined classicism is thus perceived as constructed according to an a/b/a alternation which reproduces the pattern of the first segment of the film of which this final segment constitutes the resolution: in both cases the narrative alternation is between Honore and the others. But, in the beginning segment there are 21 shots which must be decomposed: neither the first nor the last depict Honore—the last shot of the first segment shows Gigi alone since the narrative is opening; in the final segment, two shots begin and end on Honore, but between these images, Gigi, this time with her husband Gaston.

At this level, which we can call a microsystem, the analysis encounters the multiplied constraint and the dispersion of the specific cinematic codes (codes of camera movement, glances, etc.) which are deployed in the interior and all throughout the macrosystem, the code of syntagmatic categories. The analysis again encounters the voluminous force of the textual system, the full organic play of differential repetition. For example: from segment to segment, as from suprasegment to subsegment, the segmental analysis thus built up would end by constructing, through the numerous scenes which take place at Gigi's, the immense paradigm of entries and exits which supports (along with others which are less obvious) the microsystematic structuration of the narrative units of the film.

## Segmental/Familial/Conjugal

I want to insist on finally a last, fundamental effect common to most American film. This effect, through the textual volume, multiplies and closes doubly the area of its own expansion. The systematic stockpiling of symmetries and dissymmetries throughout the filmic chain decomposed by generalized segmentation faithfully copies, (because they, in fact, produce one another) the schema of familial relations which constitute the space of the narrative.

Gigi and Gaston are both children raised, each according to the custom befitting their sex, by a substitute mother (Mamita) and a substitute father (Honore). A three-way dissymmetry is inscribed within this symmetry which, from the beginning, makes Gigi and Gaston destined for one another.

- a) One man, Honore, corresponds to two women, Mamita and Alicia, in the role of adopted substitute parent.
- b) A genealogical gap makes Gaston Honore's nephew, but Gigi, Mamita's granddaughter and Alicia's great-niece.
- c) The clear age differences between Gigi and Gaston reproduce this genealogical separation, making one already a man, the other still a child.

It's in suprasegment XV at Trouville that the reciprocal feeling between Gigi and Gaston is crystallized. These three segments are in part constructed on a narrative alternation which juxtaposes Gigi and Gaston on one hand, Honore and Mamita on the other, who meet for the first and last time in the entire film during this suprasegment. They seem to be linked by an old romance, and go so far as to evoke the marriage which failed to unite them. This remembered marriage only serves to mirror the potential marriage of Gigi and Gaston. But it suggests much more. For at this moment, the line of dissymmetry between the generations disappears in favor of a matching counterpart. Mamita tells Honore, with an insistence as useless to the plot as it is necessary to the symbolic functioning: "Gigi is my granddaughter," Honore's gallantry, appropriately structural, pushes him to answer: "Granddaughter, no, daughter." How to better suggest that the children they never had are obviously those which they each adopted and

whom the film will reunite by marriage? Thus, an incestuous fiction is presented, the kind for which the classic-romantic imaginary displays such a predilection. Dissymmetry obviously reappears as does Aunt Alicia, absent from this structure containing four terms. But the dissymmetry of structures serves that which it hides and permits to be resolved: through the difference in ages, Gigi finds in Gaston a substitute father for the one who is even more strangely absent than the mother, who is present, you will remember, only as a singing voice-off—and Gaston will find in Mamita the substitute for a mother whom no one has mentioned.

This is what the story of the film tells us, in a narrative which makes the segmental the textual condition of a happy sliding from the familial to the conjugal, and thus presents in its formal achievement the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Such is the effect of textual production which I've tried to focus on in terms at once different and yet strictly complementary in my analysis of Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, an effect I have called the symbolic closure.

Translated by *Maureen Turim*

*Raymond Bellour is a Professor at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.*

SECT.	SUPRA-S.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
	0	0	Titles over engravings			x		Champagne . . . . . Gigi	
A	I	1	The Bois	a	Honoré	1-15	sequence	"Bois" theme	Honoré introduces the Bois de Boulogne and himself: the bachelor stockholder and a lover of women.
				b	Honoré Gigi	16-21		"Little Girls" theme/then sung by Honoré	He praises little girls and introduces Gigi, playing with some friends. She passes behind him and goes off through the Bois.
	II	2	At Gigi's (ext./int.)		Gigi Mamita	22-24	sequence	Mother's singing voice off	Gigi arrives at her Grandmother Mamita's and is reminded that it is the day of her visit to Aunt Alicia.
	III	3	Paris At Gaston's (ext.)		/Honoré/	25	autonomous shot	"Little Girls" variation	A cab crosses a square and stops in front of a luxurious building.
		4	At Gaston's (int.)		Gaston tradesman valet	26	autonomous shot		His uncle's visit is announced to Gaston Lachaille. He finishes dealing with a few matters and goes out.
		5	At Gaston's (ext.)		Honoré Gaston	27-28	sequence		The meeting between the uncle and nephew, who go off in a cab across Paris.
		6	Paris		Honoré Gaston	29-40	scene	"It's a Bore" theme, then sung by Honoré/Gaston	Honoré praises the charms of life (Paris, wine, women, high society). Gaston responds that everything bores him and stops the cab.
IV	7	At Gigi's (ext./int.)		Gaston Mamita	41-48	scene		Gaston arrives at Mamita's. They talk about Gigi. Gaston is astonished by the "lessons" Alicia is giving her.	

SECT.=Section

SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment

S.=Segment

SUB-S.=Sub-Segment



SECT.	SUPRA-S.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
	V	8	At Alicia's (ext./int.)		Alicia Gigi	49-64	sequence		Gigi arrives at Alicia's, running. The lesson is now on how to eat ortolans. Conversation on marriage.
		9	At Alicia's (int.)	a	Alicia Gigi	65-67	scene		Lesson (continuation): jewels, cigars. Conversation on love and art. Alicia leaves.
				b	Gigi	68-71		"The . . . . ."	Gigi inveighs against the Parisians and love and goes off.
	VI	10	Le Jardin des Tuileries		Gigi	72-75	sequence	. . . Parisians" sung by Gigi	Gigi continues singing as she crosses the Tuileries and ends up sitting on a bench.
		11	Le Jardin des Tuileries		Gigi Gaston	76-82	scene		Gaston arrives in a cab, recognizes Gigi ("Gaston, do you make love all the time?"), and teases her as he takes her along to the Palais de Glace, where he is meeting Liane d'Exelmans.
	VII	12	The skating rink (ext.)		/Gigi Gaston/	83	autonomous shot	waltz	The façade of the Palais de Glace.
		13	The skating rink (int.)		Gigi Gaston Liane skating teacher	84-90	sequence	waltz	They enter and sit down. On the ice are Liane and her skating teacher. Gigi finds her common and vulgar and leaves suddenly. Liane joins Gaston and reminds him that they are to meet Honoré at Maxim's. They leave.
B	VIII	14	At Maxim's (entrance)	a	Honoré (+x)	91	episodic	Maxim's theme	Honoré introduces Maxim's and praises it.
				b	Baron de la Cour Girl	91-92	sequence	Maxim's theme chorus in speech/song	The Baron de la Cour enters with a "belle."
				c	Honoré Girl	92-93		" " "	Honoré enters with a "belle."
				d	Gaston Liane	93-94		" " "	Gaston enters with Liane.

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRA-S.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
		15	At Maxim's (room)		Gaston Liane Honoré	95-105	sequence	"She is so gay tonight," sung by Gaston	At the table, Liane is in high spirits, Gaston gloomy. "She is not thinking of me." Honoré asks Liane to dance. Liane grows more and more exuberant, Gaston increasingly bad-tempered.
	IX	16	At Honoré's (int.)		Gaston Honoré Manuel	106-121	scene	"It's a bore" sung by Honoré/Gaston, then Manuel	Gaston arrives at his uncle's to announce that Liane is being unfaithful with the skating master. Honoré takes him to Honfleur where the couple are hiding, to settle the affair in a gentlemanly way.
	X	17	At Honfleur (ext./int.)		Honoré Gaston Liane Skating teacher	122-134	sequence		Honoré and Gaston arrive at an inn and surprise the couple. Gaston offers the man a thousand francs to disappear and says goodbye to Liane who faints.
		18	Newspaper		(Gaston Liane)	135	autonomous shot		A front page with a photo of Liane. "Sugar Prince breaks with Liane d'Exelmans."
	XI	19	At Alicia's		Alicia Mamita	136	autonomous shot		Alicia and Mamita comment on Liane's "suicide."
	XII	20	At Honoré's		Gaston Honoré Manuel	137	autonomous shot		Gaston arrives at Honoré's and is congratulated by Honoré on his first suicide; he dissuades him from shutting himself away and advises him rather to live it up.
C	XIII	21	/At Gigi's (int.)/	A a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	138	episodic sequence	"It's a bore"	Gigi's hands hold an illustrated program: "Gaston Lachaille opens Pré Catelan for a gigantic party."

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRAS.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
			Pré Catelan	B b	Gaston Girl Honoré	139-141			Honoré enjoys himself at a table with several girls while Gaston yawns.
			/At Gigi's (int.)/	A a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	142			Gigi's hands hold an illustrated program: "Who will be Gaston Lachaille's Queen at the battle of flowers?"
			The Bois	C c	Gaston Girl	143-144			In a flower-covered float, Gaston, looking bored beside a girl.
			/At Gigi's (int.)/	A a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	145			Gigi's hands hold an illustrated program: "Two thousand guests invited to Gaston Lachaille's masked ball."
			At Gaston's (int.)	D d	Gaston Honoré	146-148			Honoré looks for Gaston in the costumed crowd and finds him slumped in a corner on a couch.
			/At Gigi's (int.)/	A a	/Gigi/ (Gaston)	149			Gigi's hands hold an illustrated program: "Gaston Lachaille invites the opera company home."
	XIV	22	At Gigi's (int.)	a	Gigi Mamita Gaston	149-154	scene	"Little Girls" whistled by Gigi	The bell rings. Gigi gets up and opens the door to Gaston. Mamita is preparing a cassoulet in the kitchen. Gaston decides to put off his party and sends Gigi with an apology.
				b	Mamita Gaston	155-156	scene	Mother's voice off	Mamita and Gaston talk about Honoré.
		23	At Gigi's (int.)		Gigi Gaston Mamita	157-175	scene	"Champagne" sung by Gigi, Gaston, Mamita	Gaston and Gigi play cards. Gigi makes him promise that if she wins he will take her with him to Trouville. She cheats and wins. Gaston is furious but gives in, agrees to take them. They sing and dance with Mamita as they empty a bottle of champagne.

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRAS.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
	XV	24	At Trouville The beach The sea		Gigi Gaston Girl Man Honoré Mamita	176-183	sequence	"Champagne"	While Gaston and Gigi frolic in the water, Honoré is about to pass a note to a girl when he catches sight of Mamita on the beach, greeting him. He puts away the note and a man goes into the girl's cabin.
		25	At Trouville Tennis		Gigi Gaston Girl Man Honoré Mamita	184-194	sequence	"Champagne"	Honoré arrives on the tennis court. The girl, dressed to kill, is solemnly playing with her admirer on one side. On the other, Gaston is playing with Gigi, who is running about like a mad thing under the amused eye of Mamita.
		26	At Trouville The terrace The beach		Gigi Gaston Girl Honoré Mamita	195-223	sequence	"I remember it well" sung by Honoré/Mamita	Gigi and Gaston on the beach with a pair of donkeys. Mamita watches from the terrace, laughing. Honoré is about to follow the girl as she comes into the hotel when he catches sight of Mamita and goes to sit beside her. They evoke past love at length. Night falls. Gigi and Gaston return, dragging the donkeys.
D	XVI	27	At Alicia's (int.)		Mamita Alicia	224-235	scene		Alicia warns an amazed Mamita about Gaston's likely passion for Gigi and persuades her to speed up Gigi's education before the return of Gaston, who has left for Monte Carlo.
	XVII	28	At Alicia's (int.)	a	Alicia Gigi	236	episodic sequence	"Little Girls"	Lesson in manners: how to serve coffee, which Gigi spills.
				b	" " "	237			Lesson in manners: how to walk, how to sit down. Not very successful.
				c	" " "	238			Lesson in manners: tasting wine, on which Gigi gets tipsy.

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRA-S.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
				d	" "	239			Lesson in manners: choosing a cigar, which Gigi snaps in two.
		29	At Alicia's (int.)	a	Alicia Mamita Gigi model designer	240-246	episodic sequence	"Little Girls"	Presentation of a dress, which Mamita and Gigi like, but Alicia does not.
				b	Alicia Mamita Gigi, etc.	247-250			A second dress, which Mamita and Gigi like, but Alicia does not.
				c	Alicia Mamita Gigi, etc.	251-254			A third dress, which Mamita and Gigi don't like and Alicia chooses.
				d	Alicia Mamita Gigi, etc.	255-256			Gigi tries on the dress and is aghast.
XVIII		30	At Gigi's (int.)	A a	Gigi Mamita Gaston	257-268	sequence	"Little Girls"	Gaston arrives at Gigi's. She rushes straight into her room and returns in a white dress. Gaston, who doesn't accept the metamorphosis, loses his temper and leaves, then returns to invite Gigi to tea at the "Reservoirs." Mamita is against it and Gigi goes back to her room.
				b	Mamita Gaston	269-275			Mamita explains to Gaston that she cannot let Gigi go out with him alone. Gaston loses his temper, insults Mamita and leaves.

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRA-S.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
			From Gigi's back to Gigi's (ext.)	B c	Gaston	276-289		"She is a babe," by Gaston  "Gigi" sung by Gaston	He walks across Paris as far as the Tuileries, where he met Gigi earlier, and returns. When he left, Gigi was only a harmless child; on his return, she is a girl with whom he is in love.
		31	At Gigi's (ext.)		Gaston Mamita	290-291	scene		He rings and asks Mamita to receive him.
XIX		32	At Alicia's (int.)		Alicia Mamita	292-301	scene		Mamita reports to Alicia Gaston's proposal on keeping Gigi: a private apartment, a car, etc.
XX		33	At Gigi's (bedroom)	A a	Gigi	302	sequence	"I remember it well"	Gigi comes out of her room to open the door to Gaston.
			At Gigi's (living room)	B b	Gaston Gigi	302-308		Gigi	Gigi refuses Gaston's proposals, bursts into tears when she learns that he loves her.
				c	Gaston Gigi Mamita	308			Mamita rushes in, Gigi runs to her room.
				d	Mamita Gaston	308			Gaston says goodbye to Mamita and leaves.
XXI		34	At the restaurant	a	Honoré Gaston	309-311	scene		Gaston arrives at a restaurant where Honoré is having lunch and explains his disappointment to him. Honoré consoles him and invites him to join him that evening with "Michèle" at Maxim's.
				b	Honoré	312		"Poor boy" sung by Honoré	Honoré congratulates himself on having reached an age where conflicts like this don't matter.

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRAS.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
	XXII	35	On the telephone At Alicia's In Paris	A B C	a b c (Alicia)	Mamita Alicia 315	313 314 315	episodic sequence "Little Girls" variation	Mamita on telephone in tears. Alicia puts down the telephone and has a cab called. A cab crosses a square in Paris.
		36	At Gigi's		Alicia Mamita Gigi Gaston	316-325	scene	Mother's voice off	Alicia arrives at Gigi's and reproaches Mamita for her clumsiness. Gaston rings; he has received Gigi's letter. She comes out from her room for a moment to tell him that she would rather be unhappy with him than without him and returns to her room. Gaston goes out. The two sisters look at each other.
E	XXIII	37	At Gaston's		Gaston jeweler	326	autonomous shot	"Champagne"	Gaston chooses jewelry for Gigi.
	XXIV	38	At Gigi's (bedroom)		Gigi	327	autonomous shot	"Say a prayer for me tonight" sung by Gigi	Gigi mentally prepares herself for the evening she is to experience.
		39	At Gigi's (int./ext.)		Gigi Alicia Mamita Gaston	328-329	scene		Gigi emerges from her room in an evening dress. She kisses Alicia and Mamita, opens the door to Gaston's ring, and they go out.
	XXV	40	At Maxim's (entrance)		Gigi Gaston	330-331	sequence	Maxim's theme	Gaston and Gigi enter Maxim's and move to a table.
		41	At Maxim's (inside)		Gigi Gaston Honoré	332-335	sequence	"She is so gay tonight"	At the table, Gigi applies Alicia's lessons to perfection: the coffee, the cigar, and the jewelry. They get up to dance, as they pass greeting a surprised Honoré, who recognizes Gigi.

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment

SECT.	SUPRAS.	S.	PLACE	SUB-S.	CHARACTERS	SHOTS	SYNTAGMA	MUSIC	ACTION
		42	At Maxim's (entrance hall)		Gigi Gaston Honoré	336-337	sequence		Gaston offers Gigi his gift. Gigi exclaims like a real woman of the world over the beauty of the diamonds, which she offers to the room to admire. Gaston is angered and leaves, dragging her to the exit.
	XXVI	43	From Gigi's (ext.)	A B	a b Gigi Gaston Mamita	338 339-340	sequence		He drags Gigi by the hand up the steps. Gigi throws herself tearfully into Mamita's arms. Gaston goes back down the steps and walks across Paris.
		44	Le Jardin des Tuileries		Gaston	341	autonomous shot	"She is a babe" "Gigi"	He passes in front of the Tuileries fountain, stops, and turns back.
		45	Toward Gigi's (ext.)		Gaston	342-344	sequence		He retraces his steps and goes slowly up Gigi's stairway.
		46	At Gigi's (int.)		Gaston Gigi Mamita	345-347	scene		Mamita and Gigi are sitting up. Mamita goes to open the door to Gaston and begs him to avoid a scandal. Gaston asks Mamita for Gigi's hand. She rushes into his arms tenderly.
	XXVII	47	The Bois		Honoré Gigi Gaston	348-349	sequence	"Little Girls" sung by Honoré	Honoré sings. Gigi and Gaston appear and leave in a cab. Honoré goes on singing.
Repeat			Ending on painting				a shot		

SECT.=Section SUPRA-S.=Supra-Segment S.=Segment SUB-S.=Sub-Segment