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indexes were shifted from Martin to Ethan. While the color-object perception of Martin's mother's scalp is diminished in the film, the blue stone inlaid medal of Ethan-Debbie-Scar is simultaneously accentuated, as Scar proudly displays it to Ethan and Martin. There is some evidence to support the contention that in THE SEARCHERS the deviations in color-object signs from novel to film are motivated in part by the "star system" and textual systems in Western films.

C. Conclusion

Although color as a suprasegmental unit of the film text is certainly a rather specialized area of semiotics, there appears to be a definite value to the isolation of color-object signs and their reintegration into the time and space of the narrative as a structured abstraction. Peirce's system, his triadic model of icon-index-symbol, provides a logical method for isolating specific signs from THE SEARCHERS. His categories are not rigidly defined, and the assignment of a sign to its dominant is somewhat arbitrary in the sense that these categories constantly overlap and are co-present. Metz's terminology helps us to define the ways in which color-object signs function in terms of the narrative. As a suprasegmental unit color is related to the perception of temporal and spatial continuities and discontinuities. The perception of color harmony, color discord, warm colors and cool colors is a problematic area in the analysis of specific film texts, which does not appear to approach the consistency of a textual system in THE SEARCHERS, even when it is tied to the filmed object (color-object). Color connotation is related to certain recurring themes, if not itself thematically determined. Color naming usually reinforces color perception, but it may also substitute for it. The interrelation of color perception and color naming is a complex cultural/psychological/linguistic phenomenon. Finally, color-object signs that are linguistically specified in the literary source are often and perhaps necessarily altered in the filmic adaptation. The nature of these alterations may be related to cinematic textual systems or cinematic codes, like Western films and the "star system." Further movement towards a semiotic of color in popular film may be facilitated by studies of specific color-object filmic and cinematic codes and textual systems themselves, as opposed to speculation about these codes and textual systems on the basis of a single film text, like THE SEARCHERS.

Notes

[1]Charles S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," Philosophical Writings of Peirce, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), pp.98-119.

[2]Charles S. Peirce, Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, 8.14 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-35).

[3]Christian Metz, Language and Cinema (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1974), p.202.

[4]Peter Wollen, Signs and Meanings in the Cinema (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972), pp.122-23.

[5]Sergei Eisenstein, "Color and Meaning," in The Film Sense, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1942), pp.113-153. Also in Metz, Language and Cinema, p.178.

"HARD TIMES": THE LACK AND THE OTHER

DENNIS GILES

This is the hero of the fairy-tales, a man called Chaney. The name bears savage overtones; it is spoken with the teeth exposed, the breath expelled--a bite at the world. He moves in a time severed from our own through an exotic city which is not quite America. The Thirties, New Orleans; another time, an Other place. This double distanciation is the cue that HARD TIMES does not attempt to engage our everydayness but stands back from these banalities to gaze at a scene of primal battles. It is a world as abstracted from the sites of our daily lives as the mountain-closed arena of SHANE, the abstraction heightened here by the surprising bloodlessness of bare-knuckled fighting.

The story is an old one, found in pre-history. The journeys, the conflicts--the agon and the agony--of Gilgamesh, Perseus, Theseus and Apollo are here re-presented. "Once upon a time" the hero wanders to the Other Kingdom, there to do combat with a monstrous antagonist who blocks the path to the treasure, while on the sidelines the Princess awaits. Are we wrong to consider this film as a fairy tale--a myth?

1

According to our reading of the model developed by Vladimir Propp in Morphology of the Folktale, the lack is the motive of the heroic plot. Life is somehow deficient, unsatisfactory--a dragon is ravaging the Kingdom, an ogre has kidnapped the Princess, flood or famine has collapsed the well-being enjoyed in the previously timeless home. With the discovery of lack, the stability of the home-world collapses into plot. The acts of the hero are a remedial movement, attempting to recover the "full being" of the home which was lost; he acts to retrieve an inactive, story-less plenum.

The lack is thus never found in isolation but is always paired, in the heroic narrative, with its remedy--the possession of the bride, treasure, kingdom, etc. Even if the goal is never reached, it exists as a very real motivation of the active hero, reminding him always of his unfinished state, propelling him forward in quest of completion.

Chaney's deficiency is a simple one--he lacks money. Possession of it will end his plot and the film, at least in theory. But much to the hero's disgust, the remaining actors in his world will refuse to let him retire with his riches into a post-heroic status. HARD TIMES is a film of two complete actions, two closing statements--two moves, in Propp's terminology.

The cause of the lack is deleted from the film. We do not know why Chaney needs money so desperately, or what he intends to do with it. Was he exiled from home, or did he leave of his own volition? Nothing is told of the hero's past; we begin with the voyage impelled by the lack. The film picks him up at the first stop of an outward journey which, typically, is broken into two distinct stages: before and after the meeting with the donor.

The site is a train yard. Chaney has slipped off a slow-moving freight to amble towards camera and the scene to which HARD TIMES obsessively returns--an impromptu arena, surrounded by bettors, displaying a "pick-up" fight, bare-knuckled. Chaney witnesses an aging hulk being thoroughly beaten while this fighter's manager--a gambler named Speed--attempts to conceal his chagrin. In a drab restaurant, Chaney strikes a bargain with Speed. This is "the connective incident" which places the hero into a plot.

The role of the donor is to connect Chaney to the Other Kingdom--to the scene of the villain, the site of the treasure. He sets up the combat, provides the nascent hero with an aim, an end. As Frederic Jameson writes in The Prison-house of Language:

> In the beginning, the hero is never strong enough to conquer by himself. He suffers from some initial lack of being: either he is simply not strong enough or not courageous enough, or else he is too naive and simple-minded to know what to do with his strength. The donor is the complement, the reverse of this basic ontological weakness.

Chaney is hardly timid or stupid. He has the ability but not the means. He needs someone to make connections, and Speed--his new manager--is the connector par excellence. Clearly, the role of the donor is a crucial one, but this "helper" is largely ignored in analyses of narrative. Without his intervention, there would be no plot. From this point on, Chaney's aimless movements are raised to the level of acts--movements towards an end.

But in order that the donor lend assistance, he must first test the hero, to determine if the latter is worthy of the tale that seeks to be told. With Speed's provisional help, Chaney enters the arena, miraculously felling his opponent with a single blow. The test passed, the incipient contract is now made actual. The donor has found his champion; they take the next train to New Orleans where the "real money" is to be found. Speed "connects" Chaney to the site of the treasure, and the outward journey is resumed.

New Orleans--the opposite pole of the hero's (Northern) home. It represents warmth opposed to cold, and money to remedy the lack. In contrast to the neutral ground of the donor's appearance, this city is wholly un-home-like (unheimlich: uncanny). It is the Other Kingdom; a turf closely ruled by the villain and his henchmen. Here struts Chick, the Gambler King, and his monster--the squat, grotesque fighter named Jim Henry. Between them, they own the town (at least the fights, which is to say the treasure). The goal of the villain king is conservation, defense. He aims to keep what he already possesses (the championship, the treasure). What Chick is--his being, if you will--has already been accomplished, setting him in immediate opposition to the hero, who has yet to become what he is. Like Freud's Primal Father, the villain is in essence a prohibitor. His function is to with-hold from the hero the object of his desire. Chick will keep what he already possesses; his motives are conservation, defense, wholly opposed to heroic aggression. This plot is a zero-sum game in which one team will win only what the other loses; no new values are created through playing the game.

In order to win the treasure, a combat must be arranged between the invading hero and the King's champion. Once arrived at the scene of battles, however, the hero is not admitted to the ring. Chick refuses to fight. The hero is still beneath notice in New Orleans; beating him would add little to Chick's reputation or his treasure. Like the little boy whose phallus (= power) is too insignificant to be considered a threat to the Father's exclusive possession of the Mother-treasure, Chaney stands unnoticed on the sidelines. He must go off to play with the other children--fighters as insignificant as he. The first actions of the hero-donor team are therefore involved in a struggle for recognition. Since the King will not commit Jim Henry to such a trivial combat, a fight is arranged in the swamp--a petty Kingdom on the fringes of the city. Winning the borderland purse will gain a treasure worthy of Chick's notice and will thus prepare the climactic agon.

The preliminary battle cannot begin until the donor enacts a critical function--he must provide the hero with a magical agent and/or helper to assist him in the fight. In the fairy-tales such objects are invincible swords, cloaks of invisibility, flying carpets, magical drinks which render the hero larger, smaller, stronger, etc. Instead of a device, the magical agent can be a special animal, a dwarf, or a human being with marvelous powers. Whether animal, vegetable or mineral, the agent is not the free gift of the donor, but rather a reward to the hero for passing the previous test. The agent/helper is, in a sense, the first treasure the hero wins.

In HARD TIMES this agent is a healing potion in human form. This extraordinary character is played with suitable elan by the incomparable prince of maniacs--Strother Martin. Scuttling crab-like through the streets, murmuring fragments of Shakespeare, this dandified creature claims a relationship to Edgar A. Poe, but, through the eye of the 1970's, casts a distorted reflection of Tennessee Williams. Whatever his ancestry, the "dyed-in-the-wool hophead" embodies the degenerate Southern poet of the legends. He will be Chaney's doctor. An impromptu physical examination results in the pronouncement that the hero is fit for fighting. From this point forward, the agent/helper mediates between fighter and manager to complement Speed's primary mediation between hero and antagonist. The poet/doctor is properly seen as an extension of the donor's connective function.

The Swamp Fight. In this preparatory encounter, Chaney easily fells his antagonist, but more importantly reveals: 1) the extent of his desire to be the hero (to gain the treasure); and 2) his intelligence (trickiness). After the relatively easy combat, the swamp-fighter's manager refuses to hand over the purse. Speed impulsively tries to start a general melee despite the guns of the antagonists--they have unfairly changed the rules--but the hero restrains him.

Chaney devises a counteraction in response to the treachery: that night when the villains are celebrating, the hero bursts into their road house, grabs purse and gun, then shoots up the place in repayment. Chaney has proved himself more than equal to any tricks of his antagonist.

At this point in HARD TIMES the preparatory action has been completed. This introductory story is a microcosm of the action to come, entailing: 1) victorious combat; 2) reversal of the hero's fortunes by treachery; 3) second, final victory; and 4) reward. The film now starts to repeat its previous plot, not in a circle which retraces the very same ground, but rather in an enlarging spiral. The scene of reward is both the end of the previous action and pregnant with the action to come. It is a stopping place from which the inactive hero can look backwards and forwards, take stock of himself and reaffirm his goal. This reward, therefore, must serve as a pointer to the larger action and the greater reward at the same time that it signals a provisional completion.

The money won in the swamp fight is used as bait to lure the Gambler-King into risking treasure and kingdom. The climactic battle is finally arranged. The "skin-head" is beaten, though the issue is often in doubt. The king is dethroned, the treasure possessed. The hero is no longer potential, but actual. But once he achieves his aims, the hero no longer "exists."

2

"To exist," the dictionary reminds us, is "to stand out or stand towards." In Chaney's plot, the hero has defined himself as one who stands out of poverty (the lack) towards the championship treasure (the remedy). He has been wholly a fighter, bare-knuckled; he knows no other existence. But once the treasure is won, and Jim Henry defeated, there is no longer a gap between the hero and his goal. At his moment of completion, Chaney has nothing to fight for, and no-one to fight against. He possesses everything; what was theirs has become mine. For the first time in the plot, Chaney stands fully alone, facing no-one but himself. At this point HARD TIMES begins to veer into contradiction. We are told that the post-hero is not finished with his story despite his "complete" achievement. Again Chaney will fight the representative of the Gambler-King, again he fights for treasure. But this time the treasure is his own. In the scheme of the previous plot the action is senseless; Chaney can gain nothing, lose everything. Why this second act? Obviously, Chaney's motive must be a powerful one. The previous rules of the story cannot be discarded at will. The future action must again be rooted in the perception of lack. This means that the terminal being which Chaney has achieved must be seen by the hero from a new perspective which reveals it to be a hollow being, still lacking. In other words, the treasure for which Chaney fought must now be devalued in his eyes and a second, unpossessed treasure set up in its place.

Like most fairy-tales, HARD TIMES boasts a Princess-Beloved. In the typical tale of rescue, the Princess is the treasure. St. George spears the dragon to save her from being devoured or ravished. The dragon-antagonist is but a disguise for the Princess' father who with-holds her--defeating the monster effectively wins both bride and kingdom from the king, depriving him of his original possessions. But HARD TIMES becomes a rescue fantasy only in its second story. Chaney first fights for the money, not the girl. The Princess is only a superfluous treasure, not the primary object of desire. Chaney is able to sleep with her throughout his quest of the championship. Only after his victory, does she become valuable in her own right. This value is realized by Chaney when she refuses to sleep with him. We now learn with the hero that treasure achieves its value as treasure solely by being withheld. According to the rules of the heroic fantasy, a value possessed is no value at all; to be "worth" anything, the treasure must be lacking, out of reach.

The Princess rejects Chaney because she "has a better opportunity"--a man who will spend the whole night and has a steady job. Because Chaney seemed to consider her only a secondary value, her pride is clearly hurt. In a previous conversation she has asked the fighter why he fights. Is it because he loves to crunch his fists against another's skull? Firmly, Chaney corrects her. He fights only "for the money." Knocking people down--the act itself--is only the means to the treasure, not the end. In this dialogue, Chaney confirms that action--the very stuff of heroism--is but a necessary evil.

Here we are face to face with the self-negation of the "classical" film narrative. As Chaney explains to the Princess, what he desires is not action itself but the privilege of no longer needing to act. The heroic goal is precisely inaction. The act is born from a lack of satisfactory and stable being; it is thus a species of non-being opposed to the finished state towards which it aims, as potential is opposed to actual. Once his active existence passes into an achieved and static being, Chaney is compelled to assume the conservative stance of the villain. He is thrown into the defensive, attempting to keep the treasure--and the privilege of inaction--in which he has invested so much energy. In short, the hero no longer acts but reacts in fear of the loss which will propel him once more into the agony of action. He tries not

to perceive any lack in his presumably perfect state of being because the knowledge of lack will necessitate that he enact a remedy. Thus Chaney wishes to end the story with the possession of the treasure, to recognize no other values beyond the money which he already possesses. In the second plot of HARD TIMES, the hero is first an ostrich. He refuses to try to change the mind of the Princess since this act would admit her value; he even tries to ignore the main event of the second story--the kidnapping of Speed, his manager-donor.

While Chaney has been enjoying the fruits of victory, the plot has continued to turn, thanks to an indiscretion of Speed. It seems the donor was already in debt to Chick when he arrived in the city with Chaney. Throughout the first plot of HARD TIMES he has been told to "pay up" or suffer the consequences. But Speed has delayed until Chaney's victory brings him enough wealth to both live in style and pay what he owes. As we have seen, Chaney fulfills all expectations, but during the victory celebration at a local bordello Speed manages to lose all of his winnings at cards. Frantic, he begs Chaney to consider another fight with a new antagonist imported by Chick. The hero coldly declines the offer.

By kidnapping Speed and threatening to kill him, the deposed Gambler-King believes that he can force Chaney to fight a rematch. It is Chick's only chance to retrieve the treasure--and the throne--he regards as rightfully his. But Chick can force the fight only if Chaney abides by the rules of the previous plot--if he recognizes Speed as a lacking object of value, as a second treasure. This the hero first refuses to do. His treasure is complete, his being achieved. Particularly, Chaney wants nothing to do with a donor whose function, now as ever, is to set up a combat, to connect him into a narrative. He owes Speed nothing. It is at this crucial point that the Princess rejects him.*

In the warehouse, the end of Speed is prepared. There the "hop-head" doctor paces and mutters his fugitive poetry. And there waits the Other--a professional fighter from Chicago--for the arrival of Chaney and treasure.

But the hero sits glumly in his hotel room, utterly static, absolutely alone. He exits the room with his suitcase. Is he leaving town, or striding towards the arena?

The loss of the Princess tips the balance. The lack is recognized. At last, the hero arrives. He strips off his shirt. Speed is released; the fight begins. Why the change of heart? Let us reconsider the hero's position:

Unlike the victim/heroes of the boxing films of the late Forties and early Fifties, Chaney has been careful to maintain his independence. On the other side--the villain's world--the fighter is a mere creature of the manager, echoing BODY AND SOUL, THE HARDER THEY FALL and the other films of the fight-cycle. Yet Chaney has fallen prey to the opposite danger. Because he fears being used by the Others, he maintains such a distance from them that he is unable to love the girl to her satisfaction or establish any close relationship with Speed, his partner. Only the "I" exists. Winning the treasure proves Chaney to be a hero, but he is yet to become a man. When the Princess leaves him, it is clear even to the hero that his achievement has been possible only through the efforts of Speed--the donor--who connected him with the treasure. He begins to see that his very identity as hero is founded on a relationship with a world of Others outside the self, that his treasure was gained by Speed's "set-up" of a link between the antagonistic Other (Chick, Jim Henry) and himself. By recovering Speed, Chaney is retrieving the possibility of a relation with Others, is transcending his own isolation.

When Chaney fights for the sake of Speed, he constitutes the donor as the treasure. It will be objected that the treasure per se has not been lost. We fully agree--the money remains safe in Chaney's hands. But we argue that persons who have previously been associated with the treasure have come to stand in place of it and re-present it in another form. In the language of psychoanalysis this process is called displacement. Once the Princess has become valuable because Chaney has lost her, she begins to function as a displaced treasure. The possession of the original treasure is balanced by the loss of the second, feminine treasure, so that the final sum adds up to zero--neither possession nor loss. With the admission of Speed's value--a lost value--the sum of the heroic achievement is imbalanced, more negative than positive. This sum can be mathematically represented: (+ - -).

*Chaney's determination to avoid entanglements on the alien turf should be readily comprehensible to a post-Vietnam American audience. The hero of HARD TIMES takes the newly-popular stance that one's friends must manage their own affairs. The hero is asked to intervene in what is essentially a civil war between gamblers to save the weaker party, but declares, in effect, that he is not "the world's policeman." Chaney refuses to risk injury to a well-being he knows to be fragile. His isolation is a willful one, but is thrown in doubt once someone he claims as a friend (the girl) rejects his half-hearted commitment.

Since Chaney now risks the loss of the treasure in order to gain possession of the donor, he evidently considers the two to be at least of equal value. And we remember that Chaney discovers Speed's value only when he loses the girl. If the Princess was the treasure and the donor "stands in" for her as the object of the hero's desire, it follows that Speed is now the treasure for all practical purposes. Speed is a second displacement of the original treasure which has now been devalued to a stake which is risked to gain a larger reward. In other words, the original treasure is no longer the end but the means, functioning exactly like the purse won in the swamp fight--bait for the climactic struggle. Typically, the new object (Speed) in which the value of the treasure is "invested" (cathected) through the process of displacement, is considered to be more valuable (and more "real") than the original, degraded object.

Needless to say, Chaney wins the second fight, frees the donor/treasure and, coincidentally, keeps his original treasure. The sum state of gain and loss is converted to (+ - +), insuring a happy ending, on balance. But since Speed has been substituted for the Princess as an object of value, her minus sign is, in effect, inoperative. The gain has replaced the previous loss, yielding (+ +) as the final equation.

The first story of HARD TIMES establishes the hero's debt to the donor; the second repays it. Hero and donor now sever all relations and go their happy ways. Indeed, there is no longer any purpose to their relationship. There is no more treasure to gain, no further need for the donor's mediation.

In this analysis of HARD TIMES, Propp's "lack" has been shown to be the negative moment of the treasure, to use a Hegelian phrase. The term "lack/treasure" is a paired opposition--the lack serving as the motive which pushes the hero to action while the treasure (remedy) is the motive which pulls him. The lack is the lack of the treasure, and the hero will not act until an object or person has been seen to be both valuable and out of reach (in an Other Kingdom). To beat the antagonist and win the treasure dissolves the relationship "I/Other" on which the action was based. In order for the plot to continue into a second "move," a second lack (and a further treasure) must be recognized by the hero. In HARD TIMES this new story is motivated by displacing the value of the original treasure (via the Princess) onto the person of the donor--the one who connects the hero with the Other and renders his heroism possible.