

REAR WINDOW / 1954

OVERVIEW: In opening scenes, Jeff's accident is emphasized; he may have actually died, and the filmed events might be in actuality his death dream; in this case, the opening confrontation is a "spiritual test" that he must initiate before traveling as a soul in the interval "between the two deaths."

JEFF-LB

master-servant	S1	the framer (photographer) has been framed (IDENTIFY)	inauthentic / inconsistent
	\$	JEFF as divided in two: broken leg, immobilized (MOTILITY)	
	S2	Lisa as illuminated and illuminating; attempts symbolic alliance (marriage)	
	a	Lisa accesses pleasure that Jeff has foregone with his preference for pain	

LISA-STELLA

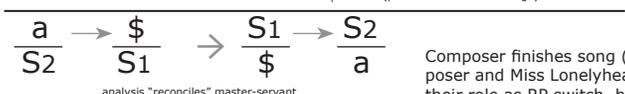
hysteric	\$	Jeff feels constricted by Lisa's demands, abuses her kindness	authentic / inconsistent
	a	Jeff postpones taking pleasure in Lisa, beneath his complaints are joys of suffering	
	S1	Editor, then Doyle; the first only a "lipogrammatic" voice.	
	S2	Clues/mystery subordinated to official views, ethics of observing neighbors	

LARS/DOYLE

university	S2	dog murder, plant grows backwards, shipping case, pocket book, jewel case; CASES!	inauthentic / consistent
	S1	Thorwald manipulates; idea of a crime; Doyle as foil to investigation	
	a	what Jeff has missed, dark apt., missing ring, lost clues; falls asleep	
	\$	JEFF splits using optics: SCALE. He is concealed (/)	

LISA-STELLA

analysis	a	ring nails Lars: IDENTIFY. Anna's ring = ANNA	authentic / consistent
	S2	takes place of \$ in M-S — Jeff as discoverer; whodunit	
	\$	takes place of a in M-S — Jeff as discoverer; Jeff vindicated	
	S1	solution of crime based on ID of the ring, evidence of Anna's death	



The opening scenes introduce "Jeff" (L. B.) Jefferies, an intensification of the POV idea as well as the film's POV representative. Jeff takes over the usually transparent job of the production apparatus; his apartment becomes a thickened screen, a point of entry into the diegetic story, which properly begins at his window sill. Just inside, Jeff's loss of mastery — his subjection to the "masculine" hero ideal (he is a WWII veteran) — is evident in his smashed camera and last photo of an auto race. RP is used to show how the photographer's independence had been lost at the expense of a broken leg. Worse is possible; we may be in Jeff's death dream. His attempts to maintain the honor position is attached both by Stella, his nurse, and Lisa, his girlfriend. Stella challenges his right to observe others from a concealed position, i.e. is POV identity, while Lisa challenges his identification with the "mastery" ideal. (She prefers University discourse, i.e. consistency at the expense of inauthenticity.) Motility is dysfunctional and Identity is on its way to revision in these opening scenes, which are, like their spatial *askesis*, outside the main story, a preview. A heat wave has "obverted" residents to their balconies and yards. This type of RP allows Jeff legal cover for his observations, which he anthologizes, making the courtyard a kind of inverted Tower of Babel. This experimental association of Mastery with the opening scene seems natural, in the sense that every opening scene must establish some sense of mastery, even if only technical, to direct audience attention.

authentication:

letter/map/phrase

Hysteria is introduced in several near-literal ways. Jefferies' body is a *corps morcélé*, a body in pieces, as the "epitaph" on his cast suggests. Lisa divides her introduction by turning on a light for each of her three names. Stella functions as a Sancho Panza, with a fable or moral for everything Jeff says (S1/S2). She treats his body piece by piece, and comments on his voyeurism in terms of the ancient punishment. Jeff and Lisa's first encounter deals with the postponement or termination of the marriage option. As a couple, they are a divided unity, \$, suppressing pleasure, a, which is in the position, as Stella reminds Jeff, of TRUTH. Hysteria transfers meaning to a field of affordances, and this clearly is the urban courtyard where residents have made themselves visible because of the heat. Collective subjectivity is also in the position of the AGENT, divided/barred in all its form. The sculptress is deaf, Miss Torso is beset by suitors, Miss Lonelyhearts has only an imaginary boyfriend, the composer can't complete his work, the balcony couple have a dog rather than a child, which they lower in a basket to the courtyard, an almost literal picture of \$/a. As a collective, S1 is the anthology, the Babel structure, that conceals beneath it the stories, S2. The only apparently content couple, newlyweds, mark their exception by shutting the blinds to their just-rented honeymoon apartment. This sign signals the use of the open-closed motif as a predicating device, always ready for reversal. Heat forces obversion, which forces the hysteria of the subject-as-field.

obversion:

gaze

Lisa attempts to initiate University discourse with a sleep-over. She packs her essentials in a tiny carrying case (a/\$). The case is a signal that Jeff should have some fun tonight, the subjective goods, the nightgown and slippers, are packed inside. Other cases serve as covers for more secrets: S2/S1. Thorwald has used his samples case to transport body parts (we speculate), a large trunk is used to ship Anna Thorwald's things away (at first it seems it may be a coffin). Thorwald has kept behind a pocketbook, and Lisa deduces that no woman, however sick, would be without her purse. If we could only obvert these "truths" (S1) from their cases (S2). We could then discover how Thorwald (S1) has been manipulating what we see from Jeff's POV (S2). Obversion is mainly accomplished with optics that Jeff has ready-at-hand: binoculars at first, then a telephoto lens. Optical enlargement gets us inside Thorwald's and other apartments, and shows how SCALE dysfunction is the signature of obversion as well as reversed predication, RP. Consistency is the presupposition of a murder mystery. Although we don't see the whole picture at first, we can be assured that the culprit's motives have created a unity of form. The inauthenticity of the University discourse, an acceptable downside of the life Lisa proposes for Jeff in the place of his false consciousness as a war hero, runs parallel to the inauthenticity of crime in general — its need for concealment. Hysteria, authentic but inconsistent, finds its mirror obverse in the University, INauthentic and CONSistent.

TELEPHONE CALL

confession:

decoy/delay

This sequence of episodes leads to the primary delay: Miss Lonelyhearts takes pills, diverts Jeff/Stella's attention away from Lisa; police arrive in the nick of time, but the delay has served to shift the time sense to real-time documentation. The character focus is on Lisa's conversion to a crime investigator willing to take risks, and a more active role for Stella. Jeff is "feminized" as the balance tilts away from "loss to lass," so to speak: in the face of lost mastery, his women do his work for him. When they are absent, as in the last scene, he is exposed and helpless. The shift from inauthenticity to authenticity is managed by the discovery of Anna's ring, which proves she has been killed. This is the agency: desire that has substituted one woman for another, concealing the means by which the murder was accomplished. Analysis works like an antidote for the initial discourse of the Master. \$ replaces a in the position of the Other, which is one way of saying that Lars has found a new woman. The a however, takes the place of S1, which we might translate as "the ring turns out to be the pivotal clue of the mystery." S2 substitutes for the divided/barred subject(s), and so in the end, Miss Lonelyhearts finds a boyfriend, the composer finishes the song, Miss Torso's husband returns, and Jeff and Lisa are together. Lisa pretends to be reading a book written by S1 > a (demon confesses) PRODUCTION Justice William O. Douglas, famous for writing on the protection of privacy, among other things. Final restoration consolidates these gains with special signatures.

restoration:

acousmatic echo

Composer finishes song ("Lisa"); Miss Torso's husband returns, the composer and Miss Lonelyhearts get together ... only the newlyweds, confirming their role as RP switch, have had enough and finally come to the window.

D/d S/s T/t R/d

reversed-

virtuality

- >S/s: Jeff as POV narrator instead of voice-over
- >S/s: Courtyard has anthology function
- >T/t: discovery of mystery initiates time travel logic: what happened? Time is out of synch.
- >D/d: Lars, Anna serves as doubles of Jeff and Lisa; mirroring creates "inauthenticity" and "inconsistency"
- >R/d: J&L's conflict seems to be taken up by Lars/Anna. How?

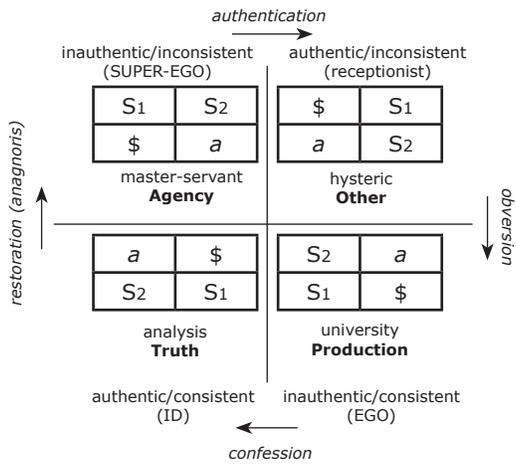
predication

- >(filmed) apartment becomes station for internal "film"
- >Jeff covers disasters but now is himself wrecked
- >all clues are examples of RP, reversed predication (artifact becomes representation)
- >sorites (anthology) creates RP as the "solution"
- >courtyard is inverted Tower of Babel
- >heat wave has forced residents out of apartments

- >scale consistency lost with use of optics
- >identity difference lost with contamination of stories (mirroring)

- >Thorwald discovers Jeff when he sees Lisa use ring as signal

- >Jeff thrown out of window



The opening of the blinds at the beginning of the film is matched with their closing at the end. Jeff's single broken leg, with inscription, now has a twin as a result of being "obverted" from his apartment window. Before all this is concluded however, the idea of the crime must be authenticated. This moment happens when, after the dog is found dead, Thorwald is the only one of the neighbors not to come to his window.

MASTER>authentication
letter/map/phrase ↓

HYSTERIC>obversion
gaze ↓

The role of the gaze as returned has confused critics. Although Jeff "looks at" Thorwald, it is the void in this view that gazes at Jeff. This negative is materialized by the pocketbook, the glowing cigarette, and later the ring.

UNIVERSITY>confession
delaying tactic [gap] ↓

The theme of confession (from consistent inauthenticity to authentic consistency) focuses on the anamorphosis of the flowers that seem to grow backward, thanks to Jeff's comparison of recent photos to the next-day condition. If Lars has been consistently dissembling, the stage is set for converting his consistency to the "true version" of what he's done. Discovery not only matches the crime, from this point on it will be *simultaneous with* the crime.

ANALYSIS>anagnorisis Thorwald confesses off-screen. The delay required just before is staged by the famous flash-bulb defense Jeff devises to keep Lars at bay when he comes around the block to take care of Jeff. The internal optical line connecting Lars and Jeff should be compared to the final circular confrontation.