7.2   Visual sequences

7.2.1   Visual sequence no.1

[ccr.1-5, MP1, b.1-4, bt.1-18, 8.0"]

All of a sudden the relaxed level of dynamics in the announcer's patter and the comfortable conversation distance over the imaginary extension of the coffee table are not only transformed by the loud octave whoop (*reveille*), the jerky bass and the vibrant semiquavers at ♩ = 134, but also broken by a total blackout on the TV screen (ccr.1). This black-out is wiped clean at a rapid pace (about 6") to reveal an extreme close-up of Kojak's head, shot in profile from the right. The change in distance between viewer and viewed from ccr.0 to ccr.2-5 is as striking as the change in sound volume. Kojak is almost uncomfortably close, at the sort of distance most Westerners find themselves when kissing, embracing or whispering. Kojak, filmed from an angle slightly below his eye level (we look up to him via the camera), has a stern, severe expression on his face. He glances downwards, slightly to the right. A light emanating from the right of the picture, possibly from a window, exaggerates the contours of Kojak's profile, casting strong shadows on the subject and creating a considerable silhouette effect with connotations of mystery, intangibility and inaccessibility.[520] This effect is similar to that created by spotlighting a light coloured stone or marble sculpture from one side. This is a picture of an introverted man: he is not involved in conversation or physical action; he is thinking. We see his profile 'through a glass darkly', by intimation and innuendo. What is he thinking? What does he look like head-on in daylight? Viewers may pose such questions because we are shown only part of the subject's appearance and character, and even then only by insinuation. This makes the profile interesting, demanding further revelation. As mentioned above, the camera (us) seems to be placed slightly lower than Kojak's face which means that we, through the camera, must look up at and look up to him both literally and metaphorically.[521]

One of the most obvious peculiarities in the appearance of the character presented in the opening sequences is that he is bald. This feature can lead to a large number of affective associations, especially to archetypes well-entrenched in the visual tra-

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519. Translation of: 'Å här i ettan ska de' bli hårda tag bland bovar, banditer och mörkmän i New York's djungel. Här e' han igen: Kojak!'

520. Similar effects were used in the title sequences to *The Third Man,* to the BBC/TV series *Maigret* and *The Saint.* Shadowed, silhouetted profiles and figures seem archetypal in the expression of mystery (e.g. the Sandman logo on the label of Sandeman's port). We should also mention the sudden change of sonic and visual environment on TV in terms of 'flow'. This sort of sudden jump from quiet and relaxed to loud and exciting is not usual on Swedish television but is typical for US television. While in New York in the summer of 1972 I remember being deeply disturbed by pictures of the suffering Vietnamese and then switched to an advert showing an opulent Californian mansion, its grounds and swimming-pool, and a voice-over telling me to relax and let some magic disinfectant rid my pool of troublesome algae. Then, after soap powder, Schlitz malt liquor and some perfume, we were jolted back to the world of napalm, bombs and terror. For detailed discussion of 'flow' on television, see Raymond Williams (1974: 78-118), especially his analysis of one evening's viewing on commercial channel 9 (ABC) in San Francisco 1973-03-12 (ibid. 100-105, 111-118).

521. Compare the famous scene in Chaplin's *The Great Dictator,* where Chaplin, as the dictator Fünf (Hitler), places himself in a high chair on one side of the desk and the visiting fictitious Mussolini in an very low chair on the other side.

ditions of western culture. We are referring here to the traditional appearance of the executioner, inevitably bare-headed and bald, hooded or both, to malicious hairless devils in the paintings of Hieronymous Bosch, to the serpent in the Garden of Eden, to dragons with bald human heads, to Turkish wrestlers, to characters in Bond films, such as Oddjob and Goldfinger in *Goldfinger*;[522] we are also referring to figures such as Bleakly in *The Ipcress File*, Lothar in the strip cartoon series *Mandrake*, not to mention other mass-media demi-gods who inevitably appear either hooded or hairless in the world of comic strips, such as Adam Strange, Fire Boy, Dragos, Batman, etc.[523] We could also associate to the xenophobic archetypes of awesome Orientals, such as the traditionally bald Gengis Khan, the implacably brutal Japanese as portrayed in western war films such as *Camp on Blood Island* and the 'yellow peril' stereotypes as symbolised by Fu Man Chu.[524]

The exaggerated silhouetting and shading of this bald-headed profiles emphasising certain features and concealing others, might also be compared to the simplified, stylised type of head profile portraits minted on coins and medals. Most individuals whose images appear in this form enjoy a position of power in their contemporary society. Similar portrayal of 'strong men' were also used in Renaissance paintings and sculptures of the *condottieri*. These hairless, helmeted gentlemen usually depicted on horseback (once again the viewer must look up), were employed by the monarchs of mini-states to command their private armies of mercenaries. The *condottieri* were renown for their brute force and severity.

All the bald-headed, helmeted, hooded or hairless archetypes mentioned so far share a common denominator of brute force amongst their personal characteristics. The majority of these personalities are moreover associated with some kind of threat: devils, dragons and the serpent may not always be physically strong, it is true, but they are brainy, wiley figures, not to be trusted any more than the super-intelligent but physically feeble sick science fiction 'egghead'.[525] However, Kojak's muscular, masculine physiognomy seems to rule out the probability of associating in this sort of direction. His broad shoulders and neck place him in the brute force rather than evil egghead category of bald-headed archetypes. His physical features have more in common with the bald bull's head (bull-headed = headstrong) of the Cretan minotaur, with the broad-shouldered baldness of oriental wrestlers or medieval executioners.[526]

This does not mean to say that all strong, bald characters in the visual tradition of

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522. Goldfinger himself was played by Gert Frobe who also played the regulation-reading, unintelligent Prussian general archetype — big, strong and brutish and decidedly antipathetic (his helmet was as shiny and hairless as the scalp inside it) in *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*.

523. In the same comic (*Gigant* no. 6, 1977) also featured the bald brute Teem, inhabitant of the planet Thaun in an unspecified distant galaxy, who 'had killed a hundred men'.

524. The poster for the film and the cover of the book *Camp on Blood Island* shows a large, strong, bald-headed, sword-swinging Japanese brute in the throes of chopping off the head of a British POW. See also the Hammer (horror) film *The Brides of Fu-Man-Chu* (1966).

525. Examples of 'evil egg-heads' are the Mekon (the green baldy from Venus who wanted to rule space in the Dan Dare series featured in the British boy's comic *The Eagle* in the early 1950s), the figure played by Donald Pleasance in Polanski's *Cul-de-sac,* the same actor's role as Dr. No in *Dr. No,* Professor Craddock in Hergé's *Tintin* (not evil, just scarily absent-minded).

526. The minotaur seems to be the epitome of brute in man. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* whence both Graves (1955: 88, ff.), and Söderström (1966: 100) have taken their accounts.

the West have to be threatening villains. We have already mentioned Adam Strange, Batman and Dragos as hairless heroes of great strength and honour. We could enlarge this list of the bald but bold and brave by citing the popularity of Yul Brinner as the hero of *The King and I* and *The Magnificent Seven*, also mentioning the rugged features of workers in helmets painted by Ben Shahn. However, the 'hairless hero' of mass media would seem to be a relatively recent phenomenon, perhaps to be considered as part of the wave of anti-hero archetypes to be found on US television, at least since the nineteen sixties.[527] We are referring here to detectives with typically anti-heroic traits, such as Columbo (who neither dresses, fights nor drives according to traditional Hollywood hero norms), to Cannon (far too obese to look traditionally heroic) and to Ironside (confined to a wheel-chair). Nevertheless, the male heroic archetype is still normally depicted as a strong young man with physical features answering to current norms of masculine beauty and with a healthy head of (not too long) hair as part of these norms (e.g. Andros, McCloud, Baretta, Bond, Rockford, the young partner in the series *Switch*, etc.).

Another important aspect of baldness is its sexuality. Now, although in certain situations it might be considered the height of asceticism to shave one's head (for example in certain monasterial orders) and although certain societies may consider baldness to be almost equatable with loss of virility and male sexual attraction (for example Samson and Job), there are obvious visual similarities between the appearance of shiny, hairless skin stretched tight around the cranium and shiny hairless skin stretched around the top of a fully erect penis. This association may seem far-fetched to some, obvious to others; nonetheless the association does nothing more than underline those aspects of hard virility we have already mentioned, especially considering the possible allusions to sexual aspects of the name Kojak (*cock, Jack*, etc.) and the intentions of the script-writers who wanted a 'hard-sounding' name.[528]

However, it is clear from the outset that Kojak is not only to be viewed as a raw, virile executioner or wrestler full of brute force. This modification of affective message seems to be provided mainly by the music, a point to be discussed further on. It is also possible that a slight modification of the raw, hard, bald-headed, brutal archetype in the visual process as well is partly brought about by the mysterious silhouette effect, partly by the superimposed 'sweep-in' form whose movement has unveiled the Kojak profile for the eyes of all to see (as in the unveiling of statues).

The sweep-in pattern starts in the right top corner of the screen and continues round its perimeter anti-clockwise tracing a sort of rectangular spiral strip of constant width. The centre of this rectangular spiral then pinpoints a space just below Kojak's right eye. In other words, the pattern circles around and then pinpoints the centre of the centre of the picture: Kojak. Why this quadratically spiral sweep-in pattern? Is it just a video gimmick? Are the viewer's eyes being directed from out-

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527. The success of anti-heroes on US television was one of the reasons for starting *Kojak* in the first place (see *Newsweek*, 1976-08-16).

528. 'No-one quite remembers where the name Kojak came from, but we needed a good, hard-sounding two syllable name' (*Kojak* producer Matthew Rapf, interviewed in *Newsweek*, 1976-08-16: 30). See also §8.5. [Skinheads and nightclub bouncers constitute two other groups of men who use lack of hair on their head to put across a testosteronic version of masculinity].

side the screen on to the outside of the screen and thence around and finally into the central reference point of the picture, the title sequences the episode and the whole series: i.e. Kojak himself, his eye, his thoughts, his *Weltanschauung*?

Is ▣ supposed to resemble ancient Greek meander patterns like ▣▣ , bringing about a sort of classical, heroic feeling of respect? Another possible inter-pretation of the rectangular spiral might be to equate it with a quadratic version of the kind of target form visible in the telescopic sight of a shotgun or camera; i.e. forms such as ⊕ stylised into ▣ . This interpretation would also lead the viewer's eye [◉] to aim at the central point, the 'eye of the storm', the 'focal point', the 'heart' of the picture and series. Simultaneously, this association could lend some excite-ment to the sequence through connotations of targets, shotguns, telescopic sights and lenses and the situations of danger in which such equipment is used.[529]

Other interpretations of the sweep-in pattern might make the viewer see Kojak 'be-hind bars' – ▥ –, caught in the spider's web – 🕸 – of New York's underworld, etc.[530] One might also find some sort of connection between the rectangular character of New York's skyscrapers and its grid of streets, or even read into this rectangularity associated moods of implacable, foursquare, sharp (without rounded lines) metro-politan modernity.

However, the most likely areas of symbolism in connection with the sweep-in pat-tern in VS1 seem to be those touching on elements of mystification and those un-derlining the centripetal, concentric movement towards the focal point of the picture, the sequence and the series: Kojak. Dealing first with the former of these two areas of symbolism, it is possible to compare the sweep-in pattern to an ex-tremely stylised maze or labyrinth symbol (the Minotaur again), or to the problem-atic nature of the thoughts puzzling Kojak in this sequence. Indeed, one might even suggest that the convolutions of his thought (metaphorical stylisation) also become the volutions of the brain surface (physical stylisation) which in turn make the rec-tangular spiral the sweep-in pattern of the title sequences which most of all resem-bles a piece of jig-saw puzzle or at least the type of complicated (spiral) but ordered (rectangular) thought which will solve the puzzle (of crime in the subsequent story). This type of association seems also to be plausible because ▣ is the most complex abstract geometrical pattern to be superimposed during the title se-quences, Moreover the notion that a signature should be a sort of affective quintes-sence of subsequent moods, personalities, environments and actions (see §4.1.4 on the 'preparatory' function of title music) seems to underline the idea that a complex of initial problems must exist in some form at the outset of the title sequences in order to present something that requires a continuation in the form of a solution. This reflects the order of events in the ensuing plot formula. Kojak's half smile in the final VS (has he found a solution to the problems troubling him in VS1?) seems to emphasise the question mark function of the rectangular spiral. Indeed, one in-

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529. See title sequences to TV series *Cannon*, *The Andros Targets*, not to mention most Bond films.
530. A spider's web, a maze, pieces of jig-saw puzzle, etc. all have more or less the same affective con-notations. It is possible that the spider's web idea may also (like most of the other visual metaphors in these titles) have religious connotations (see Psalm 22 v.15, 31 v.4).

terpretation of the form is to see it as a quadratic sort of question mark — . All these different 'problem solving' (maze, puzzle, meander, volution, question marks) associations can be further identified with the physiognomy of Kojak's head, making the 'problem solving' synonymous with its shape and appearance.

                 becomes   , so to speak.

The Kojak profile is thus mystified, it seems, not only by the strong silhouette effect mentioned before but also by the superimposition of the sweep-in pattern and all its possible symbolical associations. Moreover, the quadratic movement circling round and then pinpointing Kojak's eye may also be compared to a sort of stereo-typed, stylised eye of the sort used in logotypes —   .[531] Such an eye could possibly have the function of leading the viewer's eye on to the stylised eye on the screen, thence round and into Kojak's eye through which the television audience will thereafter be viewing criminality, law enforcement, happiness, sadness, social and economic injustice and several other aspects of life facing the inhabitants of New York City, bankrupt and beset with all the imaginable problems of economic recession in the capitalist economy of the nineteen seventies.

When the sweep-in has been accomplished, Kojak moves his head slightly towards the camera, not to look at us (the camera) as Weise had done six seconds earlier, but to glance sternly, introvertly down towards the lower middle to lower right rim of the TV screen. This apparent lack of interest in the audience (the camera) seems to put an even greater distance between viewer and viewed and no exchange of looks takes place. Kojak is observed; the audience is not observed.[532] Moreover, we are still looking 'up' to Kojak through the eye of the camera, this enhancing his aura of superiority. All possibilities of imagined two-way visual communication between Kojak and the audience are removed when the sequence is frozen, just before the theoretical point at which eye contact could have taken place.

The frozen portrait is quickly zoomed out (ccr. 5-6), but not to become the centre of the environment in which he was previously situated; instead the portrait is now the size of the central square in the first sweep-in form and is placed identically dead centre of the screen which has now otherwise reverted to its original state of black-out. As the Kojak portrait is zoomed out in this way, its size and clarity diminishing rapidly, it seems as though Kojak is being withdrawn from the viewer. What will happen now? We intend to answer this question in our description of VS2, but it is nevertheless an important question to ask, for, as we have seen, VS1

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531. Compare. logos for British Lion (films), ATV (Midlands commercial TV, GB), Contacta Optik (Swedish opticians), etc. Most similar to the sweep-in pattern of VS1-2 is, however, the logotype currently used by SR/TV2 (1978-9).

532. Do TV or film actors often look into the camera? No, most television, like traditional theatre is basically a peep show phenomenon. Viewers, listeners, etc. watch and listen without taking part. We are in other words dealing with one-way communication ('munication'), a sort of voyeurism similar to that found in advertising that appeals to snob values (see Berger, 1977: 129, ff.). See also development of artist portraits on pop album covers, e.g. The Beatles and Rolling Stones as reproduced in Thorgerson (1977: 32, 33, 90).

poses a number of vital questions, such as: who is this man? What does he look like face to face in daylight without patterns or dark shadow obscuring the view? Is he an executioner or threatening brute? In fact, asking questions seems to be one of the most important functions of VS1.

The music for VS1 (MP1) consists of three important musemes: m1a2 (the octave whoop), m2b1 (the Moog ostinato) and m1b4 + m2a1a (bass). These IMCs have been individually interpreted as (i) call to action and attention: strong movement upwards and outwards, virile, energetic, heroic; (ii) general, constant, bustling activity: agitated and insistent but positive, pleasant, vibrant, shimmering and luminous; (iii) unquiet, aggressiveness, atmosphere of large American city: energetic, threatening excitement, subculture. Having added the atmosphere of 'modernity' (harmonic language) to this picture, let us compare the individual IMCs of MP1 with the visual message of VS1 as described above.

It should be clear that there are both correspondences and contradictions between the musical and visual messages of VS and MP. They share the following aspects in common:

1. Something new demanding attention.
2. Strong, vigorous, energetic pace.
3. Virility.
4. Possible threat, the unknown, the ambiguity of Kojak's personality, the ambiguity of whether horn or bass is melody (figure / individual).

On the other hand we may list the following contradictions:

Fig. 20.   Points of affective divergence

MP1	VS1
ambiguity melody/accompaniment	individual dominates environment, figure > ground
shimmering, vibrant, luminous activity	dark room, shadows, mystery
heroic horn call, consonant tonal language	mysterious silhouette figure: is he a threatening executioner of the brute-force type?

If we use Osgood's general division of adjectival value judgements into the categories evaluation, potency and activity (Osgood et al., 1975: 48, 57-67, 111, ff.) on the similarities and differences of affective meaning presented above we find that there is correspondence between the musical and visual messages of MP1/VS1 as far as degrees of potency and activity' are concerned but that there is a surprisingly large amount of discrepancy regarding evaluation, that is whether the messages being transmitted are 'negative' (dark room, shadows, mystery, possibility of brute-force-executioner-baldness) or 'positive' (heroic, light, luminous, modern, consonant, etc.). These contradictions between sound and vision pose yet another problem in addition to the uniquely visual and musical ambiguities mentioned above. The generally ambiguous 'question mark' function of these first few seconds seems to be underlined once again. Let us now proceed to determine whether subsequent presentation of musical and visual material can resolve any of these problems and clarify any of these ambiguities.