

Analyse the
significance of the
image system in
hitchcock's north by
northwest es...



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

North by Northwest was a pre-date James Bond film, it was directed in 1959 while the cold war was going on, it is said to be the best ever Hitchcock film and was nominated for 3 academy awards. One of the most obvious things in the film was the use of different types of camera shots, and visual images to give more meaning to the film and to give a different perspective of things to the viewer. Hitchcock does this by using many different techniques such as different camera shots, shapes, patterns, outfits that the characters wear, and Hitchcock uses a different series of motifs and he puts them to use in very meaningful ways.

In the film the use of parallel lines are put to use all the time to give the idea of truth and deception and good and evil. Straight lines are meant to represent the clearness of the situation, for example when Roger Thornhill, the main character, has gone to meet Eve in the woods the viewer isn't able to see the tree tops which I think is meant to represent that they are enclosed, the trees are also straight up, in this scene Roger Thornhill is told what is going on, or things are made clear to him and also at the end of the film when Roger Thornhill and Eve Kendal are running from Vanddamme's thugs.

The tall straight, truthful trees help to hide the 'goodies' from the 'baddies'. As we cannot see the tops of the trees, a very claustrophobic and enclosed environment is produced. Also, the parallel lines are used in a very different way in the first scene. A high angle shot is used which faces vertically down the sides of tall skyscrapers. These tall buildings have many parallel lines travelling from top to bottom across the building. This suggests that within

these buildings are large deceitful and corrupt corporations from which there is no escape, such as the CIA or the UN.

Bendy and twisted lines are meant to show the deception of things that are happening to Thornhill, and things aren't as clear to him, for example near the beginning of the film when Thornhill has been forced to drink a substantial amount of alcohol and is driving down the road, the road is bendy and you see a point of view camera shot to show what he is seeing and his view is deluded, showing that he doesn't understand what is going on.

When Roger Thornhill is driving we see the bonnet of the car and you look down to the Mercedes Benz sign and it appears to look like a crosshair, I think this means that people are being targeted, this also happens in the opening scene when you look down onto the mass of people hurrying about. People's paths are crossing and it gives the impression of a crosshair from a rifle also giving the opinion that people are being targeted.

This again happens when Roger Thornhill spots a plane flying towards him and leaves a trail behind it, the trail is 90 degrees to the road and when the plane had passed you could clearly see the crosshair, I think this is there to show that Roger Thornhill was in a substantial amount of danger. Different types of camera shots are used throughout the film to give an impression to the viewer about the character. Low shots are used frequently, for example when the two Russian henchmen the camera shot are taking Thornhill away the camera starts off low looking up at them.

This gives the impression to the viewer that these men are powerful,

dominative and aggressive. A low angle camera shot is also used when <https://assignbuster.com/analyse-the-significance-of-the-image-system-in-hitchcocks-north-by-northwest-essay-sample/>

Thornhill is hanging for his life from the four heads, one of Van Damm's agents has his foot on his hand, the camera shot is looking from the foot up to the henchman giving the impression again that he is powerful, dominative and in control of the situation. Another type of camera shot is a point of view shot to look at things from the characters perspective or 'point of view'.

An example of this is when Roger Thornhill is about to get punched in the woods when meeting up with Eve, this makes the situation seem more dramatic and eventful than just looking at it from a normal camera shot.

High angled camera shots are used in North by Northwest, when Thornhill is running from the UN building the camera shot is looking down the side of the building from the very top with parallel lines running across the building to show that maybe sinister events are taking place within.

The high angles camera shot makes the character look very small in a large world as if he's weak and helpless. A wide shot is used to emphasize vulnerability for example when the crop plane is swooping in on Roger Thornhill the wide shot makes him look more vulnerable which also creates suspense and entraps the viewer to keep on viewing. A wide shot is also used when Eve and Thornhill are looking at each other in the woods, natural barriers in the way, like there are barriers between them in the film.

American patriotism is probably a major part in the film, especially with the cold war taking place at the time. Probably the most famous scene in the film is the last where Thornhill and Eve are on Mt. Rushmore Which represents all the things that are good about America and American values. Since the Cold war is taking place at the same time as the film is being made

I feel that it shows American patriotism and it is showing that the Americans will win, by when the Russian henchman has been killed. I think that Hitchcock uses this scene to show how powerful America is and what it stands for.

In the opening scene as the Russian Henchmen take Roger Thornhill away, the two Russians are dressed in quite shabby clothing where as Roger Thornhill is nicely presented, I think this also ties in with Americas involvement with the Cold War. I don't think Hitchcock really liked women, for what I can see in the film he is rather sexist in my opinion. It seems to me that he thinks there are two different types of women, moaning women and deceitful, corrupt women. In the films two types of these genders are found. Thornhill's mother is a winging old woman, were as Eve is a deceitful woman.

Eve is probably one of the centres of Hitchcock's imagery system, her name is related to Adam and Eve, where Eve tricks Adam into eating the apple. This suggests the way in which she acts throughout the film and is made to look fake, fickle and superficial, frequently changing her clothing. Probably the most noticeable item of clothing in the entire film is Eve's red rose dress symbolising a woman's genital region. Where as on the other hand Hitchcock hardly changes clothing and is made to look down-to-Earth and very upfront. Hitchcock shows the title of the film ' North by North West' throughout the film.

When Thornhill is drunk in the car he is shown at the top left of the screen, the North West of the screen and when he is at the airport many signs contain the title of the film. In conclusion I think the image system in this film

was very important and introduced new techniques and ideas and has probably affected what we watch on 'the big screen' nowadays. It is quite easy to understand that it was implied as a James Bond genre type of film the actor who plays Roger Thornhill has the class about him and the style, unfortunately not the cars.

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