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"DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCES": A STUDY OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MANIPULATION OF HIS AUDIENCES.

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A dissertation approved for the degree of Master of Arts by the University of the Witwatersrand.

Johannesburg, 2007

Abstract

This Master's thesis identifies and elucidates upon the motifs/themes/images, which Hitchcock utilized in his films to ultimately manipulate and thereby direct his audience's perception and understanding of his films' narratives.

The devices that are described and investigated in detail in this thesis are found to be recurrent in most of Alfred Hitchcock's films. That highlights the question: why are they recurrent? What purpose do they serve? I believe that the answer to these questions is that these devices were used by Hitchcock to serve the end of manipulating the audience.

The efficacy of these devices as used by Alfred Hitchcock is elaborated on in each chapter that addresses each motif in turn. Each chapter which deals with one of the motifs Alfred Hitchcock used in his manipulation of his audience contains examples from films and investigates how the motifs are used within each film to manipulate audience comprehension. These examples are strengthened with theory from academics, theorists and critics who have made a life-long study of Hitchcock.

My theoretical framework includes audience research and Metz's theory of 'suturing' which addresses the meaning of camera position and the different point of view that the audience take up. By means of this research I aim to explain the way in which Hitchcock consummately manages to manipulate the audience to follow 'red herrings' and ultimately surprise the audience.

This thesis acknowledges the premise that all film directors manipulate the audience and does not attempt to persuade the reader that Hitchcock was unique in this. It does aim to explore and explain how Hitchcock's unique use of specific motifs was utilized in order to manipulate audiences.

This thesis resulted in my understanding Hitchcock's method of directing his audiences as much as his films and I think that in a broader context explains the use and need (both Hitchcock's and the films narrative's) for the repetitive devices for which Hitchcock is renowned, rather than merely investigating them as isolated pieces in Hitchcock's films.

I would suggest that there is evidence in these films of a repetition compulsion, as if the films are attempting to solve a conundrum very much in the way that academics have attempted to solve the conundrum that is the work of Alfred Hitchcock.

Search words: Hitchcock, director, film, thriller, manipulation, audience, double, *Psycho*, scatology, voyeurism, auteur, spectator theory, Truffaut, narrative, scopohilia.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

day of 2006

Rebecca Webber

Dedication

To my family

with sincere thanks

for their love and encouragement

during the writing of this thesis

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I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Prof. Jane Taylor for her support and intellectual assistance in the preparation of this dissertation.

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2. INTRODUCTION

The enigma that seems to be Alfred Hitchcock has long been analysed by film critics and academics alike. Hitchcock was a figure who was larger than life, a name that conjures up stories of strange and macabre occurrences. After all, that was Hitchcock's trademark as a director, the strange and uncanny. It was the basis of the persona he projected to other people.

'What *is* he? He's a horror!

'A horror?'

'He's - God help me if I know *what* he is!'[1]

He has been described as eccentric and as a genius and has achieved something of a cult status. In this thesis I aim to discover how Alfred Hitchcock's direction of his films and consequent manipulation of the audience via the use of motifs is unique and specific to him as a director. I do not aim to suggest that Hitchcock is unique as a director in terms of manipulating the audience – as it is inherent in the title of 'director' that all film directors to a greater or lesser degree guide and direct the audience's perception. I am however, venturing to reveal what it is about Hitchcock's direction that is special to him as distinct from other directors.

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[1] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 113

Alfred Hitchcock was a man who thrived on scaring people or rather manipulating people to feel fear or unease:

> Fear? It has influenced my life and my career. I remember when I was five or six. It was a Sunday evening, the only time my parents did not have to work. They put me to bed and went to Hyde Park for a stroll…They were sure I would be asleep until their return. But I woke up, called out, and no one answered. Nothing but night all round me. Shaking, I got up, wandered around the empty, dark house and, finally arriving in the kitchen, found a piece of cold meat which I ate while drying my tears.[2]

It is this memory that Hitchcock recalled of a nascent genius, terrified and alone which perhaps spurred him on to manipulate others to feel as he did. The preoccupation and curious comfort that he found in food also found its way into his films and will be discussed in a later chapter.

One of the first things people think of when questioned as to what is unique to Hitchcock, is the curious relationship Hitchcock forged with his audiences. Hitchcock himself noted, "Is a listener allowed to choose the notes he'll hear? If you free the spectator to choose, you're making theatre, not cinema." [3] Quite obviously, cinema was a means for Hitchcock by which he could achieve the end of audience manipulation because the film audience is given information on many levels that are not available in the medium of theatre. Cutting, editing close-ups and other tools used by filmmakers are solely the domain of film.

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[2] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. (pp.) 18-19
[3] SAMUELS, C.T. 1972. Encountering Directors. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. p. 234

Christian Metz designates the difference between film and theatre in terms of holding the audience's attention as being as simple as the differences in the viewing atmosphere for the audience:

> When a stage actor sneezes…the brutal interruption by "real" reality disrupts the reality of the fiction, it is equally apparent that such interferences exist not only in the caricatural and unusual form of a sneeze, but that they have a thousand more insidious embodiments…since one finds then arising from the audience as well as from the stage, in the "man's pose of independence, in the woman's dress and make-up." By hermetically isolating fiction from reality, film instantly dismisses this set of resistances and levels all obstacles to spectator participation.[4]

Cinema (for Metz as well as Hitchcock) was a more malleable art form especially in the manipulation of audiences than theatre. This dogmatic approach to directing has become a 'trademark' of Hitchcock's directing method and there are many other 'trademarks', themes, elements or motifs that have become synonymous with Hitchcock's work. It is these upon which I will extrapolate and investigate to explain exactly how unique Hitchcock's style and methods of directing are. One of his great admirers, Truffaut, made just this case:

> In recent years there have been countless imitations of *Vertigo*, *North-By-Northwest* and *Psycho*, whether it is acknowledged or not, there is no doubt Hitchcock's work has long influenced world cinema. [5]

[4] METZ, C. 1974. Film Language. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 11
[5] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Columbia University Press. p. 13

So on one hand he has influenced world cinema. It is well known that the term 'Hitchcockian' as a relatively new word, stands on its own in advertising jargon, signifying a masterful control of suspense as well as a guarantee of audience satisfaction. This is clearly indicative of Alfred Hitchcock's legacy of being a masterful manipulator and of leaving audiences relatively powerless as to which subject position they are going to take up. Rather than staying within the boundaries of film and performance, his influence has been translated into an independent concept across various cultural fields.

Hitchcock's tenacity and perfectionist nature all contributed to his obsessive desire to control every aspect of his filmmaking and audiences.

> Hitchcock composed his films with meticulous care, planning every aspect of form, composition, movement, and performance. This makes the practice of close reading especially productive when applied to his work, since it is likely that any given detail was determined by the filmmaker and is not the result of chance or the routine outcome of standardized filming and editing practices.[6]

His attention to detail was of great importance when we consider that Hitchcock was not just a director's filmmaker - he made films first and foremost for the audience – in order to direct the audience. In the following thesis I will argue that Hitchcock was indeed a manipulator of audiences, that he did this using specific themes, elements and motifs and being a very articulate and precise director.

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[6] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 29

The audience was an entity that Hitchcock wanted to control in its reactions to and enjoyment of his films. Hitchcock was always thinking of the audience every time he made a directorial decision. To some directors the audience are secondary to the actual 'art' of making a film, in any Hitchcock film, the manipulation and subsequent control of the audience seems to be the main objective. When investigating Hitchcock's methods of manipulating audience we need to understand how an audience works as an entity in and of itself. In the following chapters on the audience and narrative structure, I will argue that an audience needs to be understood as both a body participating in a group experience but also that the body of an audience is made up of individuals who are at the same time present as just that, individuals.

3. AUDIENCE

> [W]e should consider film viewing as a complicated, even skilled activity. Watching a movie may seem as effortless as riding a bicycle, but both draw on a range of practised acts. [7]

The concept of a film audience is one that is usually taken to refer to a mass of individuals who simultaneously watch a film, at the same moment in time, in the same location, in the same space, a cinema.

Many theorists have tried to pinpoint the exact function, reaction and general formulae which audiences use and have at their disposal in order to enter into film narratives and become spectators. David Bordwell, Noël Carroll and Gregory Currie, are among a group of theorists in the psychology and philosophy fields who strove to define the audience in terms of cognitive film theory. Julia Kristeva, Mary Ann Doane and Tania Modleski are just a few of many feminist film theorists who saw the lack of presence of spectator theory as defined by the female perspective and the

[7] BORDWELL, D. 1985. Narration in the Fiction Film. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press. p. 33

work of Roland Barthes, Christian Metz and Jacques Lacan has been applied to theories of spectatorship which concern the viewer's relationship to the connection between language and what s/he sees.

All of these theorists individually and as a group have contributed valuable and highly pertinent theory and intellectual insight to the ongoing debate that revolves around the constitution of an audience. In this thesis I do not think that all of their theories are particularly apposite to my line of research as my primary concern is how Hitchcock manipulates *an* audience (regardless of the distinctive make-up of that audience) via the use of universal themes. I am not interested exclusively in what racial, gender, economic or political sub- groups make up the body of an audience and how their viewing positions differ or converge. If any specific considerations for a definite sub-group is necessary in examining Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience in the case study of a unique film then they will be made apparent and noted in the discussion when it becomes necessary.

For this thesis I would like to make concentrate on and make clear the differences between the concept of audience as a group entity and audience as individuals within a larger body.

The continuing argument in audience theory is the oscillation between individual and group audience. Are the terms 'audience', 'spectator' and 'viewer' the same? Is the

experience of viewing as an individual the same as when experiencing as a collective group? I would argue that there is not so much of a distinction between the two, especially when considering Hitchcock's direction, which is the specific area of question in this dissertation. I say this because the distinction between group and individual psychology (audience) becomes less clear if we take into account Freud's suggestion stated in *Group Psychology,*

> The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses: but only rarely and under certain conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of words, is at the same time social psychology as well.[8]

Freud explicitly explains that our experience is always linked to our relationships with other people thus we never really view or experience something in total isolation. He further elaborates that,

> Group psychology is therefore concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organized into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose.[9]

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[8] FREUD, S. 1959. Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. p. 1
[9] Ibid. p. 2

An example of 'some definite purpose' would be the act of watching a film in a cinema. In this case, a group of people is sub-divided into national, professional, racial and gender groupings therefore the relation to each other as a collective group is really only coincidental. If any of these individuals experience a film in terms of their relationships to others, their experience relies more on the people they know in both personal and professional capacities rather than the other strangers in the darkened cinema with them. However this cannot be the only argument in the individual versus group audience dichotomy.

I contend that Hitchcock was in his oeuvre inventing a modern public who despite their differences have one thing in common: a voyeuristic pleasure in watching an attack on an-other (because if it happened to them it didn't happen to me). So a new kind of audience member evolved in a Hitchcock audience.

Freud cites Le Bon in *Group Psychology*,

> Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, their occupations, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a group puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind…[10]

Le Bon seems to contradict Freud but from these statements it is clear that mankind and audiences cannot be investigated as simply an individual or a number of individuals because the groupings change every day according to geography, race and

[10] Le Bon as cited in Ibid. p. 5

gender. However Le Bon's argument is, that individuals who gather en masse to engage in an activity together such as viewing a film, are placed within a position in which they see the same material at the same time and so in terms of the content of what they see and hear, they are all receiving the same information. So for all intents and purposes they are in a type of group mind set. How the audience as individuals processes this information differs and so then the group mind set is no longer at work and becomes broken down into more individualistic interpretations. In film this is where manipulation arises i.e. In a Hitchcock film the you will decide that a certain character is guilty, Hitchcock confirms this and thus misleads you so the audience's reading position is ultimately challenged. It is too simplistic merely to divide the audience into 'individuals' and 'collective group'. Audiences work on both levels. Mankind and audiences can never be investigated as just individuals and neither can they solely be investigated as a group since the dynamics of audiences are continually changing. There will always be groups within a larger group, which in itself constitutes an audience. Within a group audience there will be smaller groups of individuals for whom certain themes in a film will resonate more with than others: the female audience member understands or links herself with certain viewing positions that the male audience member cannot. Certain viewing positions separate men and women because the narrative desire of most Western films places women as the object of the male gaze thus narrative closure for men does not equal closure for the audience member.

Alfred Hitchcock as a director used the idea that there are common fears and desires that affect people on a general level. He worked on the basis of using the audience as a group within which smaller groups of individuals with similar attitudes and perceptions as a result of the similar race, social level, and sexual identity exist. Christian Metz's theory of 'Suturing' is that filmgoers psychologically place themselves inside the narrative: we experience film as if we are the camera lens – taking up various subject positions. Metz's theory was unwittingly used in Hitchcock's film language in order to allow for greater audience identification in the film - if he enabled the audience to literally be stitched into the narrative to a point where they were consumed by the fake reality then Hitchcock as filmmaker had greater control over the audience in order to manipulate and disturb. Suturing is also about particular ideologies and discourses and positioning audiences in a way that controls ideological responses.

> The text moves the subject, not as a disruption of a fixity, but in a constantly shifting regulation and containment. What moves in film, finally, is the spectator, immobile in front of the screen. Film is the regulation of that movement, the individual as subject held in a shifting and placing of desire, energy, contradiction, in a perpetual retotalisation of the imaginary (the set scene of image and subject.)[11]

Film is a tool by which the spectator is manipulated. Hitchcock realized that the audience was placed in a position where they shift in where and to whom they place desire and contradiction and he set out to be the one who controlled that position and

[11] LAPSLEY, R. & WESTLAKE, M. 1988. Film Theory: An Introduction. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 138.

the energy of the audience. The audience was a means to an end for Hitchcock: a means of achieving the goal of having a 'captive' group of people whom he could manipulate and unsettle via his films using fear as a tool. It was to become an audience whose responses he could control. Hitchcock's aim was to scare people be they individuals or a group. He did this to gain power and achieved the power by being the individual who controlled the fear felt by an audience. Fear is a very basic and primordial emotion. When we experience the emotion of fear we are vulnerable and at the mercy of the source of the anxiety or fear. Thus the originator of the fear is in the more powerful position than the recipient of the emotion of fear. Hitchcock was the originator of fear in the cinema for the audiences watching his films because he understood fear as a reward. He as a filmmaker was the one manipulating others to feel and understand the film through their ambiguous avoidance of and attraction to that fear.

For the purposes of this thesis the individual terms of 'viewer', 'spectator' and 'audience' are interchangeable. The Oxford Thesaurus gives 'watcher', 'beholder', 'viewer', and 'observer' as synonyms of spectator.[12] It gives 'spectator', 'member of an audience' and 'watcher' as possible synonyms for the word 'viewer'. [13] From this we can see how the terms for one who engages in watching, seeing and observing overlap and become synonymous within popular usage. They are not distinct from one another. It is for this reason that for the purpose of this chapter and dissertation as

[12] KIRKPATRICK, B. (Compiler). 1994. The Oxford Paperback Thesaurus. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 763

[13] Ibid. p. 879

a whole, the terms of audience, spectator and viewer will be interchangeable terms for one who engages in viewing a film because for the purpose of this investigation I am interested in popular general attitudes to the concept of audience. I acknowledge that in current popular usage 'viewer' is taken to refer to someone who engages in watching television and that a 'spectator' is one who usually watches sports events but their etymological reference in the Oxford Thesaurus does seem to concur in my understanding that as words they can stand in for each other.

My purpose in this chapter is to describe 'audience' in terms that are illuminating for an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience as a filmmaker.

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3.1 Understanding the Audience

> [T]he search for something which, from one point of view, does not exist. Looked at another way, it is something so obvious that its existence is usually taken for granted. It cannot be interrogated, inspected, observed or investigated directly, but it completely surrounds us socially and it permeates our personal identity. It has no bodily form, but it is powerful; by some reckonings it is the ultimate power, being the source of sovereignty. It is a place, but you can't walk into it, and it is a group of people – a vast group of people – but they never meet. The place and the people are familiar figures, but although you know them well,

> you have never seen them and you never will, even though you're one of them. What is it? Who are they?[14]

'It' is the audience and 'they' are the spectators, the individuals who make up the audience – the subjects of Hitchcock's manipulation. This quotation highlights the ambiguous nature and tenuous link between individual audience member and group audience. It also underpins the essence of an audience being an indeterminate entity and being an almost ethereal force - a force that is almost impossible to establish as an absolute.

Although the main argument of this dissertation lies in attempting to prove via succinct argument that Hitchcock is a director who uses specific and unique methods of manipulating audiences, I will spend time in this section clarifying what I think is meant by the concept of the audience in general and the audience as it pertains to Hitchcock's films in particular.

The response to films is unequivocally an intense and private experience for an individual member of an audience but as Moores states: "…our being moved in certain ways by works of art, though very 'natural' to us and in that way only too intelligible, involves us in inconsistency and so incoherence."[15] It cannot be said be to be an essentially logical process. We witness events in a darkened cinema and on

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[14] HARTLEY, J. 1992. The Politics of Pictures. London: Routledge. p. 1

[15] MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 8

one level know that what we are seeing is an illusion of reality yet on another level we suspend disbelief to fully believe in the illusion. This response to film is what involves us in 'inconsistency and incoherence'. Our assessments of characters, who they are, what their connections are with each other, continually changes or is made to change by the influence of the director and his/her choices of framing and overall filming. Hitchcock's films specifically make it impossible for the viewer to stay in a position where they know for certain that their assumptions about the film are indeed correct or even that their assumptions are what they think their assumptions are. Hitchcock constantly and actively insured via his direction that his audiences would be involved in 'inconsistency and incoherence.' This chaos serves Hitchcock's direction in enabling him to always be the one in control, the one who makes meaning. The chaos gives Hitchcock a platform from which he can be the supreme dictator and allow the audience to jump to narrative conclusions that are inevitable incorrect. The 'inconsistency and incoherence' also becomes a tool that Hitchcock wields in order to confuse the audience and lead them down paths (in terms of making sense of the narrative) that are in essentially red herrings. A prime example of his use of 'chaos' in order to deliberately mislead the audience is the murder of Janet Leigh in *Psycho.* He bombards the audience with information in the beginning of the film about the female protagonist's relationship with a married man and her displeasure with her job. The audience believes that this information sets the scene and tone for the rest of the film so that when Janet Leigh steals the money and embarks on a road trip to join her lover the audience presumes that this relationship and the issue of the stolen money will be the main story of the film's narrative. This

is of course far from what Hitchcock has actually planned. The female protagonist and the actress with top billing is murdered another twist the audience did not expect. The audience's usual and ordered view of how a film unfolds has been shattered and they are plummeted into a feeling of chaos and disjointedness. They are now no longer sure of where the narrative is going or who the main protagonist will be. As the film unfolds the audience identifies Norman as the substitute protagonist and even starts to feel empathy for him because he has a mad and cruel mother with whom to contend. The audience feels they are sure that his mother is alive because they have seen her shadowy outline behind a shower curtain and they have heard her berate her son. These things they have seen and heard on screen and so believe that the mother figure is a live character in the film's narrative when she really only exists in Norman's head. The director has shown them this (the figure behind the shower curtain, the indentation of a body in the bedroom) and the audience has no reason to believe that the director would actually mislead them. Yet the truth is that Hitchcock has misled the audience. In this case by playing out the psychological truth as if it is the literal truth i.e. the existence of the dead mother.[16] The audience's truth is that the dead are dead– this is not Norman's truth. Hitchcock has placed the audience in positions of chaos and inconsistency so that just when they ultimately think they know where the narrative is heading he takes them down another avenue of possible meaning. At the end of the film it becomes obvious to the audience that what they

[16] According to Donald Spence within the psychological literature, a distinction has been made between the narrative truth and historical truth, in the suggestion that the subjective truth of the analysand may be a psychological fact even if it is not a historical fact. SPENCE, D. 1982. Narrative Truth and Historical Truth. New York: W.W. Norton.

had thought was occurring in the film was nothing akin to what was happening according to the director's version of the same film. Hitchcock plays the psychological truth as if it is the literal truth – he includes 'mother' as a live character in the narrative when she only has life in Norman's mind. To the audience she is dead but she is only too real for Norman. The director took them on a journey and was the individual in control, they had not for one moment been in any position of absolute control over the production of meaning in the film they had viewed.

Hitchcock's ingenuity as a director lay in his ingenious use of methods of audience manipulation in ways in which he knew would have an effect on all stratas of society and not only a select few. "Hitchcock's ability to make his audience comfortable with his conceptions, mainly in the portrayal of his characters' situations as 'normal'…"[16] is what made most of Hitchcock's plot lines plausible to the audience. The chapters on Casting, The Mother Figure, Scatology and the Double all deal with subject matters that any audience of any ethnic group; age, gender and time period can relate to even though the meanings will be different because they deal with psychological fundamentals which it seems Hitchcock believed to be universals. The group is so broad in this specific case because the themes manipulated and addressed in Hitchcock's films are timeless (they are not governed by periods of time and the changing social conventions which operate within those set time periods). His manipulation can be understood in terms of his use of themes, ideas and motifs that

[16] STEVENS, J. Analytical Essay: Alfred Hitchcock, Psycho. p. 1 [Online Article]. Retrieved 15 May 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://web.tiscali.it/andrebalza/stevens.html?

are universal (they are applicable to people on all levels of society.) Hitchcock's films balance historical particularities against ahistorical universals, the ideal of virginal beauty and innocence in *Rebecca* is very specific but Hitchcock implies that themes like the love triangle are universal. Having said that, however, there is always an exception to the rule and chapter 5 The Homosexual Other - exhibits the truth of this exception as this chapter depends on the particular 'other' being discussed. The 'Other' is a character that alters according to the main subject of debate. Plausibility of film scenario and setting also play a role in Hitchcock's ability to manipulate the audience. He achieves this by using fairly plausible settings, characters and plot lines in which most audience members can find a degree of 'believability' that are also consistent as plausibility relies on an internal consistency which is of course naturalism's conservative purpose: to persuade us of the 'reality' of narrative because of the 'reality' of the settings. The first step in manipulation of any kind is to make the subject trust and believe. In this way it is crucial to see that in having motifs, themes and concepts or ideologies that will appeal to a large section of most communities that will go en masse to see a film, Hitchcock was unconsciously appealing to a theory that was formulated much later by D. K Lewis, namely the Counterpart Theory. The Counterpart Theory is the theory that when watching a film and seeing characters act out situations on the screen the audience member makes reference or draws a 'counterpart' to an individual in their own reality or a similar situation to the one on screen, although they know the enactment on screen to be a movie device and in no sense an actuality. Gregory Currie proposes that

> …we experience genuine emotions when we encounter fiction, but their relation to the story is causal rather than intentional; the story provokes thoughts about real people and situations, and these are the intentional objects of our emotions.[17]

Kendall Walton himself provides an early statement of the Counterpart Theory by using the following example,

> If Charles is a child, the movie may make him wonder whether there might not be real slimes or other exotic horrors like the one depicted in the movie, even if he fully realizes that the movie-device itself is not real.[18]

Some variations of this theory go so far as to make claims with reference to possible rather than real people and situations. Hitchcock portrays the situations with Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt* and Norman in *Psycho* in such a manner that makes them seem normal thus the plausibility of the scenario lies in manipulating the audience to identify characters with people in their own lives - who actually exist thus making the subject trust and believe in the constructed reality. Hitchcock as director leaves the audience with the burning question of "do people like these characters really exist?" To implant the seed of doubt that this doesn't only 'happen in the movies' and could be a reality in their own lives, Hitchcock heightens audience fear, trepidation and unease. It is not so much a question of Hitchcock wanting to break down the barrier between reality and illusion as that he wants to heighten emotion by suggesting that characters like Uncle Charlie and Norman exist in the world. For if

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[17] "The Paradox of Fiction" The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. p. 5. Retrieved 5 March 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.iep.utm.edu/f/fict-par.htm

[18] Ibid. p. 2

he were to break down the barrier between reality and illusion this would be counter-productive for his aim of audience manipulation. The audience has to be completely immersed in the world of the film for this manipulation to be possible. In this respect, "Hitchcock's work is based on an 'exact science of audience relations.'"[19] Hitchcock knows which 'buttons to push' in order to elicit a specific reaction from the audience.

The audience is not homogenous however and does not perceive *en masse* in exactly the same way due to differentials in class, education and gender. This is why,

> …We can usefully analyse the 'you' or 'yous' that the text as discourse constructs, but we cannot assume that any individual audience member will necessarily occupy these positions. The relation of the audience to the text will not be determined solely by that text, but also by positionalities in relation to a whole range of other discourses…elaborated elsewhere, already in circulation and brought to the (text) by the viewer.[20]

In this respect it is important to understand the role that Metz's theory of suturing plays in the comprehension of Hitchcock's control and manipulation of audiences. The film provides various viewing positions. It allows the viewer the opportunity in Christian Metz's term, of 'suturing', to be 'stitched' into the narrative in a discursive position. "…the constitution of unified subjects who…are sutured and positioned in

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[19] Jean Douchet as cited in BORDWELL, D. 1989. Making Meaning. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. p. 226

[20] MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 16

the film."[21] With regard to this it is vital to realise the importance of Hitchcock's manipulation taking suturing into account because, "The coherence of cinematic narration hinges on suturing which reinforces the ideological effect of the subject's positioning."[22] In other words, the film provides a point of view that is confirmed and affirmed by the film itself. Although it is important to note that Hitchcock would not have imagined the process in these terms. This means that the audience member, in order to follow the narrative, fill in its gaps and so on, is obliged to be a compliant viewer – one who accepts the contract of the film. Yet although audience members accept the contract of the film, they also partake in a form of creative energy as Douchet states: "I've always said that the spectator is a creator. I don't know a true film-maker who isn't a real spectator."[23]

There is always an interaction between spectator and film as well as filmmaker. Film is a discourse in that

> [I]t calls for the spectator's participation, if only passively, through his/her willing acceptance of a proffered position in relation to the speaking 'I'. Should the spectator refuse this position and perhaps take up his/her own point of view external to the film, different possibilities open up.[24]

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[21] CARROLL, N. 1988. Mystifying Movies. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 186
[22] Ibid. p. 187
[23] Ibid.
[24] MARGOLIS, H. E. 1988. The Cinema Ideal. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. p. 51

This 'participation' that occurs when an audience engages in the discourse of a film is contrived by the director, especially in the case of Hitchcock. To use Metz's theory of suture again, Hitchcock makes the camera's point of view that of the audience - the audience is stitched into the narrative and follow what he allows them to see (the proffered position in relation to the speaking I as mentioned in the above quotation). There is a discourse between filmmaker and the audience in the making of a film and when discussing Alfred Hitchcock specifically in this thesis we must acknowledge that the predominant genre of his films was that of the thriller and the realist thriller at that. Hitchcock's plots are not fantastical – only able to exist in an imaginary domain, they are plausible and only too able to transpose from the screen to real life. They could happen in reality in the day to day life of the audience members.

Moores has analysed the particular contract established in a classical realist film:

> In *Realism and the Cinema*…Colin MacCabe (1974) proposed that 'the classical realist text' works by constructing an illusion of transparency in which, supposedly, spectators imagine themselves to be gazing directly on to a 'real' scene. When the reality of the situation is that they are watching a movie. Hollywood film, so it was claimed, denies its own material existence as text – and in so doing, constitutes a fiction of centred vision and unified subjectivity for the reader.'[25]

Suturing is important in understanding how Hitchcock's films work to manipulate the audience, because it makes us (the audience), "… imagine that we are the source of

[25] MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 13

meaning and identity – when in reality we are subject-ed to the differences of language."[26] Hitchcock is the 'puppet master' who pulls the strings enabling the audience to react in a specific way. He does this without the audience being aware of his manipulation so that audiences believe they are the source of the meaning and understanding of the film, when it is Alfred Hitchcock who is the producer of meaning for the audience. It is he who forces the subject to 'make…the meanings the film makes for it.'

The audience member can never be said to be a fixed form from which we can assume all audience reaction results because an audience member cannot possibly be an 'everyman' or woman as the case may be. Due to filial, social, economic, racial, political, sexual and especially gender influences there is an infinite set of positions from which an individual will view films. Hitchcock's audiences are also 'subject-ed' to the 'language' of Hitchcock's direction and subsequent manipulation. In other words, Hitchcock sometimes takes a group of individuals and turns them into an audience by playing on something that a certain group of individuals has in common as distinct from another group of individuals.

An example would be the male audience member who watches *Marnie;* the title character would appeal to the heterosexual, male audience member as well as the homosexual female audience member as an exciting and fascinating temptress whose main attraction is that she goes against convention by stealing, that she is a woman of

[26] Ibid. p. 13

ill repute. She also 'acts up' on behalf of heterosexual women, who would identify with her as a prosthetic self. The character who goes against convention is always more interesting and fascinating than the character who adheres to what is conventional because we as audience members want to know why there is a desire in the character to disregard convention and the 'bad boy/girl' or girl character has always been something of a cliché in terms of sexual allure. The same character is neither perceived nor has the same 'attractive' qualities for an audience member falling outside of the parameters of these three groups.

Hitchcock's audiences are a cosmopolitan array of cultures, ethnicities, nationalities and time periods. Audiences from the 1950s through to the audiences in the 2000s have seen the same Hitchcock films and have thoroughly enjoyed their spectator experience in viewing these films although obviously not in the same way because film technology has become more advanced in the intervening years. The radicalism of Hitchcock's work is kept alive so many years after his initial work was screened for the very first time because of the complexity of his work in terms of mise-en-scene, camera angles, and overall filmic construction. His films are so complex that it is always possible to find something 'new' in subsequent screenings of Hitchcock's films (even if a particular film has been seen multiple times) and in light of this it is possible to see the universality of Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences. His manipulation crosses time periods as well as cultural barriers. The notion of the audience in the investigation of Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences lies less in the ethnography of the audience than in what attributes of people in general Hitchcock

'picked on' to manipulate. Alfred Hitchcock circumvented dissonances between the viewer and the character on the screen by focussing on common denominators between them. Some of these are investigated in the following chapters of this dissertation. Despite historical shifts and changes, there is still a 'universal' human subject. The production of the individual in a dialogue with fear and the unknown is always there. The individual to Hitchcock is similar to the concept of Lacan's conception of the subject as discursively produced which Shaun Moores succinctly summarizes in asserting that,

> …Lacanian psychoanalysis is concerned to emphasize the 'de-centred' nature of subjectivity – its necessary provisional and precarious status, and its production within an external system of signs. We are not, so the argument goes, able to act freely upon the world or to express ourselves freely though speech. Rather, it is the other way around. The social world acts upon us and we are only constituted as subject in the very instance of speaking, as we enter into the 'symbolic order' of language…When speaking, we get caught up in a fiction or illusion that we really do have fixed and unified selves – whereas, Lacan suggests, our subjectivities are constantly in process and always divided.[27]

Discourse is important to our understanding of Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences in that this was a means by which Hitchcock could ensure total audience absorption in the filmic text. It is quite obvious then, that upon finding ourselves seated in a darkened cinema, watching the images displayed in front of us, we create the fiction. "[E]very time we occupy a 'subject position in discourse, as the personal pronoun 'I' is uttered another person is addressed as 'you'."[28] Hitchcock's cameos

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

though, as a means of manipulation, operate in a Brechtian manner, working as a device by which to expose the machinations behind the illusion. This practice was one in which he aimed to show the audience who the author of their present illusion was. The audience may think they create the fiction but Hitchcock is always nudging them along. He used a signature that served to stitch the real (Hitchcock's vision of the narrative) and the illusory (the audience's vision of the narrative) together.

The manipulation that Hitchcock used was often done to make the audience believe in one thing while he planned that the complete opposite would occur. Whilst I am not arguing against David Morley's assertion that "…other discourses are always in play besides those of the particular text in focus - discourses…brought into play through 'the subject's' placing in other practices – cultural, educational, institutional…"[29] I am arguing that a good director is one who in a single film can transcend differences based on personal experience and appeal to the psychological fundamentals within each individual. This is something Hitchcock achieved. He appealed to the primitive human conditions of fear, suspicion and our own innate ability to believe the worst of people without sufficient proof.

The question of audience identity has, in many theoretical investigations, been diverted into the question of spectatorship. In Hitchcock films, the audience is frequently given the uncanny experience of watching someone watching:

[29] Morley as cited in MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 16

> There would be no such thing as spectatorship if the cinema did not function as a powerful form of pleasure, entertainment, and socialization. Some films like *Rear Window* (as well as virtually all of Hitchcock's films) and *Coma*[30] read easily as demonstrations – explicit or otherwise – of the lure of spectatorships. But spectatorship is more than individual film characters who embody spectator roles, by acting, as the characters portrayed by James Stewart and Genevieve Bujold do, as spectators within the film. Indeed, spectatorship entails much more than individual films or even the individual and collective viewing experiences of audiences.[31]

To conclude, these methods of investigating the variables inherent in trying to pinpoint the essence of spectatorship although necessary, are not as important to this thesis as how Hitchcock perceived and consequently manipulated audiences.

> To begin with, then, spectatorship refers not just to the acts of watching and listening, and not just to identification with human figures projected on the screen, but rather to the various values with which film viewing is invested. Hence, the pleasures and dangers affiliated with watching and listening, in *Rear Window* and *Coma*, are channelled into powerful cultural and narrative myths of man and woman, social class, private and public life.[32]

The audience is made up of individuals who in their own private capacity as individuals take part in viewing the film and also on another level publicly take part in a public ritual for a set time. The audience vicariously takes part in lives and experiences and thus finds pleasure in even dangerous situations offered by a film text. Hitchcock's main concern in producing thrillers was the that the audiences find pleasure in danger as Jean Douchet explains,

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[30] Made in 1978 *Coma* is a film about a doctor played by Bujold who suspects mysterious deaths and medical goings on in a hospital.
[31] MAYNE, J. 1993. Cinema and Spectatorship. New York: Routledge. p. 31
[32] Ibid.

> …Alfred Hitchcock was the one, who within this principle, managed to make the most beautiful films. Undoubtedly because Hitchcock had truly made it the basis of the construction of his universe: the hero, the heroine, are the onscreen projection of the spectator's desires and fears. Hitchcock never leaves the movie-house, he takes the world which is in the head of his spectator and puts it on the screen alongside that which is in the heads of his own characters. He doesn't really begin his film until the moment when the camera, placed imaginatively inside the skull of the spectator, has begun to project that spectator's world onto the screen. It's a magnificent idea, very Hitchcockian, and one that absolutely respects the spectator even if it plays with his or her desires and fears.[33]

The spectator is not to be interpreted as a passive individual and according to Margolis must be understood as being able to bring personal experience to the interpretive process. We must remember that Hitchcock did not expect the audience to be passive but he realized that the audience would continually be drawing their own conclusions and thus set out to thwart their process.

> The cinema, it was argued, is a dense system of meaning, one that borrows from so many different discourses – of fashion, of narrative, of politics, of advertising, and so on…theorists argued that the cinema is not just a product of a particular culture, but rather a projection of its most fundamental needs, desires and beliefs.[34]

These 'fundamental needs, desires and beliefs' are what Hitchcock used to manipulate the audience – basic core fears of misogyny, the other, the mother, death,

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[33] Jean Douchet as cited in an interview with A. de Baecque and C-M. Bosséne Retrieved 17 May 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.frameworkonline.com/42jd.htm

[34] MAYNE, J. 1993. Cinema and Spectatorship. New York: Routledge. pp. 21-22

scatology and mental aberrations. All of these can be seen to a greater or lesser degree in virtually all of Hitchcock's films from the 1940s onwards, but specifically can be seen in *Spellbound, Notorious, Psycho, Shadow of a Doubt, Rope, Frenzy, Rebecca* and *Strangers on a Train.* Hitchcock understood that "…individual people are not merely individuals…" They are "…the subjective existence of thought and experience society presents for itself."[35]

4. USE OF THE 'STAR' SYSTEM

4.1 Casting and Physical types

Hitchcock's films are sometimes categorized as a 'Cary Grant', 'James Stewart' or even as an 'Ingrid Bergman' film and this is because Hitchcock seemed to favour certain actors over others in particular roles. Grant and Stewart each appeared in four of Hitchcock's films and Ingrid Bergman appeared in three of Hitchcock's films. This would seem to suggest Hitchcock's knowledge and awareness of the role that fame and 'star' status played with audiences and also to what ends it could be used in the manipulation of cinema audiences within the viewing process.

[35] HARTLEY, J. 1992. The Politics of Pictures. London: Routledge. p. 85

In this chapter I will examine Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience when taking casting and physical types of actors into account. Film stars are not just actors – their 'star' quality gives them a certain standing as icons outside of the roles that they portray. There is a moral expectation of 'stars' and Hitchcock manipulates this in his films sometimes casting to type and at other times casting against type. He also manipulates moral ambiguity, highlighting the sometimes minor differences between that which is truly virtuous and that which is purely malevolent.

As precise as Hitchcock was in composing the actual mechanics and technicalities of the film, he was just as pedantic about casting and the physical types of actors he used in his films in order to bring his characters to life. He did not cast actors in a haphazard manner, wanting to cast 'names' to ensure a box office success. Rather he had specific notions and concepts in his mind, which he wanted embodied on screen – in a particular manner. It is therefore no wonder that Hitchcock was precise and doctrinaire about the casting of his films.

It is well known that Hitchcock chose actors based on what they looked like. When he was working at the Selznick studios an actress walked by - Hitchcock took one look at her and said, and "She'll play in *Spellbound*." The actress was Ingrid Bergman. He hadn't even bothered to concern himself with an audition because she

'looked' the part to him. Bergman herself says of that incident that 'I think he chooses people for what they look like.'[36]

Hitchcock used many actors in his films and like every other component of his films, the actors were carefully chosen in order to convey a certain preconceived notion or idea and also to convey moral ambiguity in film roles to potentially sway the audiences perceptions. He used actors whom he knew would signify a specific idea or image to an audience. He manipulated the audience to view an actor playing a character in a specific way in order to prove them to be incorrect in the assumptions, which they drew by revealing the true intentions of a character during the course of the film. So the fresh and innocent - faced Norman in *Psycho* was not as innocent as he appeared, the haggard appearance and distinctly bizarre behaviour of Blaney in *Frenzy* are not indicative of a demented serial killer.

The majority of Hitchcock's villains from Norman Bates in *Psycho,* to Bruno in *Strangers on a Train* are never 'thugs'. They tend to be educated and genteel. In fact Hitchcock deliberately arranged with MGM to get Robert Walker to play the suave and elegant villain, casting him against type as he had previously only really had the chance to play the boy-next-door roles. The villains in Hitchcock's films tend to be extremely polite and also to be in possession of boyish charms. Even the murderers in *Rope* are well-educated, well-dressed young men with impeccable manners, the sort not usually believed to commit crimes. In *The Strange Case of*

[36] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 150

Alfred Hitchcock Durgnat noted that Alfred Hitchcock always said that it is best to make your villain a suave and charming fellow. Obviously indicating that villains who are the stereotypical notion of a thug (coarse and brutish) are not as compelling as 'suave' and charming' villains who exploit our gullibility and our readiness to place our trust in a person based on their background, class and demeanour of a person. The psychopath in *Frenzy* is explored as someone who can dissemble normality: that is his menace. Hitchcock pointed out that nobody ever asks the question "How do these villains get close to their victims?" He put forth the concept that villains need to be charming, loquacious individuals because they need to be in possession of these qualities in order to gain their victim's trust. It is also required for Hitchcock's audiences to feel drawn to these characters – to trust them in order for Hitchcock to take advantage of their credulity and manipulate their expectations.

Interesting to note is Hitchcock's apparent use of singular 'types' in the casting of the male roles in his films. Hitchcock never uses particularly muscle-bound nor overtly masculine physical types in his films. Prime examples of this are both Cary Grant and James Stewart who are slim, slight men. Whether they are hero or villain, Hitchcock's leading men are cerebral and gentlemanly. Hitchcock works against the preconceived notion of 'butch' masculinity being more threatening than the 'bookish' intellectual type. His villains do not have to be large, muscled, imposing figures. They simply have to suggest a hint of malevolence in order to suggest the inherent evil that lurks beneath the façade. Hitchcock highlights the short-sightedness of both society and audiences who judge villains by set, stereotypical societal constraints.

Durgnat draws attention to Hitchcock's preference for actors who,

> [A]re those with a screen personality so strong that it is often larger than the role they are playing. The identification of the audience is more complete when it is watching James Stewart or Cary Grant…than it is with less engaging performances. [37]

He chose film actors who had a large fan base and whose fans could completely identify with favourite stars. Hitchcock knew the billing of certain actor's names was enough to grab the attention of audiences before they even knew what the specific narrative was concerned with. James Stewart usually played the 'good guy' as did Cary Grant. James Mason on the other hand customarily played the villain. In this way Hitchcock, cast according to type and relied on the audience's absolute belief in the aura of the actor more than in the character the actor played. In *North by Northwest*, the character of Van Damme is evil personified but a thin veneer of 'breeding' and genteel overtones cover this evil. Audiences however will readily believe in the evil of the character because the audience expectation of Mason was one of his playing the 'bad guy' in any film in which he appeared. Hitchcock relied on the preconceived ideas that the audience had in order to subvert them.

Hitchcock's villains are not detestable characters. They appear to be charming, elegant and urbane. They are just like their counterparts – the 'heroes' in everything

[37] Ibid. p. 125

apart from their moral convictions and integrity. Hitchcock uses the values people esteem most highly in heroes, in his villains using this as a ploy to manipulate the audience's loyalty between the hero and the villain. "An examination of the heroes of any given society will reveal what that society values most highly in its people."[38] This is what makes his villains likeable characters despite their tendencies toward villainy. In this way Hitchcock's films highlight the oftentimes astonishingly minor differences between villains and heroes. This is intuitive manipulation on Hitchcock's part because uses traits in his villains that the audience can to a point admire (and one knows that we are never supposed to find redeeming and admirable points in villains!) In this way Hitchcock also raises a significant critique of cultural values and the faulty standards and nebulous boundaries that society uses to judge the abstract notions of virtue and integrity.

Hitchcock manipulated what the public wanted in their heroes and villains. He knew what their expectations were and used this in his direction of his audiences. In *Spellbound* Gregory Peck was a newcomer on the acting scene and Ingrid Bergman was the draw card. Peck had to play an impostor accused of killing Dr. Edwardes. As he was a 'new' star the audience would not be able to typecast him from the start as either the wrongly accused hero or the villainous murderer. In respect of which question, the audience would be kept 'guessing' until the end of the film. This is masterful manipulation on the part of Alfred Hitchcock. When we consider that

[38]BENSON, L. 1974. Images, Heroes and Self-Perception. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. p. 13

Spellbound's main theme is one of ambiguous guilt, to cast the leading man (who plays a character of indefinite rectitude) is fitting and quite cunning of Hitchcock to use an actor whose 'star' status was yet to be determined and whose role 'type' had yet to be established. In this case the ambiguity of the actor was used to synchronise with the ambiguous nature of the character – to keep the audience in a state of vacillation regarding the true guilt of the character.

In terms of hair colouring for the film, Peck was dark and definitely the classical 'brooding leading man' whilst Ingrid Bergman was fair, the classical film heroine, who fights for the virtuous clearing of her love interest's name. *Spellbound* was unlike *Shadow of a Doubt*, where the binary opposite of dark and fair hair represent a thematic difference in characters, the opposition in *Spellbound* exists to keep the audience guessing. It plays on the stereotypical view of the audience that the fair leading lady is entranced in the power of a dark, brooding, (and implicitly untrustworthy) male of dubious moral quality. In this respect we see how Hitchcock's manipulation of what society in general and his audiences specifically viewed as good or bad, depended on subconscious attitudes towards colouring in terms of hair, skin tone and costume.

In *Shadow of a Doubt* however the two leads seem to be coloured so as to obscure the line between the themes of 'good' and 'evil'. Due to the preconceived idea of white or light colours representing good and black or dark colours representing evil, one would think that the diabolical Uncle Charlie would have dark or black hair

whilst his innocent niece would have fair hair. This is not the case. Uncle Charlie has fair hair and his niece has brown hair. Hitchcock however, has blurred the lines between what is typically perceived as moral and typically immoral. Hitchcock does this to such an extent that there seems to be a plausible excuse used in Uncle Charlie's defence of his own diabolical actions describing how the world is 'a foul sty'. We as the audience sympathize with him, as we know how unsatisfactory a place the world can be and can even concur with parts of his defence of why he killed rich widows. On the other hand Charlie, the niece, seems to be spoilt, naïve and rather petulant. The reason for this is probably due to Hitchcock's wanting to make the statement that no person is wholly pure or wholly evil, we have characteristics of both. Even Hitchcock admits that the murderer Uncle Charlie has redeeming qualities:

> …he's a killer with an ideal; he's one of those murderers who feel they have a mission to destroy…There is a moral judgment in the film. He's destroyed at the end isn't he?…What it boils down to is that villains are not all black and heroes are not all white; there are grays everywhere.[39]

In terms of fame, once again Hitchcock in this film inverts the usage of fame and inherent 'good guy' status for the leading man. As in most rules there is always an exception. Hitchcock oscillated between playing for and against audience expectation. Joseph Cotten was a popular and well-loved film star. The trick that Hitchcock played on his audience was casting Cotten as the psychopathic Uncle. The

[39] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 98

audience would not have expected Cotten to be the villain of the piece, even less so that he would portray a character with psychopathic tendencies. So whilst the nice Charlie spends the film convinced of her Uncle's guilt, the audience sits smug in their knowledge that any character played by Cotton must be beyond reproach.

Rope is yet another example of a film wherein Hitchcock casts against type. This was inspired, for Stewart had returned from the war an Air Force hero and had re-established his film career as the platonic form of middle-American hero in Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life.* Stewart is the egotistical professor who impresses young students with tales of intellectually motivated killings that are justified in that they remove lesser mortals from the earth. Hitchcock 'plays' with the audience's expectations of what to expect from any character played by a wholesome American 'hero' like Stewart. The audience is uncomfortable with the idea of Stewart's character being in the least bit responsible for the actions of killers. Hitchcock does this to ratify the concept that we are all responsible at some level for what we say, do and think. *Psycho* is yet another prime example where the star status of actors is used to manipulate meaning and keep the audience guessing. Janet Leigh as the star of the film is expected to last the duration of the film or so the audience believes. We all believe at a subconscious level that the heroes of any film should be 'victorious' at the end yet Janet Leigh is murdered less than half an hour into the film. Subsequently Arbogast, yet another hero who is supposed to avenge Leigh's death by finding 'Mother', is also slain.

> A special urgency does result from the death, in *Psycho,* of our two successive identification figures, two brutal slaps in the face of our conditioning by Hollywood into a kind of romantic egoism whereby the hero's best pal may die but the hero, never.[40]

When Marion and Arbogast die the audience is swept into a panic of misdirected allegiance and is confused as to whom to support next. Hitchcock cleverly does this to disorientate the audience members, to make them unsure of their footing and confused. Whereas we usually know who the good guy is and to support him we now start to 'side' with Norman, who has covered up a crime and is in no way completely innocent. We support Norman because our initial figure with whom we have identified has been murdered. This comes as a shock as Leigh is fair haired, petite and defenceless against her attacker whilst the attacker (whom we discover to be Norman Bates) is also slim but dark with a boyish grin. Like so many of Hitchcockian villains seen before he has a hint of malevolence that glints from beneath the mask of good-looking, boyish charisma. Hitchcock gives the villain, Norman, dark hair and dark clothing but due to his boyish good looks and charm we as the audience do not believe he could be guilty of murdering a defenceless woman.

Hitchcock does manipulate the audience on two separate levels. On another level Hitchcock seems to set about building towards this retributive act that happens to Marion. The first time we ever see Marion she is in a motel room enjoying an illicit sexual meeting with her married lover. An unsanctioned meeting in two ways –

[40] Ibid. p. 32

firstly that they are engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage and secondly their relationship is adulterous. Marion wants her lover to leave his wife and marry her - he is reluctant. In her desperation to exert some control over her life decides to take matters into her own hands and lends fate a helping hand. She does this by stealing money that her boss requests that she deposit on her way home. She then embarks on a journey to her lover's home in order that they should run away together i.e. run away from responsibility, away from the strict authority of the confines of societal laws and moral edicts. Hitchcock manipulates the audience to feel condemnation and superior morality to this 'Jezebel'. Hitchcock does all this very subtly where he includes shots like the one where the motorcycle policeman stares directly into the camera (at Marion and us) and so disapproves of Marion (and us). Her guilt is transferred to the audience with this shot and so we feel that in order to stop the censorious gaze of the policeman – Marion needs to be punished in some way. When she is, I think the shock for the audience is firstly due to the unexpected way in which it occurs and secondly because we subconsciously had wanted Marion's censorship because of the policeman's condemnatory stare earlier. Again we see how moral complexities are raised and how Hitchcock does not shy away from having the lead actress play a character of questionable moral fibre.

'Stars' were a seminal part of Hitchcock audience manipulation. An excerpt from printed dialogue of Hitchcock's in which he spoke of his handling of stars, sums up this chapter quite aptly,

The point about the star-system is that it enables you to exaggerate from a story point of view. And the stars do bring the audiences into the cinema. A star's name is like a clarion call and brings in the time factor when, for instance, a film is shown and you want people to come and see it on definite days. A film without stars would have to wait to be appreciated….[41]

[41] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 178

Perkins joins Bruno from *Strangers on a Train* and Bob Rusk from *Frenzy*. They are all psychopaths, capable of heinous crimes without batting an eyelid, are all seen to be dominated by their mothers and are sensitive and not particularly masculine within the stereotypical ideal of masculinity.

In the following extract between Alfred Hitchcock and C.T. Samuels, Hitchcock reveals his motivation in casting villains as he does,

> H: But a very attractive man. That's something I always insist on. Movies usually portray murderers as tough and unsympathetic. That always makes me wonder how they ever get near their victims.
>
> S: You wouldn't be interested in a murderer who didn't get close to his victims, would you?
>
> H: No. I've never been interested in professional criminals. The audience can't identify with their lack of feeling. I'm also not interested in the conventional detective. That's why, for example, in *Frenzy* I invented the discussion of the crime outside a professional context.[42]

Crime is such a core of Hitchcock's films because of the 'otherness' of the criminal. In our law-abiding everyday lives, we the audience have no comprehension of leading a life of crime and or violence. The other is thus a threatening character for the audience, a character that embodies tremendous dread and unease for us.

[42] SAMUELS, C.T. 1972. Encountering Directors. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. p. 238

5. THE HOMOSEXUAL OTHER

According to Lacanian psychology, we depend on the existence of the other to fill in the gap of our desires, to create, if only for a moment, the wholeness before our subjectivity, before there was an Other. How this relates to otherness can be explained by the importance of the gaze or more specifically the image of the Other. Images constitute the self. Images of the literal other create 'lack' - a separation because it is through that difference that we are constituted but also as we look toward the other, it is with the desire of being a unified self. So we depend on the other both to create the self through difference and somehow to fill up the gap created by our subjectivity because the other represents this unified self we have lost.

This chapter explores the role that the homosexual (Other) character played in Hitchcock's films and in his manipulation of audiences specifically. Homosexual characters can be found in *Rope, North by Northwest, Strangers on a Train and Murder.* They have significance in their role to manipulate audiences and to be main characters in narratives that are based on heterosexual lines. Why did Hitchcock use them when he could have just as well used a heterosexual character? By definition the other is that which the subject is not. The mainstream audience of the 50s and 60s were middleclass, white and straight – so the homosexual would have been the other to this audience. (Of course for homosexuals, the homosexuals in the films are not the other!!) The answer lies in the 'Otherliness' of the homosexual character and how Hitchcock exploits this in order to manipulate his audiences.

I admit that this is a generalized idea of the audience watching Hitchcock's films but the films produced at this time were produced for a homogenous audience as delineated above and it was for this section of the populace that Hitchcock generally made his films and attempted to manipulate.

Homosexual characters and characters with only a hint of sexual ambiguity are to be found in quite a few of Hitchcock's films. (*Strangers on a Train's* Bruno; *Rope's* gay 'couple'; Van Damme's assistant in *North by Northwest)* all fall into the category of homosexual 'other'. The homosexual character has become an almost mythical figure in Hitchcock's films due to its being hinted at but never realized to its full potential. This was due to the fact that homosexuality was a forbidden subject on the long list of subjects that were verboten in accordance with the Hays Code. Bruno Anthony, Leonard and Van Damme and the aesthetes from *Rope* are all portrayed as suave, slightly effeminate and lacking in any traditional notion of being 'butch' which is of course a perceived stereotypical notion of heterosexual manliness. Hitchcock not only used homosexuality as a narrative tool in his films but also,

> [E]mployed actors who were known or rumoured to be homosexual since he presumably believed that homosexual actors have the capacity to bring to their acting a self-conscious sense of performativity and to project their masculinity as a lure or mask. [43]

[43] ALLEN, R. & GONZALES, I. S. (Eds) 1999. Alfred Hitchcock Centenary Essays. London: British Film Institute. p. 234

This links back to the previous chapter's discussion of casting and Hitchcock's manipulation of audience expectations of 'stars' in his films. By deliberately using actors who were rumoured to be homosexual Hitchcock used this to his advantage in manipulating audiences. If these homosexual actors 'projected their masculinity as a mask or lure' then Hitchcock knew that the audience would be ambivalent about the nature of the character that they played. The Hays code forbade any portrayal of homosexual behaviour and so the nature of the character's sexuality would be left to nuances in performance that were also ambiguous. In this way Hitchcock leaves the audience with an uncertainty about certain character's sexuality. The otherliness of the character is not firmly established as fact – Hitchcock leaves it as an uncertainty. Yet although the audience is not necessarily consciously aware of it, Hitchcock has already sown the first seeds of doubt and unease by placing this homosexual Other as a key figure in the narrative as the 'Other' that is different to us. According to Lacanian theory the other fills in the lack found in the self. This lack causes unease for the self. Mary Klages in her discussion of Lacan illustrates that during the mirror phase,

> [W]e imagine a self that has no lack, no notion of absence or incompleteness. The fiction of the stable, whole, unified self that we see in the mirror becomes a compensation for having lost the original oneness with the mother's body…according to Lacan, we lose our unity with the mother's body, in order to enter culture, but we protect ourselves from the knowledge of that loss by misperceiving ourselves as not lacking anything – as being complete unto ourselves.[44]

[44] Retrieved 19 January 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.Colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/2004lacan.html

This is why the other causes great unease due to the fact that we protect ourselves from the acknowledgement of the difference that exists of the lack that we have. Hitchcock makes the murderer homosexual and both the figures of the murderer and the homosexual are 'Other' figures. Hitchcock conflates the two making the villain a doubly threatening figure.

Seeing that the majority of the audience watching these films in the 50s and 60s were straight and white (the dominant representation of middle-class America) it is fascinating to see how Hitchcock continually oscillates between making the audience feel at ease with the villain/homosexual and then making the differences (between the villain and the audience or between the self and other) noticeably apparent.

In this chapter I am looking at the use of the homosexual as a character that constitutes the Other and as a character that invariably is the villain of the film. Hitchcock deliberately used the homosexual character as one of doubtful virtue and I believe this links in directly with the manipulation of stereotypes of the 40s and 50s and to a lesser extent the 60s. The villain then becomes a character that is portrayed by an (Other) and thus should be doubly threatening and yet is used by Hitchcock as a lure for the audience because the audience are drawn in by the Other as the villain and trust them – allowing for Hitchcock to make them follow a series of red herrings. This is achieved by Hitchcock because he makes the audience feel uncomfortable over their own prejudices against the Other and yet forces them to be beguiled by the disarming charm of these villains.

> For the point is not that Hitchcock represents homosexuals as criminals, but rather that he uses these characters to stage the performance of gentlemanliness beneath which the darkest secrets are harboured.[45]

The Other also functions (in this case the homosexual) as an area of unease and fear. We acknowledge the lack that exists and creates a divide between the Other and ourselves but the knowledge of this difference does not rest easily with us. The fact that Hitchcock uses the homosexual Other as a character from which to stage the 'performance of gentlemanliness beneath which the darkest secrets are harboured' is an interesting choice as he uses the Other as the bearer of dark secrets or to quote Pinter "The weasel under the cocktail cabinet."[46]

Although Pinter insists that the phrase means absolutely nothing it is generally accepted to mean the dark underbelly of society that is masked by the veneer of polite society. Hitchcock makes the other sinister as it is the other who as the villain charades as something s/he is not.

I do not think that this ploy of Hitchcock's would have the same effect with a twenty-first century audience. There has been a dramatic shift in contemporary popular culture, in how homosexuality is understood and perceived, yet we have to remember that these films were made when homosexuality was more stigmatised than it is today.

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[45] ALLEN, R. & GONZALES, I. S. (Eds) 1999. Alfred Hitchcock Centenary Essays. London: British Film Institute. p. 234

[46]

Hitchcock's tendency to cast actors who were rumoured to be homosexual to portray sexually ambivalent characters leads to a manipulation that Hitchcock uses in order to portray the homosexual other as benign and not overly threatening. An example is *Strangers on a Train* where we are introduced to gentlemanly Bruno, who '…is wealthy, sybaritic, and suavely homosexual.'[47] He is the antithesis of Guy who comes from a humble background and is prepared to work for his wealth and status. Bruno is (as all Hitchcock villains tend to be) charming and loquacious. Hitchcock – masking Bruno's homosexuality with debonair flamboyance - has made his 'Otherliness' more acceptable for the audience. Audiences would immediately warm to this character and Hitchcock knew this. Even when Bruno starts to propound a ludicrous and even insane project to murder individuals, the audience laughs it off as idle talk on his part. The question that Hitchcock poses in a manipulative manner is: "how dangerous could a homosexual be?" He might initially make us feel uneasy but he is portrayed by Hitchcock as a friendly, exceedingly beguiling individual. These characteristics bridge the difference between the other and the audience and make the audience feel less apprehensive. This is because Hitchcock constantly manipulates the audience to feel unease and then portrays the character that engenders this trepidation as a character that needs no second glance. He deludes the audience – only to subvert their feelings of ease later on in the narrative as the initial question is answered by Hitchcock in a cold and cynical manner. The murderers in *Rope,* Philip and Brandon are a homosexual couple that kill a college classmate yet only ten minutes into the film the emphasis seems to shift marginally from the death that we as the audience have just witnessed to the interactions between the two men and the dynamics of this relationship. Brandon appears to be the more dominant in

[47] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 218.

the relationship and seems to take charge of looking after Philip – he solicitously removes Philip's gloves after the murder and reassures him. Hitchcock gives us slight yet meaningful glances between the two men that speak volumes about the nature of their relationship. We can see their mutual affection and when Philip looks at Brandon after describing how they first met we witness the puppy-dog look of a person besotted with their lover. Hitchcock is exploiting the audience's interest in exploiting homosexual identity rid the vicarious identities provided by film. In the beginning of the film when Philip describes Brandon's ability to frighten him, he says that that is part of Brandon's charm which echoes Hitchcock's attempt to make the other and the villain charming characters despite their ability to provoke unease. In this way I agree with Durgnat that the audience's resonance might (and did) come from the story of the seduction of the one man by 'the other'.

> A profounder resonance with the audience's own attitudes might have come from the story of the seduction of the sensitive, ordinary youth (Farley Granger) by the other. And later this is just the form of *Strangers on a Train*.[48]

In a way it could be seen as a seduction of the audience by the Other. This can also be seen in *Strangers on a Train* and to a lesser extent in *Murder.* Hitchcock portrays this other through a rose-tinted camera lens in order that the audience do not recoil in discomfit. It is this fascination with the relationship of 'the Other' that Hitchcock utilizes in order to allow the audience to feel a fair amount of calm curiosity until we realize that far from being 'harmless homosexuals', one in particular, Brandon (John Dall) is a sociopath bent on some kind of quest to prove himself as an Übermensch.

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[48] Ibid. p. 206

In *Rope* Hitchcock ingeniously blends or merges two 'Others' into one character, the woman (femininity) and the homosexual. Durgnat points out that John Dall plays the more dominant of the couple as a kind of Vincent Price Jnr. - combined with an enigmatic ambivalence between the male partner to Farley Granger and feminine to James Stewart.

Clearly there is a constant vacillation on Hitchcock's part to portray a categorically 'evil' character. These characters are always made less intimidating by using their 'Otherliness' to take away from their potency as an evil threat to the audience when if left it is their otherliness that could make them appear sinister, after all what kind of a threat could a gay man pose? It is this oscillation that keeps the audience 'on their toes' so to speak in terms of understanding in their own minds who is guilty of what crime. In *Rope* for instance, John Dall (Brandon) and Farley Granger's (Philip) characters murder their college friend but it is their Professor (James Stewart) who actually plants the intellectual seed or idea that galvanizes the two young men to plot murder. So the ultimate responsibility for the murder could lie with Dall and Granger's characters or with Stewart's character depending on which side of the argument the viewer thinks is stronger. Hitchcock constantly uses the ambiguous sexual nature of the relationship between the characters of Philip and Brandon in order to make the ground of 'knowing what's going to happen next' shift. There is a diametrically opposed view of the characters put forward by either viewing them as effeminate men who really are not that dangerous or as the stereotype prolific in 1940's as Robin Wood points out,

> Brandon in *Rope* and Bruno in *Strangers on a Train*, conform to the homophobic stereotype of the murderous gay, the homosexual as perverted psychopath. [49]

In the 1940s and 1950s there was a grossly generalized stereotype of homosexuals (particularly male homosexuals) as over the top, sensitive, emasculated men who were perverse in their everyday dealings – not just in their sexual proclivities. Hitchcock was manipulating the audience to move past these preconceptions and not believe the worst of the Other, though it was not his audience's a natural inclination to do so.

In *Rope* the character played by James Stewart is seen to be guilty by the audience because he is a white, straight male. We the audience think that by virtue of these facts he should have known better than to expound upon a thesis that talked of killing lesser mortals. Conversely the two homosexuals could be excused due to their moral aberrations and inability to rationalize like 'real' men due to their seemingly feminine attributes.

The 40s and 50s stereotype of the weak 'mother's boy' is yet another stereotype manipulated by Hitchcock. *Psycho's* Norman Bates and *Frenzy's* Bob Rusk are yet another pair of sensitive men who seem to be unhealthily attached to their mothers. Rusk even has dyed orange hair like his mother. Yet these slightly effeminate, mother-bound murderers are not homosexual albeit they are not strictly the stereotypical slightly effeminate straight man either.

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[49] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 65

The 50s notion of a 'mother's boy' links in with this chapter's theme of the homosexual other – only in that there is a stereotypical notion of emasculated, weak being either dominated by a strong mother figure or are homosexual. Hitchcock's use of men who are overly attached to their mothers and homosexuals as villains is quite noticeable. Hitchcock must have thought there was some way in which villains of this nature could manipulate the audience to a greater extent, otherwise why utilise them in a canon of work that includes varied villains? Hitchcock's use of definitive concepts in casting and particularly in using certain characters is always to aid his 'master plan' of manipulating the audience and leaving them in incoherence and inconsistency. I believe that Hitchcock's 'mother's boys' are portrayed as such in order to lead the audience to completely buy into the stereotype of the mother's boy prevalent in the 40s and 50s. This is of overly sensitive, sweet-natured men who by virtue of being so close to their mothers in adulthood must be 'good' boys and definitely not murderers or as in the case of Bob Rusk, psychopaths. The homosexual and mother's boy are stereotypically seen to be less than heterosexual men in virility and strength. This is a view that Hitchcock manipulates because they prove to be murderers who do not use brawn to kill but brains. There also seems to be a nudge and a wink on Hitchcock's part to insinuate to his audiences that perhaps mothers are the root of all evil murderous lust – that families are the ultimate threat – not the other.

Norman Bates and Bob Rusk are two Hitchcock villains differ from the rest because they are in a different class. These are two psychopaths with no conscience or remorse. They are evil and insidiously cunning. Yet they are simultaneously charming and appealing,

particularly Norman Bates. They are both mother's boys who have unhealthy attachments to their mothers. Hitchcock's manipulation lay in exposing the proclivity of human nature to turn 'sour', that we are all able of committing atrocities in both the private and public realms. He laid bare this truth to the audience, demonstrating that the audience have just such a tendency. Hitchcock uses the dual models of two distinct moral realities in his films as a regular feature as Spoto notes of *Shadow of A Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train*,

> …while the two Charlies in *Shadow of a Doubt* located two moral realities within a single family, *Strangers on a Train* locates those double realities in separate social and political arenas that Hitchcock overlaps.[50]

Despite their murderous inclinations Bob Rusk and Norman Bates are 'likeable' characters simply because they are mommy's boys. In the beginning when we have no inkling as to what their diabolical plans are, we can find them interesting and vaguely familiar. They are not evil all the time and exhibit moments of kindness and genuinely likeable characteristics. Hitchcock makes his villains genial and urbane in order to allow the audience a greater feeling of betrayal when they become the psychotic killers that they are. Included in this group is also 'Uncle Charlie' from *Shadow of a Doubt.* Hitchcock portrays him as an Uncle who is the most lovable man in the world. He is seen through the eyes of an adoring niece and sister. Naturally the audience identifies with these characters and believes that Uncle Charlie must be one of the 'good guys'. Hitchcock allows the audience's identification with the family so that the audience will

[50] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 328

be kept guessing as to whom it is they are to believe - the doting unbelieving sister or the police.

Murder is a film in which Hitchcock, in his usual daring manner, includes a transvestite character who regularly performs in drag. He is called Fane and it becomes evident that he is the murderer in this film. He serves to contrast with the hero of the film, Sir John.

> Sir John is a 'real man', he incarnates the sum of the identificatory features that are considered 'the manifestation of masculinity': he is strong, successful, handsome, unbendable…Fane is the exact opposite: unhappily in love, unsuccessful, of 'impure' race and uncertain gender. He is not only half-caste but also 'half-gender'; his entire appearance is wrapped in sexual ambiguity and transvestism (on the stage he often performs dressed as a woman). At the beginning of the film somebody describes him as ' a hundred percent he-woman.' As for his sexual identification he is closer to the feminine side. Sir John and Fane are thus the opposites of one another; more precisely, each represents everything the other is not.[51]

This opposition also explains why Sir John hates Fane; Fane embodies everything that is threatening to Sir John's masculinity. "Fane reminds him of some uncanny dimension of his own desire, of the mortal feature of 'The Thing' around which his desire circulates"[52] As the 'other' Fane is more a threat to Sir John in his capacity to undermine his masculinity than he is a murderer of unsound mind.

This character is used by Hitchcock to have an unsettling effect on the heterosexual male audience member. Fane's threat is not in the fact that he is a killer capable of taking life, but by the mere fact that he challenges male heterosexuality by his transvestism and

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[51] ŽIŽEK, S. 1992. Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Lacan…But Were Afraid To Ask Hitchcock. New York: Verso. p. 97

[52] Ibid.

enjoyment of it. Heterosexual men both fantasize and blanche at the thought of dressing up as the 'other' – the woman, but Fane revels in it. So he is the enemy not only in the fact that he is a murderer but also because of his transvestism and sexual ambiguity. The enemy that lurks within is the basis for most thrillers - that is what gives the audience the greatest sense of betrayal. In this case the enemy is not only 'within' in that he is known but he assaults the inner security of male heterosexuality. He is a complex and multi-faceted villain, used by Hitchcock in brilliant manipulation of the male members of his audience.

It is film myth that the villain was usually Hitchcock's favourite character, yet it is interesting to note that he never favoured the hero or if he did as in *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* they are heroes with flaws. The less than perfect figure was the character with which Hitchcock could manipulate the audience to greater effect. A less than perfect figure is more malleable and is less predictable for the audience.

The 'other' whom Fane sought to emulate was the woman. The representation of women has been known to be an area of sometimes-heated debate for academics who have analysed Hitchcock's oeuvre; everyone has an opinion on Hitchcock's filmic use of women. As I will explicate in the following section it is a far more complex aspect of Hitchcock's films than people really give it credit for. Intrinsic to this section is an exploration of Hitchcock's proclivity towards voyeurism and voyeuristic filming.

6. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Hitchcock has become famous, amongst other things, for supposedly being a misogynist. This is a debate, which is strongly contested by academics, and critics alike who have many divergent views on Hitchcock's state as a misogynist or not as the case may be.

However, my aim is to discover how Hitchcock's use of women, be it misogynist or otherwise, to manipulate the audience in film is unique to him. In the following chapter I will investigate the extent to which Hitchcock used scopophilia and voyeurism (both related to women) in his filmmaking and will also investigate the role of 'the blonde' and 'the mother' in his films. I will explore what their recurring role is in his films and how as iconic figures they are used to influence audience perception.

6.1 Scopophilia

The use of voyeurism/scopophilia in Hitchcock's films is quite varied. Examples range from the prying camera lens of James Stewart in *Rear Window* to the Peeping Tom antics of Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*. The voyeur is evident and in plain sight.

The 'love of looking' is also ascribed to us, the audience as we watch the intimate machinations of stranger's lives. What else can film be described as, but the legitimisation of the 'Peeping Tom' syndrome in which we achieve pleasure from

looking at other people on a screen? It is a complex concept in film, which Hitchcock exploited, in his endless pursuit to engage the audience in the film process. *Rear Window* is one of the films in Hitchcock's canon of works that is self-reflexive and which comments on the attitude of all of us as people who watch others, how we condemn people as perverts and socially aberrant for doing exactly what we ourselves are doing in essence, every time we sit in a film theatre.

Hitchcock was not only a director who actively took charge of what others saw. He was himself an avid theatre-goer. Hitchcock was known for his fascination with the theatre and all things which had any aspect of performance. What is actually riveting is his penchant for using aspects or motifs of performance in his films. This discussion will be dealt with more substantially in my discussion of the voyeur 6.4.

6.2 Performances within Performances

During the early part of Hitchcock's career, staged performances were a major source of film material. It is from this that Hitchcock's fascination with theatrical behaviour stemmed. Starting with *Downhill* in 1927, 14 of his 53 feature films were based on plays.

In terms of opening sequences, *Stage Fright*'s is possibly one of the more manipulative and indicative of Hitchcock's desire to incessantly impose upon his audiences the idea that play and real life are only a whisper in difference from one another. In the opening

of this film, the credits of the film dissolve against a rising theatre safety curtain (that which protects the audience in the theatre and the audience watching the film) and the scene which is presented after the curtain rises is not a stage set but London itself. When the curtain rises the audience member is drawn directly into the world of the play. Hitchcock ensures that the line between sitting in a cinema acting as a voyeur and actively participating is crossed and the audience member becomes proactive – mirroring Metz's theory of suturing the audience into the narrative. As the story unfolds we realize that everyone in the film is 'acting a part' in life and in actual art, so there is a blurring of the lines that occurs which separates the two from each other. The world of performance is seen to be a treacherous world in which no single person can be trusted and in which everyone plays a role. Nothing is certain or true. Everything is in a state of flux as illustrated in *Psycho* where Janet Leigh is observed to perform within a performance in the scene where she is seen to be entering the bathtub.

> … she draws the shower curtain, a theatrical gesture that closes off two "performances ": the crime, of which she has now repented, and the "act" she has unwittingly put on for her voyeuristic observer. (Norman)[53]

This is because this is a scene of great change and flux for the audience as the protagonist is killed and they are left without a central identification figure.

In *Notorious* there is the example of the scene in the wine cellar. In this scene Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant's characters put on the charade of having an affair to fool Claude Rains' character into thinking that the real reason they are down there is for a secret assignation and not to find out about the uranium. In actual fact they are in love

[53] HUMPHRIES, P. 1986. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Routledge. p. 107

with one another, the pretence however, is actually reality. It is this element of pretence being reality which Hitchcock deliberately includes in his films that comments on the audience's complicity in an act of voyeurism although they aren't always consciously aware of it. In this case, the audience initially think that Grant and Bergman are putting on a pretence, until the kiss becomes too passionate to be merely part of a performance. It is at this point that the audience realise that they have actually been voyeurs in a private moment. We all 'act' in life and watch the performances of others in our everyday lives; Hitchcock uses this motif to some startling effect in most of his films.

> Generally speaking, curtains and windows in Hitchcock indicate the imminence of performance, usually intended for private "audience" and often not consciously conceived as performance at all, but as "spontaneous" behaviour…Brandon and Phillip staging their "theatre piece" in *Rope*, Uncle Charlie's ordinary-guy masquerade in *Shadow of a Doubt* and the twin case of Roger Thornhill's forced role as Kaplan and Eve Kendall's voluntary role as Vandamm's lover in *North by Northwest*.[54]

In each of the above cases there is at some point the manipulation or show of curtains, a ploy that has the effect of highlighting the actor's role as performer and simultaneously calling attention to the performance within a performance that is created. There is a scene in *The Birds* in which Lydia, Mitch's mother closes the curtains even more closely together to ensure that no glimpse of the birds will be seen or perhaps more accurately that the birds will not see her. This can be extrapolated even further, to say that Lydia closes off her space from the camera's prying lens (eye), but as in all good thrillers the threat is evident on the inside, the camera is inside and cannot be closed off. As we already know, Hitchcock uses the images of curtains as either a shielding/hiding device

[54] Ibid. p. 114

or as a theatrical facet to the actions of each character. In the above instance, Lydia tries to hide from the birds but also acts out her fear over the birds' ability to both attack and observe, ergo possessing the ability to locate her family. Another way of interpreting this is to see the closing of the curtains as the barricading off of the film world from the 'real' world i.e. to give the audience a sense of protection and safety. Lydia curtains her interior world of the house off from the 'outside', the unknown world which contains the 'unknown' creatures that stare and peer, those 'creatures' are the audience who observe from the 'outside' from an alien perspective in addition to being the actual birds. Hitchcock plays with the idea of perspective and who is on which side of the curtain, who is the viewer and who is the spectator? Hitchcock has once again played with the audience's fear of the unknown, everyone has experienced the uncanny fear that there is something in the dark outside your window peering in at you, the observer who is unseen, and has made the audience that which they fear, they have become to the characters of the film world the unseen observer – threatening in their omniscient anonymity.

Hitchcock "…achieves both a Brechtian alienation effect and a sense of intimacy … between the on-screen world and our worlds as spectators."[55] This Brechtian alienation effect is a form of alienation that serves to highlight the audience's involvement in the act of voyeurism that they condemn or secretly admire as the case may be in the character they watch on film. This only highlights the equivocation that goes on in the audience's justification of how their watching of a film is vastly different from the actions of a voyeur.

[55] Ibid. p. 108

Stage Fright and *Murder* are two films in which theatre comes to the fore as an ever-present Hitchcockian preoccupation, which becomes an explicit subject. Again we see the inherent reflexive nature of an audience watching a film about other people which comments on their own lives.

Young and Innocent, like *Stage Fright* was of particular interest to Hitchcock in his attempts to manipulate his audiences, because of the opportunity to portray a player within the realm of theatre and performance art. The hero dons glasses to mask his identity. A tramp disguises himself as a dandy to aid in exposing and capturing the criminal. A villain is disguised in blackface to play in a band. The murder victim is actually an actress. The innocent man who is running from the law is a screenwriter and Hitchcock makes a superb cameo as a photographer, holding a small camera in front of his huge person and trying in vain to get a shot of the commotion outside the courthouse. Everyone in this film deals in creating illusions. *Psycho* contains scenes, which promote the motif of performance within performance or the issue of alerting the audience to the fact that the performance, which is going on, is not situated in reality at all. Even the cabin to which Anthony Perkins accompanies Janet Leigh is a place of performance. It is within the confines of this space that Anthony Perkins stares unsolicited at her through a hole in the wall. It is also the place where the gruesome murder takes place, which is a grotesque parody of a performance in itself. These illusions of performance are the means to manipulate and disorientate the audience. Watching a performance the audience understands that it is an illusion but when illusions are created within illusions (the film) and when performances are exhibited within performances – the affect on the

audience is similar to that of placing two mirrors opposite each other, the reflection of the reflection becomes an infinite and confusing phenomenon.

The murder scene in *Psycho* is one of the most scrutinized and analysed sections of film in film history. The fact that it is so well executed has long fascinated film critics and students alike. It is the fact that it takes place inside a space within a room, which almost parodies the notion of the performance within a performance. Hitchcock deliberately shoots the murder in the shower cubicle; this is not a desultory placing. It is as if Hitchcock reiterates to the audience all the time that performances are not solely happening on celluloid and in theatres, we are living performances. "The shower curtain, to which Marion's back is turned, hangs from a bar at the top of the screen, and forms a frame-within-a-frame."[56] This frame can be seen, as the 'stand in' for the film frame to make the statement that the world we see is framed and performed.

> When the frame-within-a-frame of the shower curtain comes to engulf the entire frame, it is as if we have crossed a barrier. The camera's gesture deepens its declaration that what we are viewing is a film. At the same time, paradoxically, it asserts the identity of the shower curtain – an object within the world of *Psycho*, however it may symbolize the film frame – and the real movie screen on which our views have been projected. [57]

After the unexpected and shocking murder scene, Anthony Perkins as Norman enters the bathroom and he pauses just before entering. He is framed, with his back to the camera, framed within the frame by the outline of the doorway. This combined with William

[56] Ibid. p. 297
[57] Ibid.

Rothman's[58] assertion of the audience's identification of the shower curtain with the movie screen, "… that 'safety curtain' we assumed would separate us from the world of the film…"[59] intensifies the experience for the audience. When the shower curtain is ripped open and the hazy, nebulous figure of the attacker is seen we, the audience feel as though the safety zone of film and reality has been violated. In this instance instead of showing the audience the indistinct lines between fact and fiction, Hitchcock forces images and sounds onto them in an attempt to almost physically allow the performance within a performance to blur the line between fantasy and reality.

A scene in which Hitchcock jokes in a chilling manner is the scene in the kitchen where Norman sits after having disposed of Marion's body. He looks directly at the camera and smiles. The look suggests that Norman knows that he is being watched by millions of pairs of eyes. This is a disturbing section of the film as the audience is not sure whether the smile is one that suggests relief that everything has been cleared up or whether it is a sardonic smile that acknowledges the audience's passive complicity in the actions of the film. Hitchcock again draws the audience's attention to the fact that he is the one who controls the world of the film and they are at a complete loss to influence any outcome. Norman's glance almost makes one believe that he is smiling to congratulate both himself and us on a job well done. This time the boundary between fact and fiction has become so blurred that even we cannot distinguish between a simple grin and glance of a character or of that of an actor into a camera.

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[58] "The identification of the shower curtain with the movie screen – that 'safety curtain' we assumed would separate us from the world of the film – makes this dramatic gesture even more terrifying. For it presents the monstrous figure not simply as a denizen of a world safely cut off from our own, but as real." Ibid p. 299

[59] Ibid.

This notion of reality in the film and reality as is, is extended to the scene in the parlour where Norman Bates rants and raves in response to Marion Crane's suggestion that he should put his mother in a home. "Have you ever seen the inside of one of those places? The laughing and the tears, and the cruel eyes studying you?" These words uttered by Norman in the film are eerily apt when applied to characters in the film that we, the audience watch. An analogy can be drawn between the inmates of an asylum being watched and analysed to the characters of this film. We watch every move any character makes and we laugh with them and empathize with their tears. We analyse them and their motives. Hitchcock uses this monologue in the context of this film to comment on our own fear of institutions being incompatible with our need and desire to watch other figures trapped in the confines of the filmic narrative, living out their struggles and hardships on film. Hitchcock was a director who always liked to remind people he was there, that his films were not simply about the starring actors, hence his cameos in almost all of his films. Norman tells Marion in the scene in the parlour, "It's all for you." We assume that he is talking about the food. Yet William Rothman posits an interesting theory, he believes that Norman's covert meaning of the 'act' he puts on being for the sole benefit of Marion is actually Hitchcock's remark to the audience.

> Indeed, it is crucial to my understanding of this part of *Psycho* that the entire encounter between Marion and Norman stands in for the viewer's encounter with the film author.[60]

[60] Ibid. p. 288

Hitchcock was always well aware of the audience's identification with the stars of his films first and took note of the director second, thus he wove into his films the ability to leave a note that was distinct to him. That 'calling card' is what made him distinct and definitely unique. The 'calling card' is evident in the motifs that are being expounded on in this thesis. Hitchcock was very cognizant of the audience's complicity in the events that happened on screen. He also knew that the audience were not always conscious of this fact themselves. One of the most distinct 'Hitchcockian' moments in *Psycho* is the series of shots that make up the scene where Norman spies on Marion in the adjoining room. The camera cuts to Norman as he is viewed in profile as he peers through the hole he has made in the wall. "This shot withholds Norman's view from us, allowing us to recognize our wish for it."[61] Before this shot we see Marion preparing to undress, the film cuts to a shot of Norman's equally naked staring eye. When the film cuts back to Marion she is enveloped in a robe. We feel cheated by Hitchcock simply because he didn't allow us the same point of view as Norman. Norman saw the 'forbidden' nakedness of Marion and we, because we are complicit, wanted to see forbidden images just as much. Hitchcock knowing this to be the audience reaction deliberately leaves the audience with a feeling of lack of fulfilment in this scene. Hitchcock does this in order to intensify their identification and support of Norman.

The supposed obsession with the performance within a performance was simply a device utilized by Hitchcock in order to make his presence as the director both felt and known. By ensuring the attention of the audience to the notion that this world that they see is indeed an artificial construct, once they have suspended their disbelief is one of his

[61] Ibid. p. 289

greatest achievements. He contrived to 'awaken' the audience's attention to the fact they were viewing a film without disturbing their train of thought connected with the narrative. He was never intrusive, just deliberate.

Hitchcock's early sound film *Blackmail* is one of many films in which Hitchcock plays with notions of theatricality and performance.

> As already discussed, he was fascinated by the slippery relationship between reality and illusion – one metaphor for this being the relationship between cinema (filmed "reality" and theatre (staged "illusion").[62]

In *Blackmail* the motif of the performance is obvious in the scenes which concern themselves with Crewe's studio. In the studio we see the mask. It is strange and oddly out of place in this setting. It is so out of tune with the rest of the settings that it seems as though Hitchcock deliberately placed it there in order to bring the audience's attention to it, in order to emphasize that this is a piece of set dressing for a performance.

> The next clear signifier of theatricality is Crewe's handling of his bed curtains, a gesture indicating that the studio (and particularly the bed itself) is a place where he can arrange and control whatever performance he wishes. Meanwhile the policeman goes through his thoroughly rehearsed paces outside the window; this also serves as a proscenium, and the spectator of *Blackmail* as a screen within the screen. [63]

Humphries in the above excerpt describes the setting that Hitchcock presents in a few scenes in order to convey to the audience the idea of an extra special performance about to take place. The murder of Crewe takes place in the studio within the curtained

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[62] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Routledge. p. 22
[63] Ibid. p. 38

confines of the bed. These areas are Crewe's domains as the film world is Hitchcock's. Crewe believes that he has absolute control in these areas as does Hitchcock in directing a film. Yet it is in these areas that were seemingly unassailable, that Crewe is murdered. It would seem that Hitchcock infers from this, that for the spectator, the world of the film is not as 'safe' as it seemed. The boundaries are not as clearly defined as we the audience would prefer. Just as Crewe's control is subject to the pliable nature of others so too is Hitchcock's control dependant on other people's whims. This simultaneously points to Hitchcock's lack of absolute control over all that exists in his domain of the film world and also is used ingeniously by Hitchcock to cause unease in the viewing public, to create a sense of the film world being a part of reality. Hitchcock in a certain way deposits onto the audience his feelings of insecurity about the order of things in real life and in filmed 'reality'. They become his guinea pigs. Near the end of the film, Frank receives a call from another policeman informing him that Tracy has become a suspect, partly due to the fact that he already has a criminal record and partly due to the fact that he was seen at the scene of the crime. During this conversation Alice's father strains to hear what is being said, but is thwarted in his efforts as Frank closes the phone booth door, thereby ensuring that he can't hear what is being said. This acts as a closing off of yet another performance, a performance that both a character and the audience feel cheated out of.

Hitchcock's characters also have a tendency to 'act' for more than one audience. They act not just for the director or the audience, they act for each other.

> They perform for their own gratification or protection à la Norman Bates. They perform for us as we watch their movies. And they perform for Hitchcock himself

> whose camera observes and records their activities. Hitchcock, furthermore can be considered a performer in his own right – explicitly in his cameo appearances; and implicitly as he manipulates the figures in his films, who act for him on-screen.[64]

Hitchcock made numerous appearances in his films and it has become yet another trademark that belongs to Hitchcock which distinguishes him from other directors. His direction was not just a passive observance of other people's actions he too became active in his own films. Hitchcock's presence in his films, I believe, was motivated by his wish to both observe and control, and be both apart from and part of the visual aspect of his films. David Sterritt makes the insightful point that Hitchcock's need to control by observing and his need to be close to his characters finds its expression in two ways. One is his use of point-of-view shots and the second is his habit of situating himself in the world of his films both as a director via the camera and in his multiple cameo roles in which he took great delight in teasing the audience.

> He does this not by becoming a character...but in two other ways: through his famous cameo appearances, which allow him to enter the action directly, costumed unmistakably himself, and through his use of characters and objects that serve as surrogates for his own presence.[65]

Hitchcock's desire to claim absolute control over all that he directed, included the need to 'remind' the audience that he was there behind the actors and the script and the sound track, pulling all the strings. This desire to control extended to actually appearing in his own films.

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[64] Ibid. p. 9
[65] Ibid. p. 11

6.3 Hitchcock's Cameos

Hitchcock's cameos are as much a part of the 'Hitchcock' experience as are the inevitable murders that take part in his films. Ever since *The Lodger*, in which Hitchcock assumed a bit part to 'fill the screen', he appeared in each of his pictures. Most people have at one or more times when viewing a Hitchcock film tried to discern with great amusement where Hitchcock was going to appear in the particular film they were watching - another way in which Hitchcock manipulated his audiences. It has become something of a game amongst audiences to spot Hitchcock's appearance in his films. This chapter will elucidate upon how these cameos were used as yet another method of manipulating the audience by Hitchcock who always brought the audience's attention back to who the creator of meaning in the narrative was.

> Hitchcock's cameos are self-publicizing jokes…They also have perkily non-dramatic and illusion-breaking qualities. Yet our willingness to point and chuckle at them needn't stop us from seeing them as something more resonant: manifestations of Hitchcock's deep-seated wish not only to speak through, but to become physically integrated with, his films.[66]

Hitchcock's wish to become physically part of his films indicates the extent to which he may have wanted to control his films and his audiences. He desired to simultaneously observe the action of the film, partake in that action and by virtue of appearing in his own film enforce his presence onto the audience member. His onscreen presence is a signature that posits his absolute control over the narrative, its diegesis and so too the

[66] Ibid. p. 12

audience. Hitchcock has also made use of surrogates to stand in for his own form or presence. They can be human or not. David Sterritt asserts that,

> … his iconography often includes human (or humanlike) figures and faces that have no necessary function in the mise-en-scene, or which carry a weight out of proportion to the function they do have, and that these can be taken as signifiers of the filmmaker's presiding influence over the narrative.[67]

In *Blackmail* there are a number of these examples, one of them being the painting of the laughing jester in Crewe's studio and another is the huge and gloomy sculpture in the British museum that looks on as a scapegoat vainly flees from the authorities. Hitchcock seems to insert signs of his presence when the moment is filled with great irony. The figure and mask found in the artist's studio are reflective of death masks that look on waiting for death to finally fell Crewe in that room. The mask in the museum waits as a witness, like an omniscient presence that watches the futile attempts of a terrified man to flee capture. Bringing the audience's attention back to the realisation of who controls the narrative that they watch – that it is Hitchcock who influences the outcome of the fate of the characters on screen. Other examples are the faces on Mount Rushmore in *North by Northwest* and the statue of liberty in *Saboteur*. Once again these surrogate, inanimate stand-ins serve to observe the characters in dire and perilous situations wherein they literally dangle between life and death. Like the audience who is subject to the whims of Hitchcock, these character's lives and the audience's reaction to their fate lies solely in Hitchcock's hands.

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[67] Ibid. p. 13

At other times Hitchcock is likely to appear in person in a form that comments on what is happening in the narrative, or as an observer. In *Blackmail* Hitchcock's cameo is as a passenger on a bus. A little boy nearby pesters him and becomes annoying to the point of bullying. Hitchcock's reaction to this is to sit and stare with an expressionless look on his face. This expresses his impervious attitude taken to detractors of his work and is a signifier to the audience of Hitchcock's implacable resolution in being the master of all that they see. However much the audience pokes and prods and tries to work out the intricacies of the plot before Hitchcock reveals the denouement – Hitchcock as implacable as ever shows that the narrative and its surprises are not over until he decides so.

In both *Under Capricorn* and *Frenzy* he is seen listening to a speech. In this case he acts the part of the impartial observer, surveying his work from the inside, scrutinizing it for flaws and mistakes and also observing the audience. In *The Birds* and *Psycho* he is seen walking his dogs and standing outside a window respectively. In these cases Hitchcock's main aim seems to be simply to enmesh himself in the film itself, become one with the diegesis of the film. In this way enabling Hitchcock to manipulate the audience and influence them from within the film's narrative itself – not just from the outside looking in.

To become one with the narrative is to be the tool that manipulates the audience not merely the man who creates the tool (narrative). In *Dial M for Murder* and *Lifeboat*, Hitchcock takes on a more stationary approach. Hitchcock stares out at the audience

from an old college picture in *Dial M for Murder* and is the model for an advert for losing weight in a newspaper in *Lifeboat*. In these two cases we see exactly how Hitchcock loved to enjoy a joke at both his own and the audience's expense. He includes the audience in this 'joke' although still exerting authorial control. Included in these small groups must be Hitchcock's cameo in *Vertigo* where he enters the frame from a door in a hallway and pointedly stares at the camera with an irate and irritated expression on his face. Here we see Hitchcock gazing back at our gaze. The man who is usually complicit in our gaze stares back at us. He snaps us out of our reverie and forcibly makes us confront him on his own turf. In this situation we are slightly shocked because Hitchcock dared to break one of the codes and conventions of cinema that we expect, that of being able to be a voyeur and not be 'caught' in the act. What makes this experience even more unnerving is the fact that it is not one of the characters that we are watching who looks at us with an accusatory stare but it is the director himself.

The man whom we rely on to furnish us with voyeuristic images has turned the tables and in a non-verbal, accusatory manner takes us to task for our voyeuristic behaviour. By doing this to his audience Hitchcock sardonically brings us to the realization that we on a subconscious level understand that we partake of the fetish of voyeurism and enjoy it whilst watching a movie.

Hitchcock revels in the discomfit he has engendered in revealing this aspect of his audiences to themselves. In so doing he also forces the public to acknowledge the presence of the director in the film because he is literally appearing in the filmic world and not just controlling the content of that world. He no longer hovers on the edges of

people's minds in the fact that they know who the director is. He actually appears to them and accuses them, enforcing feelings of guilt, which is in itself, typically Hitchcockian.

Another aspect of Hitchcock's cameos is his relationship (as an onscreen presence) to the other characters onscreen sharing the performance space with him. Does he identify with them or not? David Sterritt says that the answer can be found in the mood of detachment that characterizes his appearances. He pictures himself as a comic, almost painfully ordinary character in most cases, dropping into but barely participating in the world of the story and never suggesting an air of superiority to the characters around him. Although he never assumed superiority over the characters in his films we can see his incursions into the actual world of his films as his being able, metaphorically, to 'check up' on his characters. He is able in this way to control the narrative from the closest possible vantage point and in controlling the narrative, controls the audience's understanding of the narrative.

A final point to this chapter is a strange yet highly original assertion by Sterritt that in *The Birds* the character of Mitch is actually Hitchcock's own stand-in for himself.

> Mitch's futile attempts at verbal solutions to the crisis foreshadow the film's outcome, making him as strong a surrogate for the filmmaker as Scottie or Jeffries ever was. Hitchcock's last classic film thus pivots on the simplest and most revelatory of equations. Mitch=Hitch.[68]

[68] Ibid. p. 143

Although to find any physical similarity in these two would be difficult, we realize that Hitchcock again is the one who is in control and we are merely players in a bizarre performance of which we do not consciously partake. Hitchcock by placing his surrogate as a lead character in the film becomes a voyeur watching the activities within his own creation. This also reinforces Hitchcock's control over the narrative for the audience. He serves as both director and as his surrogate is a lead character Hitchcock also serves to be a catalyst in his own films, exerting double control over both his audience and meaning in his films.

6.4 The Figure of the Voyeur

When critics and people who are film aficionados talk about the work of Alfred Hitchcock, invariably we find that the figure or theme of the voyeur is one that features greatly in such debates.

This 'voyeuristic' tone is characteristic of several Hitchcock films and used to great affect in manipulating audiences. We move from outside to the inside to the interior, and become "Peeping Toms", in *Foreign Correspondent, Notorious, I Confess, Rear Window, Psycho* and *Topaz*.[69] As John Irving said in *The World According to Garp*[70] "I was brought up to be a spectator…I was raised to be a voyeur."[71] There is something intrinsically nosey about humankind and we all yearn to be spectators of forbidden sights.

[69] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 186
[70] IRVING, J. 1995. The World According to Garp. New York: Random House, Inc.
[71] DENZIN, N.K. 1995. The Cinematic Society – The Voyeur's Gaze. London: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 1

This is what Hitchcock plays on in order to manipulate his mass audiences. He stated to Francois Truffaut:

> I'll bet you that nine out of ten people, if they see a woman across the courtyard undressing for bed, or even a man puttering around in his room, will stay and look; no one turns away and says, 'It's none of my business.' They could pull down the blinds, but they never do; they stand there [never obtrusively always covertly][72] and look.[73]

Just as Hitchcock manipulates the audience, by tantalizing them with films based on the illicit desire to gaze upon others, so too does he acknowledge the inherent power implicit in the act of gazing and being unseen – something which he 'allows' the audience to do.

> The Voyeur's Gaze: 'Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he [she] is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against him [her] self. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost.'[74]

In fact, Hitchcock is greatly admired for one of the most intricate plots of film, that of *Rear Window* which is about a man, who peers from his window spying on his neighbours, although he is eventually absolved from any sin in so doing because he apprehends a murderer. Hence, the act of voyeurism is given a sort of temporary 'stamp of approval' by the narrative, the director and the audience.

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[72] The fact that this watching one's neighbour is done covertly seems to show that this is an activity which society knows to be less than honourable.
[73] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 321
[74] Foucault, as cited in TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 1

> Yet another film in which the voyeur is one who goads the audience into sympathy (Norman Bates in *Psycho*), the act of voyeurism is again, exhibited to be an act of a perverse person. 'The voyeur is presented as a 'diseased', often paranoid, violent individual who violates the norms of everyday life.'[75]

> The cinema and the cinematic director (Hitchcock)[76] turn the audience member into a voyeur too, making them complicit in the on-screen character's illicit act of viewing the forbidden. In such moments, '… the viewer-in-the-theatre may experience the emotions of shame, embarrassment and fear that are felt by the illicit looker who has been caught looking.[77]

We see that Denzin in the above quotations sees the character of the voyeur in the film is used as more of a substitute for the audience member than purely a filmic character. James Stewart becomes the audience member who has peered at their next-door neighbour and Norman Bates is the stand-in for the male audience member who has frequented peep shows. Hence the identification becomes stronger and elicits greater feelings of failure and guilt on the part of the audience. Perhaps it is one of Hitchcock's famous 'practical jokes' that the Peeping Tom character of Norman Bates becomes so used and abused by 'Mother'. Hitchcock preys on the inherent fear of men, that their Mothers will find out about their sexual mores. The fact that Norman is initially portrayed as the proverbial 'Nice Guy' only serves to greatly confuse the audience and consequently Hitchcock 'leads them up the garden path' so to speak.

> If *Psycho* has successive identification figures (Janet Leigh, Vera Miles, Anthony Perkins), it is because it has no principal identification figure; it needs only a butt, a

[75] DENZIN, N. K. 1995. The Cinematic Society – The Voyeur's Gaze. London: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 58
[76] My own insertion.
[77] Ibid. p. 3

> fall guy, that is to say, the audience, which thinks it understands the rules of the world, and of melodrama, only to discover that fate, and Hitchcock, have a few uglier tricks up their sleeves.[78]

Hitchcock has portrayed in these two films, two distinct 'types' of voyeur each with a separate function. On the one hand Hitchcock redeems James Stewart's character by having him solve a crime and be a seemingly 'philanthropic' character, whilst compounding the aura of evil that surrounds the voyeuristic acts of Norman Bates by having him be a transvestite, the ultimate 'other' to the average male audience member and by having him be a misanthropic character. Stewart spies on people in their personal every day doings, but in *Psycho* Norman spies on Marion in the most private of activities - ablution. This as Hitchcock must have known, is beyond the pale for most people, we draw the line between observing our neighbours wash the car, hang washing out - normal everyday public occurrences, and looking at them in private situations which include activities of ablution and bodily functions, as this is seen as taboo. However, Hitchcock foists this seemingly lascivious voyeurism onto his audience – we see what the director chooses to show us. When we see Janet Leigh soaping herself in the shower, a cubicle that is surrounded by a shower curtain which is for all intents and purposes off-screen, Hitchcock allows the camera entry to an otherwise out of bounds area. The voyeurism is given added symbolism in that in order to uncover the peephole which he has drilled into the wall, Norman has to remove a painting of a classical rape scene. This rape scene prefigures Norman's voyeurism as an act of visual rape, of looking when permission was not granted. When the camera swings round to focus on Norman's eye as he watches Marion and then, becomes the eye, Hitchcock in this shot makes us the voyeur, as we

[78] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 53

watch from inside Norman's eye. We are manipulated by Hitchcock to see from Norman's point of view, viewing exactly what he sees and how. This voyeuristic tone is not singular to *Psycho*. In *Rope*,

> [T]he film opens as the credits appear against an overview of a New York street scene. The camera then draws back to the apartment terrace and closed, curtained window, thus establishing our involvement with what is enacted in privacy. (This "voyeur" tone is characteristic of several Hitchcock films – we move from the outside to the interior, and become "Peeping Toms", in *Foreign Correspondent, Notorious, I Confess, Rear Window, Psycho and Topaz*.)[79]

Right at the beginning of *Notorious* the legend 'Miami, Florida. Three-twenty p.m. April twenty-fourth, nineteen forty-six,' can be seen on the screen, just as it is used with other times and dates in *Psycho.* This exact depiction of date and time is reminiscent of films based on actual events where dates and times are inserted in order to establish congruency and continuity. It would seem that Hitchcock ingeniously uses this in order to make the voyeurism seem even more 'real' to the audience member, who, due to their suspension of disbelief, might actually be so drawn into the events depicted on screen that they might feel they actually are voyeurs watching somebody else's real life.

In the case of *Rope* the act of voyeurism is almost literally pointed out to us – Hitchcock takes us from the outside of a building right into the interior of a flat. In *Rope* the film begins with a scene of a street. It could be any street anywhere in the world; the camera swings up to a terrace and a set of curtained French windows. We, the audience, are immediately established as being the camera's 'eye' we move from the exterior to the

[79] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 187

interior and ‘peep’ behind the curtains to that which is enacted in privacy. The result of immediately identifying the individual audience member with the camera’s point of view is actually very clever on the part of Hitchcock, because he makes us the Peeping Toms before we have the chance to say ‘No’ and actually become aware of our own voyeurism – he manipulates us into this act of voyeurism.

When it comes to the theme of watching others Hitchcock’s film *Rear Window* is the one which best presents the Panoptican. James Stewart (due to his position across from his neighbours) acts as the guard in the central watchtower where he is able to watch, observe and judge the people in the flats on the other side. As in the Panopticon, the flats opposite are arranged like cells, exposed to Stewart’s prying eye. However, unlike in the Panopticon where the inhabitants of the cells live in fear of the other in the watchtower, in *Rear Window* the other who watches is in fear of missing something that he is watching. James Stewart’s character (Jeffries) becomes a prisoner of his own gaze, he fears that he may ‘miss’ something - which he does as he is asleep at the time of the murder. The audience also ‘miss’ the same thing as Jeffries because the audience doesn’t see what Jeffries does not see. We are as hindered as he is seeing that Jeffries is the audience’s substitute in the narrative. So it is safe to assume that it is not ‘the other’ that frightens James Stewart’s character (which would be understandable, as he fears marriage to Grace Kelly) rather it is his own gaze he fears because his own gaze is not as it is in the Panopticon, omniscient and ever-present. The omniscient gaze belongs to Hitchcock only. If the audience’s ‘double’ in the film is Jeffries then we too are subject to the omniscient gaze of Hitchcock’s camera showing us what he deems necessary.

> Precisely because it violates the rule, the single moment in the film when we do not see with Jeffries' eyes carries great significance. As he sleeps, Thorwald leaves the apartment with a woman dressed in black. Is it his wife? His mistress? At this moment we become the voyeur, but we are not certain of the meaning of what we see. Jeffries would very likely attach a definitive explanation to this detail. We cannot, though we want to. And it is the forcing of interpretations to suit our will that *Rear Window* denounces.[80]

Through the title of *Rear Window* Hitchcock asks the viewer to appropriate the role of the voyeur. We do not however, only peep into the neighbours across the way with Stewart's character, we are also privy to hear and see what goes on in his apartment. So in actual fact, the audience become the rear window "We are looking into the mirror called the rear window."[81]

The voyeur in Hitchcock's films is a complex character. The voyeur, we the spectators, the actor and the director are all complicit in the act of watching. In life we watch people crossing the street, drinking tea, mowing the lawn, playing with their dog in a park - inherent in our make-up is a natural curiosity towards other people, the others. Also inherent in our make-up is a fear of others watching us, which is why we are so uncomfortable about watching other people, because if we do it, some one else could be watching us. A censorial gaze that is included in *Psycho* where there is a shot of the policeman who stops Janet Leigh, he is the only person whose eyes we do not see. It is my contention that Hitchcock included this shot because we cannot identify with someone whom we cannot look in the eye. He is there to be an authority figure, a figure that watches over Marion and us, the spectators. He is the figure whom we fear, the

[80] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 262
[81] DENZIN, N. K. 1995. The Cinematic Society- The Voyeur's Gaze. London: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 54

figure of power and authority that will 'punish' us as well as Janet Leigh for illicit activities i.e. the figure in the watchtower in the Panopticon: looking but not seen.

I think that Hitchcock was so intent on making the audience voyeurs in a film before they even realized it themselves because in being voyeurs we essentially find out more about ourselves. As children we would listen at doors when we were in trouble. Why? Because we all think that what people say behind our backs is what they really think. So too, by watching others, we can gauge our own reactions and realize how we feel towards certain situations. As a consequence Hitchcock serves to teach us something about ourselves, as he teaches himself in the act of directing in a voyeuristic manner. In this way his intent is two old, firstly to manipulate the audience into unconsciously becoming voyeurs and secondly in making them aware of their own humanity and foibles by doing so. Just as Stewart's character in *Rear Window* sees in his neighbours what he lacks in his own life, so do we.

> I should argue that Jeff's 'voyeuristic' tendencies are unusually developed, and well within the range of psychological normality, but benign in the medical sense and in no need of apology or punishment. Moreover, one must be aware of the extent to which 'voyeurism' is in this context an insidiously loaded word for what might equally be described as journalist's, or artist's, or humanly ordinary, interest in other people's lives.[82]

Stewart's character uses a long lens to spy on his subjects and one can't help drawing an analogous relationship between Stewart's camera and Hitchcock's, especially if one considers Stewart's remark to Grace Kelly. "I wonder if it is ethical to watch a man with binoculars and a long lens. Do you suppose its ethical even if you prove he didn't

[82] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 240

commit a crime?" To this Grace Kelly replies, "I'm not much on rear window ethics … Look at you and me plunged into despair because we find out a man didn't kill his wife. We're two of the most frightening ghouls I've ever known."

This provides a fairly accurate summary of what Hitchcock does for a living, albeit that he watches fictional people. He still 'watches' and records the details of what he 'sees' for a living. He works in the ghoulish art of murder, mystery and the darker side of people's natures. Jean Douchet compares Stewart's character that is the photographic viewer to us, the cinema spectator, immobilized and peeking through a lens). The wall opposite Stewart's flat is the screen opposite us. What he sees we see. We want a murder to be committed just as much as he does, because we want that 'excitement'. We don't get punished for our illicit expectations but he does. Hitchcock wants us to be 'purged' of our voyeurism cathartically through the punishment of Stewart's character in the end. Hitchcock in actual fact 'sets up' the audience so that they revel in the act of watching others who are totally unaware of being watched. When thinking of voyeurs we usually think of dirty men, vicariously getting sexual pleasure from watching others engage in sexual intercourse or via watching unsuspectingly women in their dressing, undressing and overall private ablutions. Women whom Hitchcock preferred in his films, in this Peeping Tom fashion were after 1957, mainly all blondes. The blonde was of course yet another stalwart in the litany of recurring motifs in Hitchcock's canon of work.

6.5 The Elusive Blonde

Alfred Hitchcock was a man who made a living by delving into the dark and mysterious under-belly of humanity and life in general. All things brooding and mysterious were of interest to Hitchcock. Nothing was taboo, sacrilegious or prohibited. This chapter will investigate how the blonde became one of Hitchcock's most noted tools of manipulation.

The figure of the elusive blonde is both universal and particularly specific to Hitchcock. Whenever critics discuss the films of Alfred Hitchcock, the blonde is an area of interest and speculation.

> In addition to his obvious personal preference for fair-haired heroines, Hitchcock may have been aware that in late nineteenth-century culture, a serious emotional nature was typified by brunettes in art. Blonds in fiction were ordinarily naive or frivolous. In Eliot's *Middlemarch*, for example (1871-1872), noble, self-sacrificing, dark haired Dorothea is contrasted with the shallow, selfish, pale blond Rosamund.[83]

The same can be said of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* where Laura, the blonde beauty is weak and irresolute whereas her sister, the comely dark-haired Marianne is determined, intelligent and steadfast. Many critics, including Robin Wood, have argued that the blonde is a character that Hitchcock takes great pleasure in 'punishing'. However, the blonde serves a more purposeful function than merely to be a 'body' onto which Alfred Hitchcock projected misogynistic punishments, if any. The blonde is a figure in which Hitchcock took great delight due to stereotypical estimations of the nature of women with fair hair (virginal, pure, calm, cool, dispassionate). This was yet another

[83] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 86

perfect opportunity for Hitchcock to toy with the audiences' expectations and perceptions of the reality of the film and real worlds. In a radio interview with the BBC Hitchcock explains that the figure of the blonde is of particular interest to him because of the seemingly cool exterior, which probably masks a passionate psyche. The interest for Hitchcock is in the perception being of extreme difference to the reality of the nature,

> Interviewer: It looks to me as though you had 45 of them, now 40 out of these 45 were blondes, now what is it that attracts you to blondes? What does the blonde woman symbolize for you?
>
> Hitchcock: I really think it's not my attraction to them, I think it's traditional. You see it seems to me that ever since the beginning of movies the leading lady starting with Mary Pickford was the blonde and the leading man has always been a brunette. The only difference is that in many cases my leading ladies are a little more svelte they don't have their sex hanging around them like baubles … in other words, the obvious blonde even the Marilyn Monroe type wouldn't appeal to me at all because there is no mystery in the sex, the sex is so obvious and I would rather have the sex discovered, I suppose the first was Madeleine Carroll in *Thirty-Nine Steps*.
>
> Interviewer: You once said to me that you thought the blonde was the more passionate of the female types.
>
> Hitchcock: It comes under the heading of the mystery of the...(unintelligible), you see in other words if you take the Irish woman or the North German or the Swedish woman, sometimes they can even look like school ma'ams but boy when they get to it, they're uh…quite astonishing in their shall we say um…perspicacity… and their sex. I believe it's got something to do with the climate, I believe the further south you go in Europe the more obvious the sex is, after all look at the circumspection of the French woman she's not what the old-fashioned French used to be …ooh la la. She's a carefully guarded woman by her family and the Italians, you know they look passionate and so forth but I don't really believe they are. I think it's all on the surface. But when you get to the Swedish woman, take my friend Ingrid Bergman; she used to refer to herself as the apple-cheeked blonde, peasant girl type. Well as you know subsequent events, shall we call them extra-curricula events…Showed that that again was a surface matter. . …The Irish women of course were very similar.[84]

[84] Taken from the BBC radio archives. Retrieved 20 May 2003 from the World Wide Web: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/hitchcocka1.shtml

The first in a long line of blondes seen in Hitchcock's films is the golden-haired woman who is killed by The Avenger in *The Lodger.* She is a character whose only use seems to be that of dying i.e. she is the catalyst to enable the narrative to move forward yet she is a figure of mystery who disappears, and this is a section to be dealt with later on in this chapter – the vanishing lady.

Often Hitchcock's blondes are simultaneously weak and vulnerable and strong and cunning. The list would include *Marnie*, Marion Crane in *Psycho*, Pamela in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Judy in *Vertigo*, Melanie Daniels in *The Birds,* Jo McKenna in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and Alicia Huberman in *Notorious.* The use of these characters in the manipulation of the audience lies in Hitchcock's representation of them as duplicitous in nature. The audience is never completely certain of the nature of these characters. They could be timid and then turn out to be strong-willed and tenacious and vice-versa.

> Hitchcock's blondes are more than stereotypical, cut outs, that are atypical and 'grey', rather they are usually sophisticated women, who know what they want and will manipulate men in any way they can to get their own way. Grace Kelly portrayed, 'Hitchcock's favourite kind of sexuality where a cool, blond, poised outward appearance conceals an almost unbridled passionate drive within.'[85]

An example of this kind of woman is exemplified in *To Catch a Thief.* Cary Grant is no match for the wiles and perfidious nature of Grace Kelly who stalks him as much as a creature would stalk prey. "The girl uses sex as a toy and, in one of Hitchcock's most

[85] PERRY, G. 1975. The Movie Makers: Hitchcock. London: Macmillan Publishing Ltd. p. 87

impudent scenes, seduces Robbie by exploiting his taste for jewels."[86] Ingrid Bergman in *Notorious* is initially in the same position of power because she entrances Cary Grant. The elusive blonde is a character of mystery, intrigue and sexual fantasies for Hitchcock's leading men. She is the antithesis of all that is expected of the virginal blonde and thus expected by the men in the audience. As he stated in the BBC interview, Hitchcock is essentially using the blonde as a traditional female lead but rather than painting the traditional 'purer than the driven snow' character, is portraying the distinct and perhaps more realistic notion of women of desire, desire for power, wealth, men and love - Marnie, resorts to stealing from men because, she feels a need to 'punish' men for what happened when she was a child. She steals from men, to buy gifts for her mother in order to gain love and acceptance from a cold mother figure.

Marion Crane in *Psycho* is a woman who steals money in order to be able to marry her lover who is in debt and who uses this as an excuse not to marry at the present time.

Both Eva Marie Saint and Ingrid Bergman in *North by Northwest* and *Notorious* respectively, portray women who use their power and sexual attractiveness, in order to further their country's political power and bring about the downfall of villains who plot to cause the downfall of democracy.

The elusive blonde is a refined character, but she is a character who is remote and often complex, not even the audience who is usually complicit in the characters' inner thoughts and rationalization is at a loss as to the inner motivation. In this way Hitchcock manages to keep the audience enthralled, in order to establish what, if any are the actual motivations and outcomes of the blonde's actions.

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[86] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 255

William Rothman points out that the framing used in *Psycho* invokes another of Hitchcock's paradigms, that of man's desire for woman, which is, crystallized in his obsession with her hair. As Marion is an object of desire, the framing used in *Psycho* illuminates this point. In *Vertigo*, Scottie buys Judy the same gray suit and black evening gown that Madeleine wore, but his final transformation in this process is to change Judy's hair from her natural dark brown to blonde. Donald
Spoto points out that, "There is something sensuous yet aloof about this woman, we with Scottie, want to pursue her, but something forbids us."[87] Hitchcock draws the audience member into Scottie's obsession and dilemma. As in *Psycho*, Hitchcock uses framing to bring attention to Judy's hair, especially the spiral configuration in her hair, which is reminiscent of Carlotta Valdez's hair in the portrait. As a Catholic Hitchcock would have seen at the time the custom of women covering their heads with a lace shawl during Mass, in order, apparently, not to tempt men's thoughts away from God by displaying their hair which was emblematic of their sexual allure. Hitchcock exploits the audience's identification with the siren-like ability of women to entrance and lure men away from their daily obligations. The blonde is emblematic of all women; she is the cool, seductive and dangerous woman who men should be wary of.

Hitchcock is very astute in portraying this woman in such a way that she becomes an identification figure for both the men and the women in the audience due to the suturing of the audience member into the narrative in such a way that allows the audience members to identify with aspects of the blonde - the men identify with the feelings of

[87] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 308

attraction and fascination whilst the women, identify with the power that this woman yields over men, women want to be in possession of this power, whilst the men desire the woman as an object.

Hitchcock, specifically in *Marnie*, exploits the desire of the men in the audience,

A.H: The fetish idea. A man wants to go to bed with a thief because she is a thief, just like other men have a yen for a Chinese or a colored woman. [88]

Hitchcock understood the idea of giving men what they want in the cinematic context in order to have them totally engross themselves in the film. He enables them to take a subject position in which they desire a fictional character and thus they are sutured into the narrative. He understood what kind of fascination a cold, hard woman and a thief holds for men whilst women yearn for this kind of attraction to be theirs in order to have men 'eating out of their hands' and be in a dominant position. Hitchcock was very intuitive and clever in his use of sexual and gender politics in order to have both gender types in the audience to identify with the elusive blondes in separate but equally emotive manners.

In *Vertigo*,

> We watch a woman become a mannequin, or even a magazine illustration: it is all Jeffries can accept. She turns herself into a public performance, a spectacle to be watched from the other side of the footlights.[89]

[88] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 464
[89] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 187

Hence, Hitchcock as well as Jeffries turned the blonde Judy into a show. Again Hitchcock manipulates the performance within a performance to highlight the artificiality of the situation. This part of the film also brings out the point mentioned earlier about Hitchcock's use of casting. Hitchcock made sure that his leading ladies were always, statuesque and beautiful.

As Donald Spoto observes Hitchcock's camera moves during a scene in *Vertigo*,

> … finally stopping and tracking into an ethereally blond woman, her back to us and her sublime profile slightly turned. There is something statuesque about her. She represents something eminently desirable and yet infinitely remote – the quintessence of the mystery of Woman.[90]

The mystery of woman is the mystery of the elusive blonde, a figure who is both remote and near, cold yet with a hint of compassion – a figure who is desirable because of her aloofness. There are however two exceptions to the 'rule' of the elusive blonde being portrayed as a hard personality in Hitchcock's films: Gay Keane in *The Paradine Case* and the second Mrs. de Winter in *Rebecca*.

> If Mrs. Paradine is the exotic but fatal mystery woman, who degrades all she comes near, then Gay Keane is her antithesis in the structure of the film as in her husband's life. She is blond, clothed in white or at least soft light colors throughout, whereas Mrs. Paradine is a brunette dressed in black.[91]

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[90] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 308
[91] Ibid p. 178

In this case as in *Rebecca*, it is the brunette who is the cold, evil, misanthropic character simply because the blond is the heroine and can't be seen to be in any way totally warped and without redemption. If this were so Hitchcock realized that there would be no audience sympathy for the heroine in such a case. The 'arch rival' according to film tradition has always worn dark colors, symbolic of evil and general ne'er do well. Both the blondes in these two films are sweet and vulnerable, thus Hitchcock had to have blondes because even their hair color is symbolic of white, which is symbolic of purity.

These are only two cases out of a number of Hitchcock's blondes and we must remember that the majority of his elusive blondes have a difficult time in the narratives in which they are featured. In *North by Northwest* Spot proclaims that the blonde in this film is,

> …the deceitful blonde (more deadly here than in any other Hitchcock film…the disturbing moral ambiguity of the film depends on our recognition that Eve (like Alicia Huberman *Notorious*) is blithely sold like a commodity, crossing from the hands of the intelligence men to Tandem's to Thornhill's. She may be Hitchcock's classic two-faced blonde, but her deadly kiss – very like Madeleine/Judy's in *Vertigo* – brings her suffering and regret, too.[92]

The elusive blonde often pays for her misdemeanors and vanishes like Madeleine in *Vertigo* and Janet Leigh in *Psycho*.

[92] Ibid. p. 344

6.6 Characters Present In Absence

6.6.1 The Vanishing Lady

To be influential in absence is probably one of the most powerful ways in which any single person can make an impression. It suggests our fear of loss. Many of Hitchcock's characters are present more in their own absence than presence. This chapter explores the relevance that this recurring theme has to audience manipulation and if so, how.

The title for this subsection comes from the title of Hitchcock's film *The Lady Vanishes* in which an old lady by the name of Miss Froy mysteriously disappears from a moving train. Although Miss Froy hasn't actually disappeared, she is the first in a long line of characters who are conveniently removed by the unfolding of the narrative and by characters in the narrative in order to set the film's narrative into motion. Miss Froy's 'disappearance' becomes the focus of the film and her vanishing creates a presence in absence.

The myriad of absent characters found in Hitchcock's film's narratives tend to serve three functions they can be a) Catalysts or MacGuffins that are a means for the narrative to commence (e.g. Carlotta Valdez in *Vertigo*), (b) A red herring that serves to confuse the audience (e.g. Miss Froy in *The Vanishing Lady*) c) A character that casts doubt on the adequacy of another character (e.g. Kaplan's mother in *North by Northwest*)

Hitchcock's manipulation of his audiences becomes embodied in the characters that appear in so many of his films but who take no physical, concrete form.

In *Rebecca* the presence of the first Mrs. de Winter (who is the quintessential character present in absence) is almost tangible, her initials are embroidered on napkins, handkerchiefs, pillowcases etc. Maxim seems obsessed to the point of mania with thoughts of his first wife and her former servant, Mrs. Danvers' sole purpose in life seems to be to make life as difficult as is humanly possible for the second Mrs. De Winter. So Rebecca becomes a character who has as much influence in death as she did in life. (Just as Hitchcock is as much a manipulative force within his films, as he is outside of these.) This particular character is such a strong entity within the film narrative that she becomes a surrogate for the off screen presence of the invisible director – she manipulates the characters within the narrative as Hitchcock manipulates the audience. This character is used by Hitchcock to increase the audience's feelings of sympathy with the female protagonist who is such a bland, insipid and meek character that we are never even furnished with her Christian name. If it were not for the fact that she is almost haunted by the ghost of Rebecca and seen to be an interloper, detested as such by Mrs. Danvers – the audience could find no reason to 'side' with the female protagonist in *Rebecca*.

In one of many ways in which Hitchcock's brilliance is made apparent, Rebecca's presence is made most clear in the scene in which Maxim tells his wife of what happened on the night upon which Rebecca died.

> … the camera follows Rebecca's movements in a lengthy tracking shot. Most films, of course, would have resorted to a flashback at this moment, allaying our anxiety over an empty screen by filling the 'lack.'[93]

Consequently, not only is it stressed by Hitchcock to the audience that Rebecca is absent, but the audience is also made to experience it as an actual force. The 'lack' that is filled is both physical and psychological. The absence causes unease for the audience as they expect to see Rebecca and not experience the lack of physicality in a flash back scene – Hitchcock does not assuage this anxiety concerning the lack and manipulates the audience to feel unsettled and a little in awe of the character of Rebecca.

Rebecca and other characters present in absence seem to lurk in the 'wings' of the audience's minds and in this way occupy off-screen space in the film.

Pascal Bonitzer discusses the power of the off screen space to terrorize the viewer:

> Specular space is on-screen space; it is everything we see on the screen. Off-screen space, blind space, is everything that moves (or wriggles) outside or under the surface of things, like the shark in *Jaws*. If such films 'work'. It is because we are more or less held in the sway of these two spaces. If the shark were always on screen it would quickly become a domesticated animal. What is frightening is that it is not there! The point of horror resides in the blind space. [94]

Hitchcock's preoccupation with the absent character extends to actual preoccupation with dead bodies. Bodies being signifiers of what were once present persons. In *Frenzy* the

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[93] Ibid. p. 53
[94] Pascal Bonitzer as cited in MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen. p. 45

film actually commences with a scene where a body washes up on the banks of the river Thames in London. The bodies are physical manifestations of the lack of spiritual presence. The manipulation by Hitchcock is both ingenious and very subtle as the bodies are a metaphor for the lack of community in the town evident when we hear the mayor giving a speech on the subject of needing to clean up London, this could be meant to be both literally and figuratively. The spiritual decay and rot that has set in, in the city is then encapsulated in the body floating down the river Thames an indicator to the audience of the tone that the film will take. Yet this is not only decay in the city it is by inference decay in the minds of men too. Hitchcock manipulates the audience into thinking about the state of the world in which they live, a world which is not a Utopian society but which contains moral decay similar to that depicted in the world of the film. This manipulation by Hitchcock serves to highlight synchronicity between fiction and reality, which allows for a heightened sense of familiarity with the fictional world for the audience. This in turn heightens fear when the audience is faced with a serial murderer without a conscience.

The power of dead people in Hitchcock's films is apparent even in small ways. In *The Birds,* Jessica Tandy in playing Mitch's mother cries out to him, "If only your father were here!" This is a direct reference to a character that is dead but in that one instance, the figure of the father seems to loom, towering over Mitch in his apparent inability to handle the situation as his father would the mother chastises the son for not being like the father. In this specific instance the use of the absent father figure is used by Hitchcock to cast doubt on the ability of Mitch to have the attitude and attributes to handle the situation and

be able to protect both his family and Melanie. This increases and heightens the emotions of anxiety and fear for the audience. The audience due to the convention of the classic Hollywood narrative expects the male protagonist i.e. the 'hero' to be able to save the day, rectify all that is wrong and walk triumphantly off into the Bodega Bay sunset smug in the knowledge that he prevailed. Hitchcock, by using this absent character to cast a shadow of doubt on the credibility of the present male protagonist – manipulates the audience into doubting that Mitch will be effective in saving everyone from the onslaught of the birds and thus confuses the audience as to what the outcome of the narrative will eventually be.

> Hitchcock's motif here is the power of the dead to affect the living. It is a major element in the director's work. On a deeper level, it is a profoundly theological (and particularly Catholic) theme, which recurs with increasing frequency in his major films – *Rebecca, Spellbound, Psycho, The Birds* and *Marnie* among others. Even in the earlier works the psychological complexities attendant to the plot are related to someone's death (*Murder, The 39 Steps, Young and Innocent*.)[95]

In *Suspicion* the heroine hears her father say that she is an excellent candidate for marriage, which acts as a catalyst for her to marry a seemingly iniquitous character. Later the father's presence dominates the household via his portrait, which is constantly shown in the home. A portrait portraying the deceased is also evident in *The Paradine Case, The Birds, Rebecca* and *Vertigo.* Annie in *The Birds* is framed in the scene in the schoolroom by the world map and a portrait of George Washington this portrait signifies dead authority, presence in appearance but not actual tangible presence. Marion, when she is preparing to leave for Sam's house in *Psycho,* gets all her things together in a

[95] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 166

bedroom with walls covered in pictures of her as a baby and of her deceased parents. The baby pictures Hitchcock deliberately uses to allude to lost innocence and the deceased parents are used to convey a sense of unspoken disapproval of her deeds. Hitchcock's use of family photographs manipulates the audience into feeling a certain amount of sympathy for Marion, as the audience sees her as a young woman without family support – all alone in a hostile world.

Whilst Marion's problems in poor judgment can be put down to dead characters – her lover, Sam's problems are caused by both absent dead characters and absent characters who are alive. In *Psycho* Sam, says:

> I'm tired of sweating for people who aren't there. I still have to pay off my father's debts and he's in his grave. I still have to pay my ex-wife's alimony and she's living on the other side of the world somewhere.

Sam is a character who is bound to work by his having to pay off his father's debt and pay his dues to his ex-wife. These two characters are catalysts that set in motion the motive for Marion feeling compelled to steal money and attempt to run away and live illicitly with Sam, which is why she ends up at the Bates motel. Both characters are absent yet are an almost tangible presence because they prove to be such an obstacle to the happiness of Marion and Sam which is what sets the sequence of events into motion that leads Marion to her final destiny at the Bates Motel. These characters are also used by Hitchcock to initially manipulate the audience into thinking that the story will be about stealing and a rocky romance – all the indicators point to that being the path that

the narrative will inevitably follow. This ploy of Hitchcock's thus makes firstly the murder of Marion so shocking and secondly the change of protagonist and narrative a totally unexpected turn of events for the audience.

A character present in absence, which is an example of Hitchcock's use of this character as a red herring, is George Kaplan in *North by Northwest.* This a character created by the CIA. Poor Cary Grant becomes the fall guy when Mason and his henchmen suspect him of being a fake secret agent. Hitchcock makes use of his MacGuffin here in a two-fold manner. Firstly the MacGuffin is a means of simply getting the narrative off to a start and secondly he knew the audience would be completely absorbed in trying to figure out the puzzle as to who the real George Kaplan actually is, when in actual fact he doesn't exist. The character present in absence is an enigma for the audience – they concentrate on solving the mystery of exactly who George Kaplan is. Hitchcock makes this character (who is both absent and fictional) a false focal point of the narrative. The audience is manipulated into attempting to discover who Kaplan is as is Roger O. Thornhill and the twist is that Thornhill has been mistaken for a 'spy' who was made up by the CIA. The audience has been manipulated into chasing after a figment of some CIA. agent.

In *Psycho* the figure of Mother is a larger than life figure, which dominates the entire film from the shower murder onwards.

> [We] are encouraged to resent the power of the dead to influence the living, and the power of the past to affect the present. Norman's present is entirely swallowed up by the past, and Mother has come back from the grave to possess him.[96]

[96] Ibid p. 361

Hitchcock makes Norman a likeable figure for whom we feel great sympathy, as he is apparently completely dominated by a Mother who is emotionally abusive. It is the portrayal by Hitchcock of Norman as a sweet 'all American' boy which makes our disgust for a character whom we do not see but hear and sense all the more intense. Hitchcock manipulates the audience into being concerned with a figure that we think we have heard and seen – albeit a nebulous figure behind a shower curtain.

In *Rope* Hitchcock kills a character in the initial scene and then has the body 'present' for the rest of the film in a trunk. *Rope* is a quintessential thriller in that we, the audience know that which the rest of the array of characters do not know - that a body is in their midst of which they are not aware. Here the absence and the presence serve two separate but equally important functions for Hitchcock. Initially the absence of the character, David is a means for the narrative to commence and cause consternation amongst the other characters, and then it acts as a means in which to make the apprehension of the audience heightened.

Obviously Hitchcock uses the absence/presence dichotomy to keep the audience on the edge of their seats in anticipation of what will occur next. He does this with economy and precision.

This precision in manipulation extends to Hitchcock's use of the corpses he readily distributed in *Frenzy,* which are those of women who have been sexually violated and

strangled. Although spiritually and in personality they are absent in actual physicality they are still present because as Modleski points out:

> But I do mean to insist on the importance of the fact that woman is never completely destroyed in these films – no matter how dead Hitchcock tries to make her appear, as when he inserts still shots in both *Psycho* and *Frenzy* of the female corpse.[97]

An example of this indefatigable presence exhibited by the use female corpses in *Frenzy* specifically is evident in the scene in the back of the potato van when Bob Rusk desperately tries to open the stiff hand of one of his victims to retrieve a tie pin, which would serve as evidence against him if found. He has to break open the fingers of the corpse, which grasp the pin tightly as though still alive and present. In attempting to manipulate the audience, he makes the audience sympathize with the murderer by constructing this section of the film in such a manner that the object of the narrative at this point is to retrieve the tie pin and consequently the audience automatically strive with the murderer to retrieve the pin and only think about whose pin it is and how it came to be in its final resting place to begin with, later.

Hitchcock's use of the corpse in *Frenzy* has much the same function as his use of the corpse in *The Trouble with Harry*. The agency given to these corpses is done in order to outline and exhibit the affect that the dead or problems with the dead can have on the living. The authority that those who are absent can wield represents the authority of the invisible presence of Hitchcock.

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[97] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 112

Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience lies in a game of cat and mouse where in *Frenzy* and *The Trouble with Harry* these bodies literally pop up and it becomes a game in which Hitchcock strains his audience's nerves by having them be in a continual state of anticipation over whether the bodies being discovered or not. In the case of *Frenzy* we want Bob Rusk to be caught, in *The Trouble with Harry*, we want the body not to be recovered.

> [W]hat goes around is not the suspect or the sleuth but the corpse; and he also goes up and down, or in and out, since he's buried and unburied rather like a bone.[98]

The above quotation from Raymond Durgnat refers to *The Trouble with Harry* where the corpse of Harry is buried and reburied. Hitchcock's message and ultimate manipulation of the audience surrounds the issue of buried fears and problems that we do not deal with in our everyday lives. As we fear the dead and what the dead reveal about ourselves, so too do we fear the unburying of our latent fears and monstrous desires. We are afraid of that part of ourselves that desires the forbidden and fears the conventional.

Carlotta Valdez is a much-maligned character from *Vertigo* and in the film she is supposedly manifesting in the body of her great granddaughter. The theme of the dead taking control of the living is an old superstition and to some an actual belief. The dead have always held a fascination for people because the experience of death is common to every person yet it is unknown and thus a fearful state to be in. Hitchcock is quite

[98] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 267

obviously ‘milking’ this fear that the majority of people have for all its worth. The manipulation of the audience lies in Hitchcock’s introduction of what Freud would call the uncanny fear of death.

Control was of the utmost importance to Hitchcock, as too were figures that controlled and manipulated others. The figure of the mother is a controlling character that makes an appearance in nearly every film he made.

6.6.2 The Mother Figure

Amongst Hitchcock’s favourite themes was that of the mother or mother figure. Characters of special interest for film theorists and ordinary audience members are those whom Durgnat describes as characters (especially female) that are attached to a harsh or sinister mother figure. Hitchcock was so involved in portraying the character of the mother because of the greater possibility of audience identification and because the mother is a ubiquitous character that is easily found in most narratives due to its universality in terms of culture. This chapter illustrates Hitchcock continual use of this character in a succession of films via which he could manipulate audiences.

The mother figure however is not simply a benevolent figure that keeps a subsidiary place in the background of Hitchcock’s narratives. She is usually a dominant figure, not always of family attachment that attempts to pervert the flow of ‘how things should be’

as Hitchcock does in his own manipulations of the audience. This figure is not merely used by Hitchcock to manipulate and thereby control the audience and one whom the audience sees as beyond reproach; very often the mother figure comes to a difficult and unfortunate end. In *Psycho* her son murders Mrs. Bates and her personality as embodied in her son is eventually 'institutionalized'. Even in *Rebecca*, the sinister mother figure of Mrs. Danvers is a character that Hitchcock uses to manipulate the audience into a feeling of unease and subtle fear. She is however not left unpunished by Hitchcock and "… receives the usual punishment inflicted on the bad mother/witch: she is burned alive when she sets fire to the Manderley Mansion."[99] A warning to those over-protective mothers in the audience – beware of the monsters that you may be creating.

The sweet and timid character of the mother Emma in *Shadow of a Doubt* is perhaps the best and most benevolent rendering of a mother in all of Alfred Hitchcock's works. However, the portrait that he paints of the mother figure becomes more darkly tinctured in later films, beginning with the possessive and tyrannical mother of *Notorious.* In *Notorious* the figure of the mother steps out of the shadows of mere dialogue and conversation and "…all at once – as later, through *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *Marnie* – Hitchcock began to make the mother figure a … repository of … anger, guilt, resentment, and a sad yearning."[100]

Other mother figures in whom Hitchcock seemed morbidly interested were those that possessed an unhealthy obsession-like control and interest over their children, (e.g. the

[99] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 53
[100] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 291

mothers found in *The Birds*, *Psycho* and *Notorious*). These women by implication seemed to function or serve as surrogates for Hitchcock's control over both the film and his audiences. The control that each mother wields over other characters in the film as analogous to Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience and the exact control that he had over each aspect of his filmmaking – as the mothers do not want to relinquish control over their charges so too does Hitchcock not want to relinquish the interpretation of his films.

> It is something of an understatement to say that, in Hitchcock's American films, mothers are generally not presented in a very favorable light. There are three mothers of psychopathic killers (Mrs. Anthony, Mrs. Bates, Mrs. Rusk); the neurotically clinging mother of *The Birds*; the love-withholding, guilt-ridden mother of *Marnie.* Other mothers are presented somewhat more sympathetically: the nervous, pathetic, well-meaning Emma of *Shadow of a Doubt*, the caustic and skeptical mother of Cary Grant in *North by Northwest.*[101]

Mothers and Hitchcock have always seemed to be oxymorons in terms of Hitchcock's seemingly troubled relationship with mother figures in his films. Relationships between characters and their mother figures in Hitchcock's films are always assailed with problems, hidden resentment and lack of love and or fear. Mother in *Psycho* drives her son to murder, Marnie's mother in *Marnie* withholds love and affection, and the mother in *The Birds* resents affection shown by her son to other females and in some ways projects his father's responsibilities onto him. These are only some examples of the bizarre and strange mothers to be found in the canon of Hitchcock's works. Generally mothers in Hitchcock's films tend to be malicious, cruel, twisted or completely naïve. Marnie and Norman have a lot in common and it is interesting in that they are both lead

[101] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 361

characters that have been their own mothers. Donald Spoto observes that both Norman's and Marnie's mothers who are both ill and confined have warped their children. Just as Norman says to Marion "A boy's best friend is his mother", so too does Lil say of Marnie, "A girl's best friend is her mother." In this way Hitchcock conveys to his audience the sense of all pervading control that mothers can and do wield over their children, everyone who has had experience of their own mothers knows this and in this way Hitchcock allows for more chilling identification with figures who have been detrimentally 'mothered' in his films.

Even characters that only represent mother figures are apparent and are equally naïve. Not that all mother figures are naïve but they are portrayed as such by Hitchcock.

In *Shadow of a Doubt*,

> His (Uncle Charlie's)[102]landlady maintains his invincible innocence in the face of every indication of his underworld vulgarity (he lies apathetically in his bed, banknotes scattered on the floor). She offers to open his window, falling into the role of indulgent mother figure.[103]

The landlady is a mother figure (in that she fusses over him as a mother would) who indulges a man who is a callous murderer and a sociopath too. She doesn't perceive him in the correct light and thus is morally complicit in his crimes, as she does nothing to alert the authorities to the fact that a man with suspiciously large sums of money is staying at her boarding house. So figuratively she also has the blood of the widows on her hands.

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[102] My own insertion.
[103] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 186

Hitchcock's motivation in using this character is that, we have all been 'conned' into thinking that somebody is what they are not be it by a mother figure or not. Perhaps we have also willingly, out of affection for an individual, refused to see the obvious in terms of nefarious behaviour. We know as Hitchcock knows how easy it is to fall into the trap of trusting charming people, but at what cost? Hitchcock points out the obvious that it could be we, the audience, who are complicit too - by our overlooking behaviour which in other circumstances we would find suspicious in order to pacify someone with whom we are besotted. We too have pampered and mollycoddled someone and not voiced our objection to an action or indeed series of actions. In this way he manipulates the audience into a position of realizing that inaction is as detrimental as action especially when an individual (particularly a mother figure) should know better.

Yet another character that is pampered by a mother figure (this time his actual mother) is Bruno from *Strangers on a Train.* Both Bruno and Guy are actually exhibited as being 'soft' as,

> … both men are mother's boys. For while Bruno is a mother's darling, has a sickly ambivalent love for and charms old ladies at Washington parties, before something inside him takes over and sets him strangling one, as he strangled Guy's wife, so Guy seems to 'belong' to two women, Miriam and Anne, by comparison with whom he seems rather boyish, a little weak.[104]

The equation with both men as 'mommies' boys' is significant, in that it implies that both men are weak of mind and moral fibre because of their devotion to and excessive

[104] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 218

affection for their mothers and or lovers and wives (who become controlling mother surrogates). Hitchcock must have known of men's attitudes towards 'sissies' and 'mother's boys' and he must have used this in *Strangers on a Train* in order to manipulate the men in the audience to completely disavow any logic in the two men's actions whilst making them so 'lovable' in a sense that women in their maternal instincts would have no choice but to sympathize with other characters in their vulnerability and seeming naivety. Hitchcock was both devious and exceedingly cunning in creating this dichotomy or rift in audience perception according to gender stereotypes. Bruno's (as a stereotypical mother) mother dotes on him and allows him to live the life of a playboy without any responsibility. It is his father (as a stereotypical father) that objects to his lavish and extravagant ways.

> And Marion Lorne's portrayal of Bruno's eccentric mother is a perfect cameo. She is a frightening figure, living in her own fantasy world, painting bizarre surrealistic pictures and doting on a son to whose sickness she is blind – but with that amusing touch of the flibbertijibbet for which Miss Lorne was loved and famous. The ambiguity of the role is a perfect foil and is so darkly paralleled by the thoughtless ramblings of Mrs. Cunningham at the party sequence.[105]

This mother is a mother whom most audience members can identify with either they have a mother figure that is so or they know of a friend's mother who is similar. In this way, Hitchcock implies and leads his audience into thinking that such a mother could influence any son to such lengths as murder, if your own mother is like that could you too possibly be so inclined. Or your friend, who has a mother of a similar personality type, is she a possible murderer? Hitchcock allows for seeds of doubt to enter people's minds. Where if they were to witness such an incident in reality they wouldn't give it a second thought -

[105] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 219

in the confines of a cinema and in the darkness of the cinema and one's own mind, such thoughts seem to have a stronger hold and their veracity holds true. Hitchcock manipulates the audience's mindset to increase the sense of foreboding and fear in the film.

> [A] doubling of the killing of Miriam and also a ritual murder of his mother, for whom his anger and resentment had earlier been established.'[106]

The mother again becomes synonymous with driving the son 'mad'. Whether done consciously or not, by having Bruno ritualistically murder his own mother Hitchcock points to the destructive possibilities of the mother-son relationship. In order to increase the dichotomy in audience sympathies mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hitchcock moves from the primarily destructive mother-daughter relationship to that between mother and son. Hitchcock moves the audience identification from women to men, as it is they who can most identify with Bruno at this point. Imagine if a man who was sitting in the audience saw this section of the film and recalled from his subconscious thoughts he had had of wanting to kill his mother. Of course I don't suppose these were serious thoughts at all but thoughts more along the lines of idle threats due to rage and great irritation. Yet nonetheless these thoughts had occurred. How does such a man feel when viewing this section of film? Due to greater identification he must feel cold and fearful. Just what Hitchcock ordered.

When one considers that in *Strangers on a Train*, it is the women who really have control, it is interesting to ponder on how the mothers whether it is in a positive or

[106] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 214

negative way yield such power in both the narratives of the films and the imagination of the audiences who watch them.

> Just as Barbara brings Miriam to the reception, so the two Washington old ladies bring Bruno's mother to the reception. Looking at the first, he strangles one of the latter…Bruno accidentally strangles a substitute for his own, apparently beloved, mother. Miriam is about to become a mother and Guy makes a point of respecting her pregnancy.[107]

Hitchcock uses two models of motherhood in this film – the role of the mother as filling a sacred role in society and the role of mother as a harridan, intrusive and smothering. He uses these models so that he can manipulate the audience's sympathies and loyalties for Guy and Bruno. On the one hand we understand the villain's (Bruno) irritation with his vague and fussy mother who doesn't give him any guidance but wants to be nosey. Although the audience does not condone her murder we can sympathize with irritation and frustration that were the catalysts for the attempted murder. Guy, on the other hand has a pregnant wife who makes his life unbearable and he will not grant him a divorce. The audience sympathies with Guy because Miriam is heartless and does not act in a manner befitting a soon to be mother – she does not believe in the sanctity of motherhood and goes out carousing with other men. In this case the audience is appalled by her behavior and is manipulated by Hitchcock by his less than flattering portrayal of this woman to actually feel justified when she is murdered. When we see her sightless eyes staring back at us there is a sense of satisfaction that she received a fitting punishment.

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[107] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 219

In *North by Northwest* we encounter Mrs. Thornhill, a woman who by all accounts loves her son but who snorts loudly and derisively in the courtroom when her son explains to the judge how he came to be drunk in charge of a vehicle. Hitchcock here gives the audience the chance to see a mother who is the polar opposite of other mothers in his films. Rather than dote on her son; she disbelieves him in the blink of an eye. The mother, rather than be biased in favour of her son, completely disbelieves anything he is willing to divulge. This is just as detrimental as the doting mother in the opposite way where the mother never believes the child to be capable of any good at all. Hitchcock illustrates here the dichotomy of relationships between mothers and children and how they vary between two points and seldom seem to exist on any sort of middle ground. In *Notorious*, Alex's mother dominates him. Hitchcock manipulates the audience because he shifts the potent power from Alex's character to that of his mother. Hitchcock knows that the audiences expect the spy, Alex, to be the strong and powerful character and do not in the least expect his mother to be a stronger personality – he manipulates the audience's expectation of character roles within the narrative. This is hardly a situation for an international spy to find himself in. As an international spy one would assume that he is suave, confident and not still tied to his mother's apron strings but nevertheless Alex,

> ...is one of Hitchcock's mother-dominated men, among whom the most obvious are Herb (Hume Cronyn) in *Shadow of a Doubt*, Bruno (Robert Walker) in *Strangers on a Train*, Roger Thornhill (Grant) in *North by Northwest*, and Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) in *Psycho*. Sometimes the mother figure is a girlfriend (Midge/Barbara Bel Geddes in *Vertigo*) or a housekeeper (Stella/Thelma Ritter) in *Rear Window*, or a wife (the inspector's wife/Vivien Merchant in *Frenzy*).[108]

[108] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 169

In the above examples, we notice how the heroes are not all powerful and are actually hampered in their heroism and bravado in being fussed over by women. Most men in the audience would see this as an odious part of the narrative as most men would rather have the heroes or villains as the case may be, as being solitary, stoic and without unnecessary female interference. Hitchcock in this way manipulates the men into completely identifying with the hero in at least one aspect by doing this Hitchcock ensures that part of his audience will definitely identify with the male heroes/villains. When it comes to interfering females none can be so insipid nor so grey as *Vertigo's* Midge. To take the example that Sterritt gives us of Midge in *Vertigo,* when we explore further we find that Midge's script contains speech that refers to her as a mother figure in Scottie's life.

> Scottie actually uses the word – "motherly". She reminds one a little of that other sympathetic young mother figure, the Doris Day of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*: she disapproves of Scottie's leaving the police, she supervises his attempt to "like" his vertigo (by climbing portable stairs) as a mother might help a child to master bicycle, alternately urging and restraining.[109]

When in the hospital, Midge bends over Stewart and says, "Please try. You're not lost. Mother's here…Want me to shut that off?…You don't even know I am here…But I'm here." These words alone point to her own realization of the role that she is to play in his life. It is almost as if she feels that if she cannot be his life partner and love interest, then to dote on him as a loving mother is the next best thing. Women always tend to be the carers, so the role of lover and mother can become conflated, as Midge would rather care for Scottie, i.e. love him at any cost regardless of the reciprocal feelings, rather than be

[109] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 111

abandoned and left alone. Hitchcock counts on most women having experienced this dilemma and identifying with Midge. She is a subsidiary character that Hitchcock uses as a lead into the narrative for the audience. By associating ourselves with her, we can then start to identify with aspects of all the characters, however remote they and their situation initially seem.

As Hitchcock progresses in his career his films show increasing concern for the role of motherhood. In *Notorious* Mrs. Sebastian was a demonic and tyrannical figure; in *Strangers on a Train*, Mrs. Anthony is a pathologically confused harridan; and in *Rear Window* the mother figure, Stella is a busybody who nurses Jeffries and pries into details of his love life. Only Mrs. Stevens in *To Catch a Thief* is a humorous character whose understanding of her daughter finally wins through. In later films the mother figure changes and becomes more forlorn and desolate. Midge in *Vertigo*, in *North by Northwest* Mrs. Thornhill watches her son cynically like a hawk, in *Psycho* Mrs. Bates possesses her son after her own death, in *The Birds*, Mrs. Brenner is a terrified, pathetic woman who is afraid of being abandoned as her children grow up and in *Marnie*, Mrs. Edgar is the cause of her daughter's guilt and sexual pathology. These women are linked by their status as mothers and by nothing else. Hitchcock gives the audience a wide array of mother figures who are all different in temperament and character from one another – thus appealing to a wider audience base. Hitchcock's manipulation is evident here, linking his films with the figure of the less than perfect mother, in order to procure the anxiety of his audience in terms of their own relationship with their mothers and also making the women fear doing the same to existing or future

children. He uses a common denominator. The mother is a figure that most people have in their lives whatever their situation in life and all women have the possibility of being mothers themselves. In a way Hitchcock uses the mother as a levelling measure to say to his audience that people are not as different from each other as perhaps we are all inclined to think.

Another controlling mother is Lydia in *The Birds,* who resents any other woman playing any role in her son's life. She is a mother who comes the nearest to being portrayed as part of an Oedipal relationship by Hitchcock. Hitchcock's cloying mother in this film is a sad woman who wants control at any cost and almost loses the love of her son in the process. Hitchcock highlights in this film the effect which emotionally suffocating those we love can have. We all do it, not necessarily in the same relationship dynamic but we have the ability to smother in any relationship, in this way he emotionally manipulates the audience into 'siding' with Mitch because we all have a fear of the mawkish, smothering and over-bearing mother figure.

Another young woman in *The Birds* also yearns for a mother figure. Cathy, Mitch's sister, needs an effective mother figure rather than her own biological mother's interference and this is key to her relationship with Melanie. "…and a clue to the dynamics of the film, which pivots around feelings of lack and emptiness as well as the aggressive jealousy that swirls among the women of the story."[110] The women are jealous of each other as they compete for the attention of the man, Mitch. Manipulation by Hitchcock is evident in his once again pandering to the male audience member's ego

[110] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 128

in having the male protagonist be the interest of two or even three (if you count Annie) women and so too their empathy with Mitch as character is due to his interfering mother. Most men at one time have had to deal with an overly interfering mother who meddles and fusses for (to the child) no apparent reason.

The relationship between Mitch and his mother is one where the controlling mother models the son on the father and which is almost incestuous. In the kitchen, Mitch calls his mother "dear" and "darling" which only gives strength to the almost conjugal nature of their relationship. When the birds attack, Lydia yells at Mitch and exclaims, "If only your father were here!" In this statement alone she implicitly equates Mitch and his father, as she makes the inference that his father would have handled the situation better, ergo she doesn't think that Mitch has taken to his father's shoes very well. He shouldn't have to as he is her son and not her husband. There is evident emotional manipulation in this example; we see the character of Mitch never living up to his father's example in the eyes of his mother. Men feel that they are expected to be like their fathers, to emulate them in every way. Hitchcock again invokes the attention of the male audience member who has probably experienced a similar situation or has at least an understanding of the position Mitch is placed in by his mother – to identify with a character there has to be a 'hook; that the audience member can relate with or to – a facet that Hitchcock uses in this instance.

The schoolteacher Annie tells Melanie that his mother always interferes in Mitch's relationships with women. Annie presumes that it is because Lydia resents any woman who can give Mitch what she gives him, love. Annie even goes on to refer to the Oedipal

trajectory in that she thinks that Lydia is not possessive and jealous in the traditional sense, but that she is more afraid of being abandoned by her children, especially Mitch.

David Sterrit says that this revelation by Annie:

> [s]erves to distinguish this film from *Psycho,* in which Norman's mother is most definitely possessive and controlling, '…albeit in a bizarre and second-hand manner.'[111]

The great difference between Mitch and Melanie is their mothers. Mitch in talking to Melanie mentions "a mother's care" and Melanie reacts with awkwardness and perhaps distaste. Mitch's mother has always been there for him; Melanie's mother left her family for a love affair and hasn't been seen since. Melanie's non-existent relationship with her mother links to Hitchcock's next film, *Marnie* in which the relationship between mother and daughter is less distant but has more traumatic and severe emotional consequences for the daughter. Hitchcock manipulates the audience into making the mistake here that because Melanie has been lacking the role figure of a mother she must be wayward and thus must be in some way responsible for the tumultuous catastrophe that has befell Bodega Bay, when Melanie is the one who ends up caring for Mitch's mother and his sister while he (the one with the constant albeit over –protective mother) is being sensible and securing the house against further attack. He sets the audience up to accept that Melanie is somewhat of a frivolous natured woman because of her lack of a mother

[111] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 129

figure, when she is actually becomes the strong mother figure to Cathy when the birds attack whilst Mrs. Brenner becomes a fearful wreck.

In *The Birds* there is a scene in which Jessica Tandy runs from a farmhouse after having seen the farmer with gouged out eyes and rushes back home to maintain the security of her son and daughter.

> A.H.: The point I was trying to make is that this woman, though she was so terribly distressed about having seen the farmer with his eyes gouged out, was still a possessive mother. Her love for her son still dominated all of her other emotions.[112]

Hitchcock admits to deliberately adding this scene to convey the strength of her maternal feelings. He manipulates the audience into suddenly sympathizing with this mother whom before he had manipulated the audience into despising. Hitchcock is constantly turning the tables on the audience, inexorable in his proclivity for surprising and controlling audience reaction.

Hitchcock incorporates the theme of the mother in this film (*The Birds*), as the film deals with chaos and disorder in a seemingly tranquil part of the world. It is the place where you would least expect something like this to happen and it does. Everyone thinks that their neighbors or people they know are stable and living a grand and luxurious life except we do not know what goes on in the houses of people. People's relationships with their mothers is one such area which people assume is an area of order and contentment, but very often the reality does not match the illusion. Everyone has a mother figure, even

[112] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 450.

if they do not have a spouse or children and so Hitchcock brings in the mother theme to alert the audience to their relationships with their own mothers and the current state of that relationship. By doing this he allows for greater sympathy towards his leading lady by the audience. In terms of the narrative she is the interloper, the outsider, so Hitchcock has to find a way for the audience to identify and sympathize with her, to make her more 'palatable' for the audience's visual and narrative consumption.

Towards the end of *Marnie* when Marnie goes and puts her head on her mother's lap like a child yearning for some kind of sign of approval from her mother, Mrs. Edgar responds by saying, "Marnie, honey, you're achin' my leg." The future of their newly discovered relationship is ambiguous. Like Marnie's relationship with Mark, the mother-daughter relationship will have to be worked out in time and it is time that Marnie has both denied and abused up to this point. We all yearn for that which is not always attainable, especially when it comes to relationships. It is this yearning for something which we know is the impossible that Hitchcock plays on in order to manipulate the audience into identification and feeling empathy for the characters. Hitchcock's initial portrayal was of a harsh woman who didn't have time for her own daughter - a woman who refused Marnie the physical contact that she yearned for, but lavished it on the neighbour's child, Jessie.

7. SCATOLOGY

Mother: No! I tell you no! I won't have you bringing strange young girls in for supper. By candlelight, I suppose, in the cheap erotic fashion of young men with cheap, erotic minds.

Norman: Mother, please!

Mother: And then what, after supper? Music? Whispers?

Norman: Mother, she's just a stranger. She's hungry and it's raining out.

Mother: "Mother, she's just a stranger." As if men don't desire strangers! I refuse to speak of disgusting things because they disgust me! Do you understand, boy? Go on! Tell her she'll not be appeasing her ugly appetites with my food, or my son! Or do I have to tell her 'cause you don't have the guts? Huh, boy?

Norman: Shut up! Shut up![113]

This excerpt from Hitchcock's best known and arguably his most famous film, *Psycho,* introduces the following chapter in which I will deal with the preoccupation of Hitchcock with scatology, the related issues of food and sex and his ever present trademark, murder. Although I must admit that I first and foremost attribute these mainly to *Psycho* and *Frenzy* it must be allowed that these themes were probably always present in Hitchcock's films to a lesser degree and only appeared in such stark and contrasting terms in latter films due to the relaxation of the moral codes and ethics used to censor films. In this

[113] *Psycho*. By Robert Bloch. Adapt. Joseph Stefano. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles. Paramount, 1960

chapter I will concentrate on *Psycho* and *Frenzy* as case studies of this bizarre fascination of Hitchcock's, interspersed with incidents from other films as and if they are applicable.

Donald Spoto describes food in *Frenzy* as "…a basic visual metaphor for the devouring abuses of man-against-man."[114] In this light it is easier to perceive Hitchcock's use of food and all things related in his films. Hitchcock, if indeed using food to be a metaphor for the 'devouring abuses of man-against-man' uses this visual metaphor in order to make his audience feel uncomfortable. He constantly highlights the audience's proclivity towards dark and sinister deeds, deeds that would be seemingly unnatural and an abomination in society's ordered way. In Hitchcock's films there is always the suggestion in his manipulation of the audience, that we ourselves could actually enact what we see on the screen – that we in extenuating circumstances could take part in the disturbing acts of violence and treachery that we witness enacted by the characters in the narrative. It is in this suggestion in which a lot of the fear that the audience experiences is formed. The nascent uncomfortable feeling that we might have wished to kill a person becomes a fully-fledged confirmation from Hitchcock's narrative. that this was not simply an idle desire. From what we have witnessed in Hitchcock's films, violence could be brought to bear against an individual by us if a situation in which we were enraged or fearful for our lives and safety arose. It is in making us doubt our own humanity and our capability for violence and inhumane actions in which Hitchcock performs his brilliant yet insidious manipulations which unsettle his audiences.

[114] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 101

It is again noticeable that via visual metaphor or direct visual picture, Hitchcock is still incessantly attempting to gain absolute control of the audience who sit and watch his films. He never leaves the audience to piece the shots of the film together as they wish; he is always present in the film thrusting his personal comprehension of the film's narrative and plot onto the audience. However, Hitchcock's precision in making a film with the audience in mind in every shot and sequence is what has made him one of the most admired directors of his time.

According to Jean-Paul Satre in *Being and Nothingness*[115] an animal's (man's) curiosity is always either sexual or alimentary. Here is a direct link between viewing man as animalistic in his baseness, a baseness that according to laws of evolution we are to have supposedly surpassed and left in our evolutionary wake. Yet it is just this baseness, that is the basis for most of Hitchcock's plots. His plots involve men and women who delve into the darker sides of their psyches in order to attempt what most of us only consider in the abstract if we consider these actions at all. In knowing that these characters threaten the individual audience members Hitchcock's manipulation is subtle yet clear. Even if the characters do not actively seek to delve into the darker side of human nature they are almost always forced into it, or are passive participants because of circumstance, seen in the many films involving the wrongly accused man or woman as the case may be. Just as these characters may be passive participants that are drawn into circumstances unknowingly or even against their own volition, so too are the audience subject to the will of Alfred Hitchcock. The curiosity which is either alimentary or sexual is to be found in all or most of Hitchcock's films. Food and sex feature greatly and are almost always

[115] SATRE, J-P. 1974. Being and Nothingness. New Jersey: Citadel Press.

linked to murder of some sort. Emotions in Hitchcock's films are always mutable and susceptible to change, as are the emotive responses of the audience watching Hitchcock's films. The unpleasant truth however, that which is not always pleasant to acknowledge is the 'indigestible' part of a Hitchcock narrative – that which hints to the audience of their own propensity for dark and immoral deeds.

According to the above quotation by Satre, that which is known remains the same, i.e. Hitchcock knows that the audience is always there, whether he acknowledges it en masse or not. The audience for Hitchcock is who he is 'speaking' to and he preys on the sexual and alimentary aspects of life, thinking that this will have resonance for his audience both as a whole and as individual members. If there is one thing that we all share in common as people it is our ability to perform basic bodily functions, Hitchcock was aware of this and was almost certainly aware of people's reticence to discuss or even acknowledge the fact that we all urinate, defecate, and engage in sexual intercourse. There is even today a certain wariness amongst people in discussing matters such as nudity, sex and matters of bodily waste excretion - it is a cause of great embarrassment for people, causing them distinct discomfort, obviously this is why Hitchcock delved and dwelled on matters of this nature, not simply because he was in some ways himself a voyeur, but because it is a common denominator, that forces us to be equal in our own humanity. Hitchcock didn't want his audience members to feel that they were excluded from human baseness because of class or education level, he wanted his audiences to know that what one man is capable of, is that which general humanity is equally capable of.

Hitchcock loved to regale his guests with anecdotes on the subject of food and sex, and reveled equally in their discomfort and their amusement, whichever it may be. Was this puerile and childish fascination with 'taboo' subjects such as defecating and sex introduced into his films as a means of ridiculing his own audience whilst 'leading them by the nose' so as to make the inferiority of the audience's situation an indication of his superiority and dominance? I do think, however, that the fascination of what makes people feel embarrassed and uncomfortable when assailed with certain images and words, was a driving force behind this. This was indeed a part of the afore-mentioned penchant of Hitchcock to make his audience members equal in status regardless of class and other social distinctions.

Hitchcock loved to throw dinner parties where he would play practical jokes on the guests – he once threw a dinner party where the food was dyed blue. This sense of humour extended to his films too. In one of his earlier films, *Suspicion*, Hitchcock's sense of twisted humour is very much evident, at the novelist's dinner party. In this section of the film, the guests discuss the subject of murder in an affable manner as the novelist's brother attempts to carve a Cornish hen. While he is doing this, he talks about the exhumation of a body. This also seems like one of the practical jokes he would launch at one of his own dinner parties, as this is so emblematic of a practical joke he would play on people he knew. It is also very likely that this was indeed a practical joke played on his audience too. His sense of enjoyment in making people subject to what he wanted is what drove him to be so dictatorial in his film direction. He wanted to laugh at

his audience and not with them, he wanted to make them feel ill at ease and be the one who controlled the strength of this feeling.

So many of Hitchcock's supporting character's gossip about other people in the story, and we all know the saying about sins of the tongue, and how words can kill in terms of reputation. Hitchcock is reminding us that there is a psychological link between slander and murder.

In *Frenzy* the novelist's brother is aiding and abetting 'murder' because he is slicing up a Cornish hen to eat for dinner, thus consuming flesh of a dead creature. We consume the dead, another point that in light of the circumstances in which murder is being discussed, would make most audiences feel decidedly uncomfortable. We eat flesh of animals but never really stop to consider that the animal's life was taken against its will, in theory constituting murder. So in actual fact, we are all consumers of murdered flesh, if this point is taken to its extreme connotations. *The Birds* is yet another example of how murder and food is highlighted in a Hitchcock film. Added to this is the reversal of humans in the food chain – rather than being the ones in search of prey humans have become the prey. In this film it is uncertain whether the birds start to attack the humans, in order to surfeit their appetite for human blood or merely just to get their own back for the way in which birds and nature has been treated in general by humankind. Another option is that Hitchcock intended that the audience surmise that the birds wanted to feast on the humans, as the humans had feasted on birds and animals alike for eons. Is Hitchcock implying in a manner of speaking that by feasting on birds and animals that

may eat us we inevitably eat ourselves and become bloated with our own baseness? In so doing, if that is indeed his intent, his manipulation of his audience in this respect lies in the ability of his audience to read between the lines and interpret subtext. In so doing he gives his audience credit for being able to read so penetratingly into his work, hoping thereby to manipulate them into his way of thinking. For this is never spelt out for the audience, it is only implied.

In his fascination with waste, Hitchcock perhaps insisted on our brutal slaying of animals as waste products of our lustful appetites and thus made this film in order to order to posit the theory of what would happen should the animals take their revenge.

Fear generally is born out of the unknown. Thus we fear animals, especially because they are more adept at attacking than we are. Physiologically they have claws and talons. Should birds attack we would be defenceless. This theory has an eerie and unsettling feeling to it – exactly what Hitchcock desired. *The Birds* has been cited in many polls as being one of the scariest of all the films in Hitchcock's canon. So it would seem that because birds seem so aloof and are never really the common domestic pet in most houses, it seems that they hold a peculiar mystique for most people. Alfred Hitchcock and implicitly Daphne du Maurier upon whose short story of the same title the film was based, obviously had the insight and foresight to sense this and realize the possibilities this had for a narrative of great threat and ambiguous menace.

By obsessing over scatology Hitchcock seemed to want to influence his audience into delving into their own psychological and emotional excrement, that which we discard and slough off because we view it as inconsequential and unimportant, or those parts of our inner psyche that we fear because the thoughts that originate from our inner psyche may be dark and ominous. Waste comes in many forms - abstract and actual waste matter. Waste of the mind which becomes manifest in unproductive, trivial concerns or even perverse and dark thoughts is, if Hitchcock's films are any indication of his thought processes behind trying to manipulate and scare his audiences, more toxic than any other kind of waste, because it contaminates the entire mind set. The mind is what ultimately controls the actions and the purposes of people thus if the mind produces more 'waste' than not this could lead to crime and nefarious objectives. As the twentieth century taught us, one person's actions can affect an entire population of people, and so we the audience are to fear, what waste our own minds produce. We fear that which we cannot control and our mind and thoughts are subject to external influences and are not always strictly within our absolute control. Hitchcock imposes his own mindset on his audience - one of fear and anxiety. Fear of the unknown and anxiety concerning our own fallibility, for in humankind the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Flesh brings us back to appetites for sex and the method in which men lust after the flesh of women, apparent in both *Psycho* and *Frenzy*. So Hitchcock's use of appetites, links through many different aspects and many films to rest in the grand link between food, scatology, sex and murder, all of which are concerned with a bodily function.

Psycho has been considered possibly the greatest film Hitchcock ever made, not in the least because it was novel in its day for its depiction of murder and the subject of psychotic individuals. This subject had previously only been touched upon in films but never examined in all its gory detail. *Psycho* was perhaps Hitchcock's crowning glory, his best attempt at the control and manipulation of an audience, even preventing audience members from walking in late to the movie, because this would spoil the entire movie for someone who had not been there from the beginning. Hitchcock's appetite for complete domination and control of the audience is concurrent to the appetite for food and sex featured prominently in *Psycho*.

> ("Appetite" is a concept given great prominence in *Psycho*. The next shot in the film shows Marion's uneaten lunch. Almost the first thing we learn about her is that she has lost her appetite.) At one level, *Psycho* is an allegory about the camera's natural appetite. [116]

Does Rothman refer to the camera's appetite for to obtain the visuals exclusively without any regard for the audience, or its appetite to show the audience? I think that in the shots that set up the first scenes in *Psycho* it is safe to say that the camera in its manipulation does seem to have a life of its own and seems to be a force alien to the filmmaker and the audience. In this way the audience becomes acutely aware of the power of the camera as a voyeuristic tool, a tool through which they watch. Vicariously Alfred Hitchcock continually places his audience in odd and almost unreal situations in which they would not normally find themselves. Hitchcock manipulates incessantly so that the audience is always moments away from realizing their own voyeuristic pleasures and desires, and at

[116] ROTHMAN, W. 1982. Hitchcock – The Murderous Gaze. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 252

that moment Hitchcock hopes the audience will be surprised and shocked at themselves. Hitchcock's desire for the illicit image is concurrently the camera's desire and thus by coercion the audience's desire.

Scatology and analogous incidents referring to excrement of most kinds is abundant in this film, more so than in any other of Hitchcock's films. Right at the beginning of the film Norman greets Marion at the motel with the words, "Dirty Night." He prattles on in this vain until he shows her cabin number one, where his inane conversation dries up completely, although he floods the bathroom with light he cannot bring himself to say the word 'bathroom' and so Marion must finish the sentence for him. All Norman manages to say is "…and the, uh...over there." "Is the irony only Hitchcock's, or does Norman already know what dirtiness lies ahead this night?"[117] The term 'dirty' to describe the weather, is both quaint and an odd choice of words, with an infinite combination of words that he could have used in order to describe the storm Norman's deliberate choice of 'dirty' refers again to scatology, human excrement, blood, and any other bodily fluids that are excreted from the time of his meeting Marion to the time in which he finally murders her and deposits her body in the cesspit of the swamp. The swamp is the toilet of his fears and of the audience's fears too. Hitchcock assumes control once again, because it is at this point where the famous cessation of the car's sinking occurs, making an entire generation of film audiences catch their breath and hope against hope that Norman will not be caught in the act and the car and Marion will sink out of view forever. This is a desire that is not thought of in the moment but upon reflection is a

[117] Ibid. p. 269

startling gauge of our own ability to avert moral responsibility in siding in the matter with Norman, by hoping that a murder will be covered up and not avenged in any way.

In the exchange mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, between Norman and 'Mother', we see that 'Mother' continually draws the analogy between the act of eating and the act of copulation, making both seem sordid and unclean almost as if they were one and the same act. "Raindrops fall past the glass as Mrs. Bates pointedly mentions food, appetite, and Norman's 'guts', or courage – words that equate the sexual, the gustatory, and the digestive/excremental."[118] It is interesting to note the act of the rain in this sequence, almost as if Hitchcock deliberately decided to make the night a stormy night to hint at the act of 'cleansing' that 'Mother'/Norman would enact upon Marion later in the film. In this way we see how Hitchcock continually leaves 'clues' for the audience but they are often so subtle and seemingly inconsequential, that we do not deign to take notice of them. One of those clues would be Norman's passionate cry of "Mother! Oh, God! Mother! Blood! Blood!" This specific moment in *Psycho* can be indicative of reference to menstrual as well as excremental anxieties. Menstrual anxieties were of course problematic to Hitchcock, who by his early twenties in a shoot overseas, had to be told by crew why an actress couldn't be part of a shot in the sea and consequently what menstruation was. Norman, who had problems with women, and did not trust them, because he felt his mother had betrayed him, would of course, have anxieties about any bodily function in which women participated: sexual intercourse; defecation and menstruation. Menstrual blood is also suggestive of child bearing and the substitute of the phallus in the form of the foetus. Subconsciously it is apparent that both Hitchcock

[118] STERRITT, D. 1963. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 107

and Norman feared the substitute for the phallus, which might take away from their own worth, and self-appraisal. The act of menstruation in psychology is often taken to be perceived by little boys as the 'wound' of castration, from the father's enacted revenge for desire of the mother. The desire, which is in itself, is deemed to be scandalous and 'dirty', the desire for incest.

> The swamp is itself a toilet, of course, and one that suits Norman's bigger-than-life psychosis: overflowing with dark, thick gunk that intrudes into the world and is capable of embracing the most enormous, outrageous shit that even Hitchcock's mind could imagine. Horrifyingly, it almost doesn't complete its flush – the car pauses in its descent, threatening not to disappear. Norman waits, nibbles, glances around with a distinctly birdlike gesture, and smiles as it sinks finally back into the muck. Sound effects underline the scatology of the sign. Fade to black on the muck. With this visit to Norman's private cesspool, the motivating money/excrement of the film vanishes for good.[119]

This is probably one of the finest shots in the film, simply because (as mentioned earlier) without us being aware of it, Hitchcock, places the audience in a position to feel empathy for Norman and feel anxious on his behalf that the body does indeed disappear beneath the dark and murky water of the swamp. When minutes earlier the audience had been cheering on Marion, hoping that she too would 'get away with murder', the audience is now championing the hiding of a body by what we presume to be an innocent party. We (the audience) catch our breath as the car halts in subsiding, fearing for Norman. Hitchcock cleverly manipulates his audience into feeling empathy for two characters that have both done wrong, but because the line between right and wrong is so vague in some cases, Hitchcock has used this in order to make his audience sympathetic towards the two main characters that are less than perfect. In this manner Hitchcock constantly pushes the

[119] Ibid. p. 109

envelope and makes his audience reevaluate again and again what is right and what is wrong. Is the evaluation of right and wrong more subjective and relative to the individual, than a mass enforced system of right and wrong, good and bad? Hitchcock leaves the answering of that question to the audiences.

The money, which disappears with the body of Marion into the swamp, is also seen as corruptive and 'sin' inducing. After all it was the desire for money that got Marion into this predicament in the first place. Money being seen as excrement is a malicious direct jab at the audience by Hitchcock, who points an accusatory finger at them, sitting in cinema seats which they paid for, indulging in voyeuristic, vicarious pleasure. The corruptive power is in their own hands, not in those of another. We the audience, sit in judgment of the characters we watch, but how are we any different?

Norman's condition is made universal in the final shot of the film in which Marion's car is extracted with difficulty out of the swamp.

> [T]he toilet-swamp becomes a birth site, delivering up Marion's corpse (wrapped in the car's rear end, its taillight an ultimate blind eye) umbilically connected to Hitchcock's camera and the world beyond.[120]

Marion's body is situated in the rear of the car, almost as if she were more waste matter, to be expelled from the car at a later time, than a once living human being.

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[120] Ibid p. 117

The birth site that is spoken of in the above quotation is indicative of the menstrual anxieties, of which Norman is susceptible and which go back to fear of the woman as 'other'. His fear of woman as 'the other' led him to kill Marion and his unnatural attachment to his mother, made him adopt her very personality and clothes. By highlighting this in the final scene of a thoroughly disturbing film narrative, we see that Hitchcock's intention is always until the final scene, to disturb and manipulate his audience into submission and comprehension of the film as he wishes the audience to interpret it. Male audience members are targeted in this final scene, evoking childhood Oedipal anxieties over the castrated female, who bears the wound of the missing phallus and who embodies, illicit and forbidden desires on the part of the male child who also identifies with the traumatic severing of the mother's umbilical, cord, which results in the baby experiencing want and need for the first time. Thus Hitchcock 'punishes' the male audience members for the pleasure they derived from their secretive enjoyment of sitting in a darkened cinema and watching others who are unaware of their gaze. Others, whom they attempt to control and dominate in life and reality (i.e. The Other as woman, homosexual and the black man) as much as Hitchcock dominates them in the cinema. The cesspit of Norman's desires and sins belongs to the audience too.

If, as I am suggesting eating is linked to excrement it is interesting to note that Marion's assignation with Sam is clearly (after the time and date is shown in print in the opening shot) taken during her lunch hour. Instead of eating she was having sexual congress, which for Hitchcock is similar (the sating of bodily appetites). Hitchcock immediately draws his audience into this film from the very beginning by stating time and place as

though this were a documentary of sorts and also by having some of the initial shots be of two people lying on a bed in the middle of the day. Knowing his audience would be scandalized by such a provocative situation Hitchcock milks the situation for all its worth. His manipulation is implicit in his ability to draw the audience into the world of the film exactly as if it were reality depicted from the initial shots and title sequences. To situate the scene as if in reality, allows for the audience to be more quickly absorbed into a fictional reality.

The motif of scatology is taken further in *Psycho*, when Marion is driving towards her final destination, which should be Sam, but instead becomes the Bates motel, she has vivid daydreams of what people will say when they realize she has absconded with the money, one of which includes Mr. Cassidy: "She sat there while I dumped it out!" "I won't kiss off $40, 000. I'll get it back, and if any of it's missing I'll replace it with her fine soft flesh." She thinks of the threats that people, more importantly men would make, threats that revolve around payment in kind - sexual kind. Hitchcock uses this to allow the women in the audience to feel great unease on her behalf and, in some ways probably hopes that the men in the audience will, on the other hand, be hoping that Marion does get caught, in their own voyeuristic hopes that Cassidy will indeed take payment in kind.

> If Cassidy tried to make good on his threat, he would fail. Then he would really feel her power. That is, underlying the scenes conjured in Marion's imagination is a fantasy of vengeance against the likes of Cassidy, men who regard her as a piece of flesh to be bought and consumed.[121]

[121] ROTHMAN, W. 1982. Hitchcock-The Murderous Gaze. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 264

If Hitchcock's use of Cassidy's threat to take payment in kind from Marion was to allow for the female audience members to feel threatened, then here, Marion's potential power over Mr. Cassidy is inserted deliberately by Hitchcock, in order to turn the tables as it were, and make it the turn of the male audience members to squirm in their seats. In Hitchcock's world nobody was exempt from his influence, in his mind everybody eventually had their turn in having the spotlight turned on them.

Food also plays a great role in *Psycho* where shots of bathrooms are followed or preceded by shots of people partaking of some kind of a meal.

> The first thing we see in *Psycho*, once the camera has passed through the hotel window…is a bathroom. Its white sink gleams faintly in the background as the camera searches for Marion Crane/Janet Leigh and Sam Loomis/John Gavin…(A little later, Marion's own bathroom will be visible a she prepares to leave Phoenix with the stolen money.) One of the next things we see is food: the lunch that Marion has been too occupied to eat and about which Sam speaks the first line of dialogue.[122]

The bathroom also proves to be the final resting place for Marion. In the bathroom before she dies, Hitchcock invokes imagery of baptism or ritual cleansing and rebirth. Bathrooms hence have two functions in Hitchcock's world, functions that are uncannily liked: they can either be used for cleansing or evacuation. There is no middle ground concerning bathrooms for Hitchcock. Bathrooms seem implicitly linked to moral iniquity and human frailty. When we see the bathroom only slightly in the shot when Marion is readying herself to leave, it is only a hint as though to show the bathroom in full view,

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[122] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 102

would be breaking some moral or ethical code, which is strange for Hitchcock as he didn't normally seem to be preoccupied with what his audience felt comfortable with – he went against this and bathrooms signify a frail or weak state for the audience as we are naked in bathrooms, stripped of clothes and on a metaphorical level stripped also of our societal mask that we wear for the world outside our homes. We perform intimate and personal functions in bathrooms – urinate, defecate, bathe and so on. Making use of the ablution facilities in a bathroom is a private and secret part of most people's daily routine. This links in with scatology because scatology is akin to the waste product of defecation – the receptacle of which is one of the main fixtures in a bathroom – the toilet. Hitchcock draws the audience into the narrative so that they become sutured into the narrative and substitute themselves and their own weakness for that of the characters.

Receptacles (like toilets) are used by Hitchcock in this film to be the bearers of negative things rather than positive. Toilets are receptacles of excrement. The safe deposit box, was the receptacle of the money, the lust for which was the cause of the narrative commencing in the first place. The swamp becomes the receptacle for her mutilated body and the money combined. The shower cubicle was the receptacle for her metaphorically washed off sin and dirt and then was the
receptacle for her blood, for which Fate sacrificed Marion for her wrong doings and made her clean, in the eyes of Hitchcock and implicitly his audience. As the audience we do sympathize and mourn for Marion's death but at the same time we do feel as though somehow she has now repented enough of her sins by being murdered. She has sacrificed herself so that her sister and Sam do not have to live with the shame of having

a sister and lover who is a thief. Hitchcock's manipulation here, allows for the audience to transfer their sympathy from Marion to Norman. If we still felt sorry for Marion we would blame Norman for as we perceive it, his mother's actions and would watch the rest of the film hoping for Norman and his mother being discovered. As it stands though, we are 'allowed' by Hitchcock to transfer our feelings of sympathy from Marion to Norman by making us see her murder as some kind of vengeance exacted by a cruel and strict Fate. This act of killing the so-called 'heroine' in the first part of the film was a great coup for Hitchcock, by doing this he saw to it that from that point on, the audience was so disoriented as to where there 'allegiance' was to lie, or in other words, which character they were supposed to be supporting. From that point on, the audience was entirely in his directorial power and he could then lead them wherever he chose.

> The symbolic nature of this object (a packet of bills totaling $40,000)[123] becomes apparent as we watch Cassidy's behaviour. He is childish in his boasting about wealth, happiness, and success. He is domineering in his insistence that the business transaction be done according to his whims, and in his treatment not only of the women but also of Lowery the boss, whom he humiliates (with his "bottle in the desk" remark) and then bullies into a drinking session. He is demanding of attention from everyone in the office. In all, he is an overgrown child who has not mastered – or cared to master – the rules of middle-class social intercourse. Just as clear is the particular stage of childhood development in which he's stuck: the anal-sadistic phase. His packet of cash is a packet of excrement – which he has "made", of which he is proud, and with which he has no desire to part, at least before a proper and admiring fuss has been made over it by the women (Marion and Caroline) and the rather lone authority figure (Lowery) who are his audience.[124]

The preoccupation with money, as depicted above, as a secretive almost dirty entity, is peculiar to *Psycho*. Money is obviously indicative not only to the characters but to

[123] My own insertion.
[124] Ibid. p. 103

Hitchcock too as a form of moral by product, something that is digested in the alimentary canal of business and transactions thereof and is neither pure nor necessarily good either. Money like excrement is simply a result of a greater process. But in and of itself is virtually worthless. That said it is something that we obsess over and crave. This is perhaps the reason for the money being made the MacGuffin in *Psycho*, because it would immediately grab most audience members' attention. Especially since it was such a great amount for the time, Hitchcock manipulated the audience's interest in this film by making the MacGuffin something that would have immediate resonance for most if not all members of any one particular audience gathering. After all, most people always want or could actually benefit from or via accruing greater amounts of money. In terms of *Psycho,* money is akin to a morally corruptible product that has the insidious power to disrupt and even destroy people's lives. Money or lack thereof, has driven Mr. Lowery to drink, Mr. Cassidy has become a bombastic twisted man, who thinks people and their affections are mere objects that he can buy, and Marion in her need for money is murdered. Hitchcock gives his audience no other option in their interpretation via his film of what money does to people. Hitchcock in essence foists his interpretation of the narrative onto his audience, he does not allow for open interpretation or even debate as to how to interpret this. He simply, via his filming, allows the audience to see what he implicitly suggests in his filming.

> The next person to exhibit a compulsion retention syndrome is, of course, Marion herself. She does not deposit the money/excrement as instructed, but carries it home and puts it on her bed, the very place where she told Lowery she planned to spend the weekend.[125]

[125] Ibid. p. 104

In this instance I feel that the placement of the money on the bed is very specific and not simply put there for effect. Hitchcock was nothing if not meticulous in the placing of actors and objects. I feel that Hitchcock wants the audience to infer that the bundle of money is a substitute phallus. It sits on the bed, beds are indicative of one of the more conventional places where sexual intercourse can take place, and the money is a substitute phallus, because it can do for Marion what Sam can't or is not willing to do, solve a problem and make her life better. Hence the position of strength and power, which she so urgently needs to fill with Sam's presence in her life, has been filled with the money. The money has become the power in Marion's life as it enables her to do as she pleases, even though it is stolen. Ultimately Hitchcock suggests to his audience that she is corrupted, because he orchestrates the 'cleansing' shower/murder scene, in which Marion is seen to 'atone' for her misdeeds. Misdeeds committed primarily against Mr. Cassidy as it is his money that she steals.

> Cassidy figures prominently in her interior monologue – as biologically vulgar as ever, saying, "kiss off" and "I'll replace it with her fine soft flesh." He also says, "She sat there while I dumped it out", a sentence that makes the money=shit equation almost explicit.[126]

The correlation here between human excrement and money is more or less explicit, in Cassidy's words. Hitchcock uses this particularly vulgar man and his especially vulgar speech, to heighten the sense of danger for Marion, by making the audience susceptible to fear about her safety when she has vulgar men like Cassidy after her. Hitchcock, heightens the sense of identification with Marion by the audience. He makes Cassidy

[126] Ibid. p. 105

appear to be a grotesque chauvinist after only one thing if he can't get the money back. The threat of rape will immediately make the women in the audience especially afraid for Marion's sake. Hitchcock's childlike obsession with the money is as of a child in the anal phase who is particularly proud of the excrement it has produced and I think he suggests that it is also our childlike obsession too. This is why the equation of shit to money is so apt.

> At the used-car dealership, she exchanges her dark-toned car for a model with a lighter color. (It's less resonant of excrement; the transaction is a mirror image of her earlier change from white to black underwear.) Before paying, she enters the lavatory to handle, examine and break apart her forbidden horde.[127]

So Marion does not actually rid herself of the excrement, she simply exchanges it for another form. Hitchcock's strict upbringing in the Catholic faith is resonant here, as sin is never excusable and never mitigated. There are many forms, just as she cannot cleanse herself by trading her stolen money for a car. Sin begets sin. Her dirtiness, implicit in her crime, seems to follow her everywhere. Because she can't get rid of the money in one go and she seems to be pursued all the time, (the policeman stops her on the side of the road, in a menacing and interrogative fashion). It is still a tainted colour thus the car itself seems to be like the scarlet letter that bears testimony to her less than pure existence. She herself knows that her existence will only be purified when she gets to be with Sam, as mentioned in the previous chapter, redemption can be achieved through the love of a 'good' man.

> If there is any doubt regarding Hitchcock's scatological turn of mind throughout Marion's ordeal, a closeup of her first car's license plate lays it to rest: It is ANL-

[127] Ibid.

> 709, the letters spelling a revealing word while the numbers cushion an anus like zero between two more substantial digits.[128]

Being the great joker Hitchcock was, it is obvious that this was a practical and mischievous joke on his part; I don't think he thought that the audience members would actually take notice of the car registration number. In fact in the time that *Psycho* was first screened I doubt whether the audience would have put two and two together. They were not as sophisticated in reading film and looking for signifiers as we are today.

> Marion disposes of her ANL-709 at the used-car dealership, and the rainstorm that comes down on her near the Bates Motel has a flushing and cleaning function. But her sin is already too great for such abstraction. Tormentingly, her vision is obscured (as it will be later by the shower curtain and shower water), and windshield wipers slash across the frame.[129]

Again we have the visual image of baptism. Hitchcock continually evokes imagery of water and flushing in the next sequence. When Marion flushes away the piece of paper on which she has made calculations as to how much money she has to pay back to Mr. Lowery, he shows us a close up of the flushing of the water in the toilet bowl, indicative of the flushing away of tainted money and sin and wrong doing. Hitchcock extrapolates on this theme of flushing away sin and complicated matters in the scene in which Norman sinks Marion's car.

> Norman chews candy as he watches the white car sink beneath the very black surface of the swamp behind the house. As the film was about psychoanalytical ideas it's appropriate to use them in the film – the bathroom scene, very glossy and white, and

[128] Ibid. p. 106
[129] Ibid.

> devoted to the theme of cleanliness, is followed by a scene in which everything disappears into a black sticky cesspool. Norman has pulled the chain. [130]

Just as Marion flushed away the evidence of her calculations and hoped for a new beginning so too does her body become evidence that necessitates being eliminated and flushed away. Hitchcock continually makes the audience aware of the parallel between Marion's life and her death.

> He described to Truffaut his vision of a film about food and what happens to it – as waste, it's poured by the ton into the sea. The vision hardly needs psychoanalysis, particularly if one thinks of all the things that happen to food. 'Your theme', says Truffaut, 'might almost be the rottenness of humanity,' and Hitchcock does not demur. Of a certain kind of pessimism, about which film critics, especially if they are young and Anglo-Saxon, incline to be hypochondriac, but which unfortunately perhaps can't be dismissed as subhuman or unintelligent, Aldous Huxley I think coined the phrase, 'the excremental vision' and its reflection is evident enough in the work of Sade and Swift, of Huxley himself, of Leline, of the swamp-and-bathroom syndrome in *Psycho*. Its full integration with preoccupations not unlike Hitchcock's appears in the novels of Gerald Kersh, some of which are so savage as to be, by traditional Anglo-Saxon standards unfilmable. [131]

> A.H: Yes, that's the general idea. You may recall that in *Murder* I showed the defence attorney and the district attorney having lunch together during the trial recess. In *The Paradine Case* the judge, who has just sentenced Alida Valli to death by hanging, is having a quiet meal at home with his wife. You feel like saying to him, 'Tell me, your Honour, what do you think about when you go home after having sentenced a woman to death?' [132]

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[130] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 326
[131] Ibid p. 50
[132] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 303

Hitchcock even in this statement exhibits his control of the audience in that he always has to in a rather offhand, almost off the cuff manner leave his audience with something to ponder, he doesn't want audiences to passively watch, he wants to evoke something, a thought or an emotion, he wants to be the puppet master that makes an audience see his films as he perceives they should. Other directors allow for individual interpretation, Hitchcock did not want that - he wanted millions of people to interpret the story as he the auteur wanted the narrative

interpreted. Hitchcock wanted to coerce an audience but you cannot compel an audience who sits and does not engage. Hitchcock did not want a totally unthinking audience because then the manipulation would be too easy. *Psycho* is an apt example of this, Norman's character is spelled out for us by Hitchcock. In a way Norman can be seen to be Hitchcock's substitute in the film. Norman's voyeurism and murderous intentions are clarified by Freud's statement that in obsessional neurosis,

> …regression of the libido to the antecedent stage of the sadistic-anal organization is the most conspicuous factor and determines the form taken by the symptoms. The impulse to love must then mask itself under the sadistic impulse. The obsessive thought, "I should like to murder you," means…nothing else but "I should like to enjoy love of you."[133]

> Norman's confusions about sexual difference and appropriate sexual behavior are similarly clarified by Freud's assertion that during the "pre-genital" phase (to which Norman has regressed) the contrast between masculine and feminine plays no part as yet; instead of it there is the contrast between active and passive…That which in this period seems masculine to us, regarded from the stand-point of the genital phase, proves to be the expression of an impulse to mastery, which easily passes over into cruelty. Impulses with a passive aim are connected with the erotogenic zone of the

[133] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 101

> rectal orifice, at this period very important; the impulses of skoptophilia (gazing) and curiosity are powerfully active.[134]

As a result we see that Hitchcock's continual preoccupation with all things relevant to scopophilia has rested at the feet of a character chosen for his own peculiarities and obsessive preoccupations. Hitchcock's own seemingly bizarre preoccupation with scopophilia is understood in light of the fact that during the anal phase, the impulses of looking and curiosity are the most powerfully active. Accordingly we see the need for scopophilia in his films and if an individual himself, takes that much pleasure in looking and actively participating in the gaze, it is only natural that he constructs his films in such a way that the gaze and the meaning thereof is never obscured by individual audience interpretation. The interpretation has to be controlled to be only his interpretation thereof. It is patently obvious that "…the film's preoccupation with anal-compulsive behavior, which recurs throughout the narrative in thinly disguised form…" [135] is Hitchcock's attempt to convey meaning to the audience. Alfred Hitchcock does not attempt greatly to hide the images but it is the meaning of these signifiers, which he controls and manipulates in such a way that the audience is not initially aware of the extent to which Hitchcock moulded their own understanding in his use of one of many motifs.

To take as a further example of Hitchcock's manipulation from another film,

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[134] Ibid. p. 101
[135] Ibid. p. 100

"…*Rope* is built on the juxtaposition of a crime whose motive is an aesthetic attempt at a moral emancipation with a Pateresque sense of meal as ritual." [136]

> When the meal (cold chicken) is served from atop the man's coffin, the crime is seen as one of "devouring". (This idea is even more forcefully treated in *Frenzy*.) The candles, lit for the meal and placed atop the chest, are also for a funeral. Once again, then, Hitchcock interrelates the themes of play, sex, food, murder and ritual.[137]

Hitchcock's macabre sense of humour is clearly evoked in this particular scene. Firstly, the meal is cold chicken, which is what human flesh has been likened to tasting similar to, secondly it is a white meat and human flesh, jokingly has been referred to as 'the other white meat'. Hitchcock, contrives scenes such as this in order to suggest to his audience the horrors of what is actually taking place and how we can metaphorically 'devour' people in the way in which we murder and slander reputations with our mouths, the very receptacles of the food in question, thus we can be said to be cannibalistic in that we devour the other, that which poses a threat to our environment and our own sense of stability and sense of worth, perceived or otherwise. Again we see how the meaning attributed to this scene is clearly denoted and delineated by Hitchcock, allowing for no mistake in interpretation by the audience.

I will now move on to one of the last films in Hitchcock's canon of work, *Frenzy*. This film is seen as one of the more violent and disturbing of all his works, including *Psycho*. Not in the least considered so for the graphic and highly sadistic rape scene that

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[136] DURGNAT, D. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 51
[137] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 188

occurs towards the middle of the narrative. A scene of brutality and sadism not yet seen in one of Alfred Hitchcock's films.

This is a film where Hitchcock's obsession with food and elimination is brought even more to the fore than in its scatological predecessor, *Psycho*. Precisely because Hitchcock knew that food and sex are two of the more interesting pastimes which people from all walks of life indulge in. Yet another starting point from which Hitchcock knew he would implicitly be able to engage his audience's attention from quite early on the narrative. The theme of food is even carried over to scenes concerning the police Chief Inspector thus the theme of food serves for Hitchcock to link the criminal with his pursuer (good and bad) this draws a parallel for his audience signifying that there are more things the good have in common with the bad than perhaps the bad have in common with the good.

> Eventually the culprit is cornered by Inspector Oxford…who's given some moral support by his scatter-brained wife…while she prattles over her gruesome attempts at Cordon Bleu cuisine.[138]

The character of the wife is one whom Hitchcock places in order to act as a commentator on the rest of the action in the film, to contrast and highlight sections of the action. She is a substitute for Hitchcock, the individual who pulls the strings and ensures that everybody comprehends the same storyline in the same exact manner. Her efforts at Cordon Bleu cuisine are attempts by Hitchcock, to add light relief and sometimes-cynical

[138] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber p. 395.

comments to the action of the main characters including her own husband the police Chief Inspector. This character could actually be seen as Hitchcock's insertion of himself into the film, his embodiment in kind in the film, as a part and not just a vague constructive force behind the film.

> But perhaps the most admirable achievement of *Frenzy*, and one which appears to have escaped the attention of major critics in the US and abroad, is its brilliantly sustained metaphor of food, the act of eating – and its antithesis, hunger.[139]

When we initially meet one of the main protagonists Bob Rusk, he is eating grapes and offers some to his old friend the ex-RAF pilot Blaney, who politely declines. Rusk is in fact in the fruit and vegetable trade. He makes a living out of selling goods to eat, to satisfy appetites, even his own literally and metaphorically. Hitchcock is straight off the mark, to associate the figure of Rusk with the abstract notion of 'appetite'. This time it is the appetite of a gustatory nature, but Hitchcock does not split hairs as all desires and appetites to him are linked and interdependent anyway. Hitchcock in his Catholic way, links sins of the flesh, to sins of the palate and desire of any inordinate nature is seen in Catholicism to be sin in any case – gluttony being one of the seven deadly sins. Hitchcock's notion here, was to probably implicitly suggest to his audience that they are not so different to Bob Rusk because we all find ways to sate our appetites, regardless of the nature of those appetites. So Hitchcock's question essentially is: what makes you, the audience so different from this apparent aberration to the norm, Mr. Rusk? Hitchcock is again, controlling the audience, by actually accusing them of being the same as the

[139] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 435

protagonist and in this case, the notorious villain. He does not allow his audience to watch complacently and smug in their comfort and their secure seats.

"Food in *Frenzy* is a basic visual metaphor for the devouring…" [140] the devouring of flesh, (human and food) and the possession of what people want - the possession of things but more importantly, people. To take this analogy one step further, this film is finally about Hitchcock's appetite for control and manipulation. His appetite is for second hand voyeurism and his apparent need to feel superior to his audience and people in general.

> Rusk leads up to his attack by speaking of 'eating together', and then remarks about his liking for fruit: "We have a saying in my line of work: Don't squeeze the goods until they're yours." He identifies Brenda with his lunch, and their staccato dialogue includes references to his "appetites", or his "hunger", and the "Frugality of your meal." He takes a bite of her fruit ("English" he asks), and the quietly sinister tone in his voice as he says to Brenda, "I want you-you see, you're my type of woman."[141]

Never in Hitchcock's film is his strange, twisted and macabre sense of humour, regarding sex and food, so vividly and blatantly portrayed than in this specific scene. He slowly leads the audience towards the realization of the rape, which is soon to occur but heightens the intensity of the scene and the suspense for the audience by inserting this seemingly prosaic scene as a prelude to the rape scene and in this way he lulls the audience into a false sense of security and yet simultaneously tinges it with a sense of hesitant expectation. Hitchcock's delight in keeping his audience in a heightened sense

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[140] Ibid p. 436
[141] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 440

of anticipation is obvious in the drawn out exposition of this scene. It leaves the audience wondering if Rusk will rape the woman or not. The way in which Hitchcock makes the character of Rusk savour every moment of the scene, talking about food and fruit, seems almost sadistic and perverse. This is two fold, firstly for the character of Blaney's ex-wife and secondly for the audience who are powerless, to stop what is to occur, which is what I believe was Hitchcock's intent. Hitchcock wanted the audience to witness this scene and feel the fear of Blaney's ex-wife, the feeling of supreme power in Rusk, mingled with their own disgust and grave unease.

> In *Frenzy* ambivalence can be related to the polarity woman as food vs. woman as poison (source of "pollution," "waste-product" of society, to use the politician's words). To understand how woman functions throughout the film as both edible commodity and inedible pollutant (the stench of femininity alluded to in the myths and studied by Lévi-Strauss) helps us to achieve a deeper insight not only into this particular film, but of some of Hitchcock's major concerns throughout his career. That eating and copulating have frequently been posited as analogous activities in Hitchcock films has certainly not gone unremarked in the criticism. However, the tendency – most pronounced in the Spoto biography – has been to put his parallelism down to the imagination of an overweight pervert. Such a view has unfortunately obscured the extent to which Hitchcock films into bold (and rather comic) relief an equation that seems to exist at the heart of patriarchal culture itself. As Lévi-Strauss observes in *The Savage Mind,* there is a "very profound analogy which people throughout the world seem to find between copulation and eating. In a very large number of languages they are even called by the same term. In Yoruba 'to eat' and 'to marry' are expressed by a single verb the general sense of which is 'to win, to acquire,' a usage which has its parallel in French [and also in English], where the verb 'consumer' [to consummate] applies both to marriage and to meals."[142]

Hence the equivocation between consuming, food, and sex, according to Hitchcock's work and interpretation is in fact, true insofar as certain facts verify semantics and

[142] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 106

ideologies, ideology that he used within his films to strengthen his own interpretations and views that he imposed upon his viewers.

> In *Frenzy,* the association of women with pollution is made explicitly in the film's opening sequence, and the film is "littered" with shots of grotesque-looking female corpses (Hitchcock had been dissuaded from showing spittle dripping from the tongue of Brenda Blaney in the shocking close-up of her after the murder). Babs' body, dusted with potato flour spills out of the truck and onto the road…[143]

It is obvious even to a viewer not in possession of film theory knowledge that associating the female corpse with that of the grotesque and seemingly abnormal, is specifically put there in order for the audience to infer that the female 'other' is indeed 'other' and strange in all aspects even in death. The female body dead or alive is a receptacle of men's fears and desires and that's why the other has to be removed from life and from this film in particular. It is also why woman is seen as pollutant. Women sully the idyll that man longs for by complicating the status quo by mere virtue of their existence.

The idea of woman as object, 'food' or otherwise, some kind of gain, is interesting when taken into consideration that in the films of Alfred Hitchcock, the main aim by the director in my estimation was to manipulate and influence the feelings of his audience in any which way he chose. In *Frenzy* especially, women and food seem interchangeable as they both serve to satisfy an appetite in general but to satisfy the hunger of men more specifically. Hitchcock knew that women in his audience would be offended by this

[143] Ibid. p. 108

analogy and that the men would on some level even if it were not conscious, identify with the lust for both food and women. As a result he manages to get a reaction out of all members of his audience even if the reasons therefore are diametrically opposed in understanding and identification. The reaction of the audience is what Alfred Hitchcock was primarily concerned with and he knew what effects he was in search for even in diametrically opposed reactions that were dependant on the gender of the audience member.

The issue of woman as pollutant or waste product is highlighted by the corpses that are liberally strewn throughout *Frenzy* and by the body that rides along on the tide of the river Thames as the mayor/political figure pontificates about pollutants in the river, which of course would be a female body and not a male one. Hitchcock interprets the female body as the other and unclean, as he knew that his male audience would identify with that fear of the female other and the unclean aspect associated with the menstrual cycle of women. This ideology of the menstrual cycle being less than perfect is supported and put into practice in religious circles too. In both Islam and Judaism, it is the menstrual cycle that makes the woman unclean. The other is a threat and Hitchcock incorporates this into both *Frenzy* and *Psycho* in the murdering of women and thus exterminating the threat of the other. In this case, more for himself, than perhaps for his audience.

> When he has finished raping and strangling her, he spies the apple, resumes eating it, puts it down, picks his teeth with his tie pin, and again takes up the half-eaten apple (shown in close-up) as he leaves. Now, given the numerous references to gardens in the film (Forsythe sarcastically says to Babs and Blaney when they are talking

> outside the pub, "This is Covent Garden, not the Garden of Love"; Rusk tells Blaney that his "Old Mum" lives in Kent, "The Garden of England"; etc.), it seems plausible to argue that the Adam and Eve myth is being invoked, but that a deliberate reversal is effected: here the man eats the apple, "knows" the woman, and is responsible for her destruction.[144]

Alfred Hitchcock wanted reactions (be they positive, negative, horrified or indifferent) from his films. As already stated the deaths of the women in both *Frenzy* and *Psycho* seemed to be a form of extermination of the woman as other. In consequence Tanya Modleski's assertion that a reversal of the Adam and Eve myth is highly plausible and I would say substantiated if taken into account when investigating the whole of Hitchcock's cannon. In terms of manipulating the audience by appealing to age old ingrained assumptions and fears, he knows that he will gain the support of some men for the villain, whilst the women will recoil and feel the same disgust and hatred towards Bob Rusk as the women in the film do. Hitchcock manipulates the audience's (in particular the men in the audience) cultural assumptions about women

> In *The Savage Mind* Lévi-Strauss suggest that the common cultural "equation of male with devourer and female with devoured" may be intended to reverse the situation man most fears. Lévi-Strauss refers to the sexual philosophy of the Far East where "for a man the art of love-making consists essentially in avoiding having his vital force absorbed by the women [possessors of the vagina dentatal and in turning his risk to his advantage. (We recall the analysis of *Murder!* In which the hero takes the risk of hystericization and feminization in order to achieve masculine control over the narrative.) Thus it is possible to see in the film's brutality toward women still one more indication of the need expressed throughout Hitchcock's works to deny resemblance to – absorption by – the female, a need that for Lévi-Strauss lies at the inaugural moment of culture and of myth…Yet, as we shall see, the identification of male with devourer and female with devoured may not always have the psychic effect of negating the imagined ability of the female to absorb the

[144] Ibid. (pp.) 105-106

> male, since food is frequently endowed with the power to transform the eater into its likeness. You are, after all, what you eat.[145]

For the most part woman is seen as a body needing to be separated from man in all aspects particularly in filial relationships.

> According to Kristeva, dietary prohibitions are based upon the prohibition of incest (an analysis confirmed by Levi-Strauss) and thus are part of the "project of separation" from the female body engaged in not only the Biblical text, which Kristeva analyzes at some length, but by patriarchal symbolic systems in general. [146]

The fact that dietary, prohibition existed to prevent incest and as part of the "project of separation" indicates the fear that exists in the collective unconscious of men, which speaks of the unnatural desires elicited by all women – thus tempting men into complicated situations. This fear would of course necessitate having to get rid of women who have already tempted men into committing indiscreet actions. This fear is what Hitchcock plays on in *Frenzy* to cause anxiety for male audience members. He does this so that the eradication of the female characters in the film does not seem so irrational and abhorrent.

> Finally, the body of Babs is paralleled with the repellent, virtually inedible food the inspector's wife gives him to eat, food like pig's feet, which the inspector nearly gags on while reconstructing the potato truck episode with his wife. He relates how the corpse's fingers had been snapped open to retrieve an incriminating object, and as he speaks of this his wife snaps breadsticks in two and crunches on them.[147]

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[145] Ibid. p. 106
[146] Ibid. p. 109
[147] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p.108

In this shot we see what malicious delight Hitchcock takes in ensuring that had the image of Rusk breaking open the fingers not been gut wrenching enough, he will make sure the audience gets their dose of nausea for the evening by using an analogous image with more severe sound effects, reminiscent of the act itself but more stark in its visual and aural effects.

> If the film and the capital [city][148] are both interdeterminately adrift between epochs, the plot thematic is firmly structured around the linking corruption lurking within sex, food and money. Rusk rapes Mrs. Blaney, her legs forced conspicuously apart, and a few shots later Mrs. Oxford takes the lid off her latest dish, to reveal a soggy quail with its legs lifted up and apart. Rusk's grapplings with the barmaid's body in the potato sack, and it's conspicuously protruding foot, are reiterated as the Inspector's utensils prod at a slithery little bundle of pig's trotter. The snapping of the dead girl's fingers is echoed in Mrs. Oxford's brisk breaking of a breadstick. Meat is corpses. We are all eaters of the dead, violently slain for us. Decency is a matter, not of kind, but of degree. Covent Garden is a herbivorous rather than a carnivorous foodmarket, but the equation corruption=corpses=food is carried through to food=money. Blaney storms out of a pub and a job over his supposed theft of a drink. Later a customer complains over the stench of an outdated Scotch egg.[149]

Corruption as is made obviously clear in *Psycho* is perceived by Hitchcock and thus is portrayed to his audience as basically the end result of greed and lust for money. The stench of decay which runs throughout the film from the polluted rivers through to the outdated Scotch egg, is Hitchcock's signal to the audience, that what he portrays is the world we live in, a world in which the people are 'pigs' as Uncle Charlie put it in *Shadow of a Doubt.* A world devoid of the truly innocent and sublime.

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[148] My own insertion.
[149] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 396

> Hunger plays a central role in *Frenzy*. The hero is hungry because he is penniless and has to be fed by his wife. The Inspector is hungry but his wife does not satisfy his appetite. Rusk cannot find women to "satisfy his unusual appetites," as Brenda and her secretary said. "The killer must be found," says Oxford, "before his appetite is whetted again," and the killer himself is always hungry, always talking about food or chewing fruit, especially before and after killing. All these men are interrelated – by their clothing, their eating habits, their names or the psychological affinities they have, and their sexual relationships with women which are in each case pathological, frustrated or unsatisfying and leave them "hungry." It is, in fact, a hungry world Hitchcock shows us…There are evidently different ways of satisfying that hunger.[150]

The issue of 'hunger' would also have resonance for Hitchcock's audience he constructs the narrative in such a way that the audience have to follow his lead but they do this complacently, such is their 'hunger' for the visual images shown to them, their voyeuristic pleasure is so in need of being fulfilled that they follow blindly wherever Hitchcock takes them, ergo, Donald Spoto's above assertion that there are different ways of satisfying hunger is true, because there are a myriad of ways to feel 'hunger'.

> Properly examined, it emerges as a complex work charged with oral anxieties and a revealing tendency to couple food imagery with those favorite Hitchcock concerns: sex, violence, and death. (The same linkage can be traced through films of very different periods, finding special strength in *Blackmail, Suspicion, Notorious, Rope,* and *Psycho,* among others.)[151]

The oral anxiety is simply an extension of the obsessive preoccupation with scatology as the process of scatology starts with ingestion of food via the mouth. It is interesting to note that a majority of characters in Hitchcock's films are murdered by strangulation and

[150] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 442
[151] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 16

that strangulation involves cutting off access from the oral cavity. Hitchcock held a certain fascination with the oral cavity, as Donald Spoto notes,

> Hitchcock spoke of food and various recipes and restaurants of the world constantly. As one of his earlier actresses noted "Food was very important to him. He got as emotional about food as he did about anything, and his relationship to food was almost sexual."[152]

If food was almost sexual to Hitchcock it is no wonder that he directed *Frenzy* so that the murderer eats while raping and strangling a woman.

> At the same time, although by the end of the film we might be inclined to agree with the porter who says, "Sometimes just thinking about the lusts of men makes me want to heave," and although, as Robin Wood has contended, the main female characters are more sympathetic than anyone else in the film, there is little doubt that part of what makes the crime Hitchcock depicts so repellent has to do with a underlying fear and loathing of femininity.[153]

This 'underlying fear and loathing of femininity' is again the reiteration of the previously discussed topic of fear of woman as 'the other'. Women in this film, *Frenzy* are to be murdered because in terms of the narrative, they are the temptation for a man who is frustrated by his own impotence but as signifiers they tell women in the audience that they live only due to the goodness and tolerance of the men in their lives and as signifiers, the women who are murdered in *Frenzy* tell the men in the audience, that women pose an unnatural and corruptive threat to masculinity, they are also the bodies that lure the gaze of the male and lead him to fantasies and thoughts not wholly ideal or pure.

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[152] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 512
[153] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 105.

> The association of women with defilement, with filth, is as strong in Hitchcock as it is in the "savage mind" analyzed by Lévi-Strauss. In *Psycho* Marion Crane is identified with money ("filthy lucre"), bathrooms, toilets, blood, and, of course, the swamp. In an earlier film, *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), Uncle Charlie (Joseph Cotton), who murders wealthy widows, sees the world as a "foul sty" a "filthy, rotting place," and he delivers a speech (significantly, at the dinner table) in which he speaks of men who work hard until they die, leaving their wives to throw their money away: "Eating the money, drinking the money…smelling of money…Faded, fat, greedy women."[154]

So it would seem that the overall message that Alfred Hitchcock wants to impart to his audience is one of a world where men are the pious hard workers and where women occupy the position of sybaritic leeches. A rather harsh and unflattering picture to paint, but one nevertheless, that seemed to increase in its frequency in its appearances in the later quarter of Hitchcock's film career.

> Potatoes, fruit (particularly grapes), and gourmet delicacies appear on the screen and in dialogue with increasing frequency as the film progresses. At the outset, the murderer gives his friend, the wrongly accused hero (or more accurately, in this case, "nonhero") a bunch of grapes from his market. The Chief Inspector is starving while his wife prepares inedible specialty foods. Potato sacks are constantly carried across the screen, passing before us, interrupting our view, crowding out the characters; indeed, food is almost the "main character" in the film! The killer talks of eating lunch just before he kills his friend's wife. He remarks on her frugal lunch (which consists mainly of fruit, to which he helps himself)…Thus food and eating become the associative links with abuse, possessiveness, dishonesty and, ironically, psychic and emotional starvation. As one character says: "I understand there are people starving in this world."[155]

The thought of people 'starving' becomes associated with the earlier mentioned assertion of there being various ways to experience hunger. We, the individuals in the audience

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[154] Ibid p. 108
[155] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 436

starve for food, physical companionship, success, admiration, validation and most importantly love, as do the characters in the film. In consequence Hitchcock draws his audience into the understanding of the cycle of hunger and the sating of that hunger by any means necessary, even killing as Bob Rusk does in *Frenzy*.

> The sour fruits of human exploitation are traded, people become one another's food, and no decent meals are served at home; one person buys someone a meal, another longs for a meal, another becomes a meal. There is nothing appetizing about food or friendship, and all the relationships are sterile or aborted by murder: *Frenzy* is, to the last frame, a closed and coldly negative vision of human possibility.[156]

The 'closed and coldly negative vision of humanity possibility' that is evident in *Frenzy* is also what the audience finds most disturbing. Our ability to be capable of murder, treachery and lying – all negative attributes of our personalities has always been a problematic area for society. This concern with the 'dark' side of our human nature became manifest in literature as the appearances of the double or doppelganger a figure that is usually the evil antithesis of a person. This probably was one of the more fanciful ways in which people in the last three centuries managed to rationalize the dark side of human nature and as such became a strong theme in Western literature and even found a place in the films of Alfred Hitchcock as a means of manipulating the audience into a greater understanding of the human condition.

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[156] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 517

8. THE DOUBLE

> Wheresoe'er toward sleep I turned,
> Wheresoe'er for death I yearned,
> Wheresoe'er I trod the ground,
> On my way sat down by me
> A wretched sight, black-vestured he,
> In whom a brother's guise I found.[157]

The use of the double in literature has been well documented and has been much studied over the years. It holds a strange and uncanny fascination for readers, authors and now via the written word we have moved into the realm of the visual arts, film and film directors alike.

Hitchcock said: "I am primarily interested in the Jekyll-Hyde mentality of the squire." [158] And this is evident that this informed his filmmaking especially concerning *Shadow of a Doubt, Strangers on a Train, Psycho* and to a lesser degree *Frenzy* in which the literal use of doubling (of images etc) and the split self is obvious as a motif. I think that this was used by Hitchcock as a tool of manipulation because of the audience's inherent understanding of a sense of the divided self – the propensity for evil and good in all of us. This chapter will explore how Hitchcock exploited this in his manipulation of the audience.

Otto Rank in his book *The Double – A Psychoanalytic Study* mentions that it is fascinating to note how people were greatly fascinated in the reading (and listening, and

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[157] RANK, O. 1989. The Double – A Psychoanalytic Study. London: H. Karnac (Books) Ltd. p. 5
[158] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 184

watching) of stories about the subject of the double, noted especially after times of major upheavals of society. One of the reasons he posits for this is:

> Psychology, as we know it today, had its beginnings at the end of the eighteenth century and in the nineteenth. The quest into the mind is simultaneously the quest into the individuality and integrity of the self, which can exhibit puzzling contradictions and obscurely understood drives and impulses…Major wars and other extensive disturbances of society are among those occasions which cause man to ask himself fundamental questions about his identity – an identity which he had existing on various levels or even in fragmentation.[159]

This fragmentation of the self, the splitting up of the individual self, is the origin of the figure of the double. Although the fragmenting of the self is usually a sign of mental illness, we can all be said to fragment ourselves in our daily lives, having to be different personalities, or adopt different personality traits according to which facet of our lives we are addressing. We are the co-worker, the employer, the mother/father, son/daughter, sibling and lover. Hitchcock understood this and sought this fragmenting of the self to spill over into his audiences, he wanted them to obey him and be taken along on his fantasy trip. In order to do this Hitchcock had to manipulate the ordinary, everyday sensibilities of his audiences, in order to make them feel sympathy for a murderer and a thief and hope that crimes are not revealed so as to keep the integrity of an evil character intact. This would naturally, be contrary to what they thought they should feel. He also included the figure of the double as a motif in his films, to address the areas of psychosis and murder. To audiences especially in the era in which Hitchcock practiced his art, it would have been more palatable to imagine someone perpetrating heinous acts of

[159] RANK, O. 1989. The Double – A Psychoanalytical Study. London: H. Karnac (Books) Ltd. p. xxi of the introduction.

violence against another person if the cause therefore was a disturbed state of mind because the heinous acts could be explained in terms of an unbalanced or sick mind. The mentally ill can be confined and contained enabling society to feel safe but if mentally healthy persons can take to violence and murder then there can be no certainty of others in society being safe from these acts. There is also a sense that terrible acts perpetrated by sane people are worse because there is no excuse of mental ill health only an evil nature. If we take Rank's assertion that the investigation of the mind is primarily concerned with the search for individuality, then we assume that this is what Hitchcock intended when including the motif of 'the double' and 'the mirror' in his films. He wanted to impart this to his audience and make them search for their own individuality in the midst of watching other characters search for theirs on screen. Of course this would be done unobtrusively, as Hitchcock was the master of manipulation and, as is implied by the use of manipulation, it is done without the other person being overtly aware of the process.

Nietzsche said, "Man's shadow, I thought, is his vanity."[160] Hitchcock knew all about vanity, his own ego, by all accounts of colleagues was quite large, but he knew further that vanity among people is a common downfall, a downfall that he could exploit in his films both in the narrative and in the manipulation of his audience. The audience always likes to think they are one step ahead of the narrative, the thought process behind this being that they are so advanced in 'reading' the narrative that they can already predict the outcome. This idea in itself is a form of vanity, superfluous and not in any way serious, but vanity nonetheless. It was this vanity that Hitchcock managed to subvert and use

[160] Ibid. p. 49

against his audience, to confuse them and manipulate them into thinking his way and thus interpreting his films in the manner in which he wished them to be interpreted.

> Richard M. Meyer was writing in this tradition (of seeing the double for the unreal and uncanny, to his desire to depict distant and separate traits of himself, or to his desire for another existence) in 1916 when he described E.T.A Hoffmann's use of the double-theme as arising from his 'longing for a more exalted existence.' Meyer stated too that the doubles themselves, 'unsure of their identity, are sometimes inhabitants of this earth and sometimes belong to some unearthly region.'[161]

The 'unearthly region' of which Meyer speaks is so readily interpreted in this instance with the region of film. The characters in Hitchcock's films occupied a realm, another sphere almost, where (for the audience, while seated, isolated and cocooned in a dark cinema) the lines between what is, and what is perceived, becomes blurred and indistinct. Thus the audience members are themselves drawn into a world of 'the double' by a masterful cinema director, who evokes such powerful subconscious and conscious emotions and provocative thoughts, that the audience are always in two minds, the mind of the audience member watching, and the mind of the audience member who is compelled, to identify even though they do not wish to with the dark and often disturbing undertones of the Hitchcock oeuvre.

Shadow of a Doubt was a film in which the double and the mirror phase is evoked most clearly by Hitchcock. The clearest indication of his substantiation for using this motif is found in a section from the Patricia Highsmith novel of the same name from which this was adapted.

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[161] Ibid (Rank) p. 630

> But love and hate, he thought now, good and evil, lived side by side in the human heart, and not merely in differing proportions in one man and the next, but all good and all evil. One had merely to look for a little of either to find it all, and one had merely to scratch the surface. All things had opposites close by. Nothing could be without its opposite that was bound up with it…Each was what the other had not chosen to be, the cast-off self, what he thought he hated but perhaps in reality loved…there was that duality permeating nature…Two people in each person. There's also a person exactly the opposite of you, like the unseen part of you, somewhere in the world, and he waits in ambush.[162]

Consequently the idea was already present in Alfred Hitchcock's mind to use the motif of the double in order to evoke the unease and fear that he wished to elicit in audience members watching his film. As the section concerning 'the other' illustrates, nothing makes one feel so uneasy as 'the other', the one who is not like you but who apart from certain distinct differences, could be you. However where the double is concerned, 'the other' is not so much that which is totally alien to you, but essentially the reverse mirror image of you, what you could be under less satisfactory circumstances. The 'you', that you perhaps suppress, the you capable of evil misdeeds and great cruelty, which is only glossed over because of society's restrictions, which are enforced upon you. Hitchcock's manipulation here lies, again, in not so much the obvious and didactic, but the subtle and inferred. He allows the audience to think they are in control of what they think whilst viewing his films, but who in actual fact are very much under Hitchcock's influence. Another facet of Hitchcock's manipulation lay in the ability to lead the audience along in thinking, moralistically, that they know the difference between right and wrong and for this reason will 'support' the truly virtuous character, only to find as the story progresses

[162] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 321

that the character they had assumed was a truly naïve and innocent character, was one capable of evil acts, Charlie kills her Uncle in *Shadow of a Doubt*, Norman is the real killer in *Psycho* i.e. the double is the 'double' faceted characters found in the narrative who seem to be what they are not.

Hitchcock wanted to manipulate his audience by ensuring that this motif of the double was used not only in *Shadow of a Doubt* but also in many of his box office successes, *North by Northwest, Psycho* and *Strangers on a Train* and to a lesser extent *Rope.* All of these films have in common the double motif or the figure of the double. The double, if it is a character, is usually a nefarious and insidious character that is capable of great evil. Donald Spoto in his biography of the life of Alfred Hitchcock, regarding *Strangers on a Train,* noted:

> All this doubling – which has no precedent in the novel- was quite deliberately added by Hitchcock, and is the key element in the film's structure. (In this regard, he also gave the homosexual angle a wider reference, making it serve the theme of two aspects of a single personality.) Walker is Granger's 'shadow', activating what Granger wants, bringing out the dark underside of Granger's potentially murderous desires.[163]

In both *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train,* we find that the double is a murderous double, a receptacle for the hideous and distorted desires of the individual. In terms of this, Hitchcock managed to get his audience thinking about their own secret and perhaps even latent desires, and what they would do, if they ever took the decision to unleash these terrible desires on society or get someone else to do it. In this way it is

[163] Ibid. p. 328

simple to see how Hitchcock may have intended these films, with their doubles, to 'speak' to his audiences on an unconscious level, so that they too might consider what would happen if the same or a similar event happened to them without consciously being aware that it was Hitchcock's manipulation that set them on that train of thought. Would they swap murders with someone as a means to a quick and efficient way to deal with a bothersome business associate or an irritating relative?

> The theme of the double was available to Hitchcock from the literary traditions that were familiar to him. From E.T.A. Hoffman's first novel, *The Devil's Elixir*, and his tale, '*The Doubles*' he took the device of the doppelgänger. 'I imagine my ego,' Hoffman wrote, 'as being viewed through a lens: all the forms which move around me are egos; and whatever they do, or leave undone, vexes me.' The statement is virtually an epigraph for *Strangers on a Train.*[164]

If we were to all assume that Hoffmann's view was the moral and correct view, we would inhabit a world where no one single person was safe because if you annoyed any individual they could exact revenge not merely by slander as happens in society today but by means of actual murder, as is the case in *Strangers on a Train*. These are statements with concomitant questions, which Hitchcock poses in the film. He does this by his delicate manipulation of the audience, in making them support the character and not support the character of his wife, because she stands in the way of his marrying somebody else, seemingly corrupting his life and happiness. So when she is murdered we are to a greater or lesser extent satisfied with the outcome. A hideous thought but it is true, without us realizing it, or even voicing it as a conscious wish we want Guy's wife dead. We are just as complicit in the murder as Guy is because like him we secretly

[164] Ibid. p. 329

wanted her dead although we never actually stated it bluntly. The lens through which Hoffman saw his vision, could also be likened to Hitchcock's camera lens, through which he filmed his critiques of human nature.

With influences such as Hoffmann's in his early and formative years, it is no surprise that intertextuality was to arise in Hitchcock's work which made the manipulation of his audience via the motif of the double even more intriguing because part of his audience who would have been old enough to also make reference to the literature of a previous time, would immediately understand and be susceptible to the image and connotations of the double because of their own literary history, but so too, would audience members who had not had the opportunity of reading Hoffmann and his colleague's works or those young enough not to remember they would be led by Hitchcock's manipulation's. Thus Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience was in some respects a two-fold object because he worked from two suppositions; there were audience members who already knew and those who did not. The question left was one of interweaving the motif in such a way that it was neither obvious to the audience members who knew about the motif nor to those who were new to the idea. Consequently as in all his films he walked a thin line, between leading the audience along, but not making it apparent where the next turn or bend in the narrative road would occur.

Sterrit brings our attention to the fact that the use of this particular motif in audience manipulation has its roots in the precedent set in the Romantic and Victorian eras where,

> [T]he double always reflected strong inner conflict, conflict between the fear of involvement with life and the concomitant fear of non-involvement, stagnation, and death, a conflict between the reach toward wholeness and the danger of disintegration. Intimate with these sources, Hitchcock would make the double – in *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train,* as later in *Psycho* and *Frenzy* – the messenger of death. He required no training in psychology to be aware of this common creative currency and its attendant imagery: it was one of the few recurring motifs in the art and literature of his time, and inevitably the cinema, his cinema, capitalized on the forms and patters of this device.[165]

Sterrit points out that in *Shadow of a Doubt* and in particularly *Psycho* and Frenzy, that the films are essentially concerned with the complementing of different personalities. In *Shadow of a Doubt* we see how Charlie's naïveté is tarnished when her Uncle displays his own dark nature. In all the films mentioned above – the 'innocent' characters concerned learn of their own dark sides and potential for evil that are brought about by doubles, what Sterrit calls 'psychic Doppelgangers'.

Charlie starts off believing that her uncle is her fateful twin, even voicing her belief that they are like twins, to him. Hitchcock lets the audience believe in Charlie's trust and devotion after all, how can Charlie as well as her mother be wrong? He delights in twisting the narrative, to give the audience a great shock, thus allowing both Charlie and the audience to be let down and shattered in their belief of this man. Thus both the character and the audience are exposed as gullible people – the kind of people upon whom Uncle Charlie preyed. We the audience sit in our theatres watching the film, eating popcorn and sitting in our padded seats are we too also the 'pigs' referred to by Uncle Charlie? We, the audience may as well be the widows, whom Uncle Charlie

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[165] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 31

murdered. We lavish money on ourselves by treating ourselves to a superfluous outing to the cinema. We do not use the money for more practical endeavours, as the widows also do not. Hitchcock draws a very clear analogy. Hitchcock is not 'punishing' us for going to the cinema, but he does draw an analogy between the audience and the widows who are frivolous and pleasure seeking and perhaps abstractly in just as great a risk from Uncle Charlie.

The figure of the doppelgänger is analogous to the idea of someone's 'shadow' and overall, 'mysterious other half', or in other words an individual's diabolical twin. The idea of the vampire as the double will also be described later in this chapter, as it has distinct and obvious references to the mirror phase and Hitchcock's apparently strange relationship to mirrors. The image of oneself reflected in the mirror is of course the reflection of both oneself and one's own propensity for evil and corruption. This 'other' is 'Mother' to Norman Bates in *Psycho*, Bruno to Guy, the two killers in *Rope* to James Stewart, Uncle Charlie to Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt.*

In *Shadow of a Doubt*, the film contains a double opening (Charlie's introduction is to be repeated, almost shot for shot, in the introduction of Uncle Charlie). Within the film itself there are a number of references to the number two. There are two men who are pursing Uncle Charlie, Charlie is taken by her Uncle to the ''Till Two Bar', two children in the family etc. Hitchcock used this relatively simple device of having couples or two's situated randomly in the film to bring back to the audience on an unconscious level, the duality of human nature, indeed their very own natures, how we can want, need and

desire things that we intellectually realize we should not, thus creating a polarized conflict within ourselves as Uncle Charlie does.

> *Shadow of a Doubt* has doubles in terms of the pairs that appear. There is an almost infinite accumulation of pairs that reappear in the film. Hitchcock of course does this to reinforce the idea of the double to the audience; he doesn't want them to miss the point. There are two Charlies; two detectives chasing Uncle Charlie, two criminals are being chased, two women with eyeglasses; two dinner sequences; two amateur sleuths; two young children; two older siblings; two sequences in a railway station; two scenes outside a church; two doctors; and two double brandies served in the "Till Two" bar by a waitress he has only worked there for two weeks; two attempts to kill young Charlie; two scenes in a garage etc. The double was fascinating to Hitchcock and thus he thought it would hold the same effect on his audiences. "Isn't it a fascinating design? You could study it forever."[166]

In *Strangers on a Train,* we find a character that is the sp(l)itting image of another character. Miriam, Guy's wife is the almost identical copy of Ann's younger sister Barbara. She is so similar that even Bruno in turn starts to choke an old woman at a party when he looks at Barbara and thinks of his murder of Miriam. However, an astute audience member would have noticed this doubling of characters much earlier on,

> …whenever we saw the sister we thought of Miriam, and she thus performs the functions of a ghost. Her role as 'marker' is emphasized by her morbid fascination with the murder, so that her questions persecute Guy, paradoxically, since she also seems staunchly loyal by nature…she is played by the director's daughter, Patricia Hitchcock, so that the Hitchcock family appears in the film twice.[167]

In this respect Miriam also works as a character present in absence. Hitchcock's use of the double here, is due to his wanting the audience to be made uncomfortable by the

[166] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 327
[167] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber and Faber. p. 219

uncanny likeness of Miriam to Barbara. Barbara is a character utilized by Hitchcock to never allow Guy, Bruno or indeed the audience to relax. Barbara acts as a constant reminder of what has occurred.

As regards the use of the director's own daughter, the double here is the use of two Hitchcocks in the same film. I would say that this was mere coincidence and not worthy of mention were it not for the obvious dictate of Hitchcock's that nothing occurs in his films by accident or coincidence. I feel that Hitchcock always wanted to manipulate his audiences, and always managed to make a cameo appearance as if to remind or constantly make the audience aware that he was present in every one of his films as both himself in the cameos and as director. He was the one in complete control. By having his daughter play the character that is the reminder to everyone in the film and in the audience of the terrible crime that has been committed, he is saying that by proxy he is the one who reminds everyone that murder cannot happen and be covered up forever (he is the one who ultimately manipulates.) He is the one who constantly points the finger of blame and direction. Alfred Hitchcock only used his daughter as a double of sorts to 'cement' the already tight control he mastered over his productions and audiences.

The character or rather the actual physical figure of Barbara, manages to merge Guy's two wives – the double of Miriam, the sibling of Ann. This is rather like an algebraic equation to find a missing quantity:

If Barbara=Miriam
and Miriam=Ann
then Barbara=Ann

The explanation of this seemingly paradoxical equation is as follows. Barbara for a split second is seen in the eyes of Bruno as Miriam whom he has already killed thus he equates the two. However, Ann and Miriam share the same status as being or having at one time been Guy's lover, hence if Bruno equates Miriam and Barbara and killed the one and simulates killing the other, then he could have been just as capable of killing Ann and the killing of Barbara is actually the simulation of the killing of Ann. This is a very ingenious moment in the film, devised by Hitchcock, in terms of the doubling that he uses. It is suffice to say that Hitchcock links Ann and Miriam as being doubles of each other. They both held the love of Guy, but are totally different in their personalities. In the equation that I outlined above, Hitchcock manipulates the audience into linking the two and realizing that Ann has the proclivity to become just like Miriam. Hitchcock leads the audience into feeling doubt about whether or not Guy's relationship with Ann might eventually turn into the end result of his relationship with Miriam. Thus Hitchcock robs his audience of the confident feeling that this will be a completely contented union. In this case we see that Guy has actually found himself what he thinks is the antithesis of Miriam, but who is actually by the fact of being sister to Barbara who is the double of Miriam is very much like Miriam, although she appears to be her double, but the in her case instead of being the evil double, is the good double, the redeeming twin.

In *Murder!* there is a scene in which the character of Sir John shaves and muses in a stream-of-consciousness voiceover. This works as a means of externalising inner thoughts of the character for the audience. However, the character may as well be talking to his own double and splitting himself in two. His double in this case would work as a device to inform of the happenings, hence the stream-of-consciousness voiceover that serves the audience in its capacity as equally as the character would. Hitchcock was ever inventive and this is an example of using a device, the voice over and the doubled image to feed information to his audience without being didactic or overbearing, allowing his audience to think as usual that they are the ones who are piecing the clues together when it is Hitchcock who is doing it for them.

9. CONCLUSION

Ernest Lehman one of Hitchcock's collaborators, remembers a conversation he had with Hitchcock in one of the filmmaker's favourite places, a restaurant.

> During location shooting in New York, he took me to dinner at Christ Cella. He'd had a few martinis, and in a rare moment of emotional intimacy, he put his hand on mine and whispered, "Ernie, do you realize what we're doing in this picture? The audience is like a giant organ that you and I are playing. At one moment we play *this* note on them and get *this* reaction, and then we play *that* chord and they react *that* way. And someday we won't even have to make a movie – there'll be electrodes implanted in their brains, and we'll just press different buttons and they'll go 'ooooh' and 'aaaah' and we'll frighten them, and make them laugh. Won't that be wonderful?[168]

Little did Hitchcock know of the virtual worlds that would later be constructed, allowing audiences to experience the most amazing sensations as if they were in a situation but without the danger. This is what audiences wanted and still do, thrills without danger or repercussions. Hitchcock gave them exactly what they wanted. Alfred Hitchcock began his career when the art of the moving picture was only in its nascent forms. Both he and his art form grew together. The culmination of his career left the world a little bit more wary of the things that lurk in our subconscious as well as things that go bump in the night.

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[168] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 406

His career spanned sixty years and the result was fifty-three feature films, which are still as popular as they were in the era in which they were produced. Academics and students of film, like myself still decide to write dissertations and books on this man and his work.

He was an influential man whose methods influenced an entire generation of filmmakers. We only have to look at Brian de Palma's *Sisters* to see how this film in fact pays homage to the master of suspense, Alfred Hitchcock. The remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* by Gus van Sant in itself was a very significant tribute to a man whom many filmmakers admire for his ingenuity and intelligence in reading audiences.

During the time I have been busy researching and writing this paper, many people have asked me why I even bothered to research up on such an 'old' and 'out of date' director. I always smiled when I heard these comments before trying to condense into five minutes, three years worth of research and knowledge that I have acquired about Alfred Hitchcock and his audience manipulation techniques, that has firmly placed him among people whose artistry and ingenuity I admire. Upon telling people that many of the thriller conventions used by modern directors in contemporary films, to scare and thrill and ultimately manipulate audiences, were actually originated by Hitchcock, I usually receive baffled and I think mostly incredulous stares after all most young people really think that the great film directors include directors such as Martin Scorcese, Brian de Palma, and Steven Spielberg.

Hitchcock was a man of great insight, ingenuity and foresight. Although he was never awarded an Oscar by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, he was awarded a Lifetime achievement award by the American Film Institute, where a superb banquet was held for him, including all the people he had worked with through his career. These people who included Bernard Herrmann, Cary Grant, Grace Kelly and Ingrid Bergman, congregated to honour a man who added greatly to the history and cannon of film work at large.

Hitchcock's films have been translated into many different languages and are still shown in cinemas in countries all over the world thus making it obvious that Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience and the audience's enjoyment thereof, was not confined to any specific language.

One only needs to search for 'Hitchcock' on the Internet to find a myriad of web sites formed by ardent and dedicated fans of Hitchcock, his films and his genre. A testament to the enduring fascination that audiences share for his work.

It was my aim to construct the argument that Hitchcock, more than most directors, manipulated his audiences and always had every part of his films in his strict control. Hopefully this has been achieved.

In conclusion I shall use the eloquent and articulate words of Alfred Hitchcock's biographer, Donald Spoto, who in his final thoughts in his critical novel *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock* wrote,

> Obviously, the passion which a critic brings to the study of specific works of art reveals much about the critic himself…The act of interpretation, after all, interprets the interpreter to himself. In any case this writer has discovered as much about himself as about one artist's work, and that is no small dividend.
>
> *Finis coronat opus* – the end crowns the work, according to a curious old adage. But in a work of criticism, the end should only bring us back to the beginning, to the works of art themselves. If the reader is impelled to see again the films of Alfred Hitchcock I shall have considered my work successful.[169]

[169] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 525

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Appendix A

FILM REFERENCE LIST

1) ***Blackmail***. By Charles Bennett. Adapt. Alfred Hitchcock and Charles Bennett. Screen. Alfred Hitchcock, Ben W. Levy and Charles Bennett. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. John Maxwell. Perf. Anny Ondra, Sara Allgood, John Longden, Charles Patton, Cyril Ritchard, Donald Calthrop. Joan Barry recorded the dialogue for Miss Ondra. Elstree, 1929.

2) ***Dial M for Murder***. By Frederick Knott. Adapt and Screen. Alfred Hitchcock. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, Robert Cummings, Anthony Dawson, John Williams. Warner Bros. 1953.

3) ***Downhill***. By Ivor Novello and Constance Collier. Screen. Eliot Stannard, written under the pseudonym of David LeStrange. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Michael Balcon. Perf. Ivor Novello, Ben Webster, Robin Irvine, Sybil Rhoda, William Braithwaite. Islington, 1927. (The film was released in America as *When Boys Leave Home*.)

4) ***Family Plot***. By Victor Canning from his novel *The Rainbird Pattern*. Adapt and Screen. Ernest Lehman. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Karen Black, Bruce Dern, Barbara Harris, William Devane, Ed Lauterer, Cathleen Nesbitt, Katherine Helmond, William Prince. Universal Title, 1976.

5) ***Frenzy***. By Arthur LaBern from his novel *Goodbye Piccadilly Farewell Leicester Square*. Adapt. Anthony Shaffer. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Jon Finch, Barry Forster, Barbara Leigh-Hunt, Anna Massey, Alec McGowan, Vivien Merchant, Billie Whitelaw, Clive Swift, Felix Forsythe. Pinewood, 1972

6) ***I Confess***. By Paul Anthelme. Adapt and Screen. George Tabori and William Archibald. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Montgomery Clift, Ann Baxter, Karl Malden, Brian Anherne, O. E. Hasse, Dolly Haas, Roger Dann. Warner Bros. 1952

7) ***Lifeboat***. By John Steinbeck. Adapt and Screen. Jo Swerling. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Kenneth MacGowan. Perf. Tallulah Bankhead, William Bendix, Walter Slezak, Mary Anderson, John Hodiak, Henry Hull, Heather Angel, Hume Cronyn, Canada Lee. Twentieth Century-Fox, 1943

8) ***Marnie***. By Winston Graham. Adapt and Screen. Jay Dresson Allen. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Tippi Hedren, Sean Connery, Diane Baker, Louise Latham, Martin Gabel, Alan Napier, Mariette Hartley, Bruce Dern, Edith Evanson, S. John Launer. Universal, 1964.

9) ***Mr. and Mrs. Smith***. Story and Screen. Norman Krasna. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Harry E. Edington. Perf. Carole Lombard, Robert Montgomery, Gene Raymond, Philip Merrivale, Lucile Watson, Jack Carson. R. K. O. 1941.

10) ***Murder***. By Clemence Dane. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. John Maxwell. Perf. Herbert Marshall, Nora Barry, Phyllis Konstam, Edward Chapman, Esme Percy. (Hitchcock directed a German version of *Murder*, called *Mary*, immediately after completing the English version. It starred Alfred Abel and Olga Tchekowa in the roles originally played by Herbert Marshall and Nora Barry. The film is not available.) Elstree, 1936.

11) ***North by Northwest***. Screenplay. Ernest Lehman. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Jessie Royce Landis, Leo G. Carroll, Philip Ober, Josephine Hutchinson, Martin Landau, Adam Williams, Doreen Lang. M. G. M. 1959.

12) ***Notorious***. Adapt and Screen. Ben Hecht from a theme by Alfred Hitchcock. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant, Claude Rains, Leopoldine Konstantin, Louis Calhern. R. K. O. 1946.

13) ***Psycho***. By Robert Bloch. Adapt and Screen. Joseph Stefano. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles, John Gavin, Martin Balsam, John MacIntire, Lurene Tuttle, Simon Oakland, Frank Albertson, Vaughn Taylor, Mort Mills, Patricia Hitchcock. Paramount, 1960.

14) ***Rear Window***. By Cornell Woolrich. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Grace Kelly, Wendell Corey, Thelma Ritter, Raymond Burr, Judith Evelyn, Ross Bagdasarion, Georgine Darcy, Jesslyn Fox, Irene Winston. Paramount, 1954.

15) ***Rebecca***. By Daphne du Maurier. Adapt and Screen. Philip MacDonald and Michael Hogan. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. David O. Selznick. Perf. Joan Fontaine, Laurence Olivier, Judith Anderson, George Sanders, Nigel Bruce, Gladys Cooper, C. Aubrey Smith, Florence Bates, Leo G. Carroll. Selznick International, 1940.

16) ***Rope***. By Patricia Highsmith. Adapt and Screen. Hume Cronyn. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, John Dall, Farley Granger, Cedric Hardwicke, Joan Chandler, Constance Collier, Edith Evanson, Douglas Dick, Dick Hogan. Warner Bros. 1948.

17) ***Saboteur***. Screenplay by Peter Viertel, Joan Harrison and Dorothy Parker from an idea by Alfred Hitchcock. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock, Frank Lloyd and Jack H. Skirball. Perf. Robert Cummings, Priscilla Lane, Otto Kruger, Alma Kruger, Norman Lloyd. Universal, 1942.

18) ***Shadow of a Doubt***. By Gordon McDonnell. Adapt and Screen. Thornton Wilder, Alma Reville, Sally Benson. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Jack H. Skirball. Perf. Joseph Cotton, Teresa Wright, Patricia Collinge, MacDonald Carey, Henry Travers, Hume Cronyn, Wallace Ford, Edna May Wonacott. Universal, 1943.

19) ***Stage Fright***. By Selwyn Jepson. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville from two of Jepson's stories, *Man Running* and *Outrun the Constable*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Marlene Dietrich, Jane Wyman, Michael Wilding, Richard Todd, Alistair Sim, Dame Sybil Thorndike. Elstree, 1950.

20) ***Strangers on a Train***. From a novel by Patricia Highsmith. Adapt and Screen. Whitfield Cook. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Robert Walker, Farley Granger, Ruth Roman, Leo G. Carroll, Patricia Hitchcock, Laura Elliot, Marion Lorne, Jonathon Hale, Norman Varden. Warner Bros. 1951.

21) ***Student of Prague***. Screen. Hanns Heinz. Dir. Henrick Galeen. Perf. Conrad Veidt, Werner Krauss, Agnes Esterhazy. 1926.

22) ***Suspicion***. By Francis Iles from the novel *Before The Fact*. Adapt and Screen. Samson Raphaelson, Joan Harrison and Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Harry E. Edington. Perf. Joan Fontaine, Cary Grant, Cedric Hardwicke, Nigel Bruce, Dame May Witty, Isabel Jeans. R.K.O. 1941.

23) ***The Birds***. By Daphne du Maurier. Adapt and Screen. Evan Hunter. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Tippi Hedren, Rod Taylor, Jessica Tandy, Suzanne Pleshette, Veronica Cartwright, Ethel Griffies, Charles McGraw, Ruth McDevitt, Elizabeth Wilson. Universal, 1963.

24) ***The Lady Vanishes***. By Ethel Lina White. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Edward Black. Perf. Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Dame May Witty, Paul Lukas, Georgie Whithers, Cecil Parker, Linden Travers, Mary Clare, Naunton Wayne, Basil Radford, Catherine Lacey. Lime Grove, 1938.

25) ***The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog***. By Mrs. Belloc-Loundes. Adapt and Screen. Alfred Hitchcock and Eliot Stannard. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Michael Balcon. Perf. Ivor Novello, Daisy Jackson, Marie Ault, Arthur Chesney, Malcolm Keen. Islington, 1926.

26) ***The Man Who Knew Too Much***. By Charles Bennett and D.B. Wyndham-Louis. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes and Angus McPhail. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Doris Day, Daniel Gélin, Brenda de Benzie, Bernard Miles, Christopher Oben, Reggie Malder. Paramount, 1953.

27) ***The Paradine Case***. By Robert Hichens. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. David O. Selznick. Perf. Gregory Peck, Ann Todd, Charles Laughton, Alida Valli, Ethel Barrymore, Charles Coburn, Louis Jourdan. Selznick International, 1947

28) ***The Thirty-Nine Steps***. By John Buchan. Adapt and Screen. Charles Bennett and Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Michael Balcon, Ivor Montague. Perf. Madeleine Carroll, Robert Donat, Louise Mannheim, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, John Laurie, Helen Haye, Wylie Watson. Lime Grove, 1935.

29) ***The Trouble with Harry***. By John Story. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Edmund Gwenn, John Forsyth, Shirley MacLaine, Mildred Natwick, Mildred Dunnock, Royal Dano, Philip Truex. Paramount, 1956.

30) ***To Catch a Thief***. By David Dodge. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Brigette Auber, John Williams. Paramount, 1955.

31) ***Under Capricorn***. By Helen Simpson. Adapt and screen. Hume Cronyn. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Ingrid Bergman, Joseph Cotton, Michael Wilding, Margaret Leighton, Dennis O' Dea. M. G. M. Studios at Elstree, 1949.

32) ***Vertigo***. By Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Adapt and Screen. Alec Coppel replaced by Samuel Taylor. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes, Tom Helmore, Henry Jones, Raymond Bailey, Ellen Corby, Konstantin Shayne, Lee Patrick. Paramount, 1958

Appendix B

HITCHCOCK'S CAMEO REFERENCE LIST[170]

1) **The Lodger (1926)** Hitchcock made two cameo appearances. He first appeared at a desk in a newsroom and later in the film as part of a crowd watching an arrest.

2) **Easy Virtue (1927)** Passing by a tennis court, carrying a walking stick.

3) **Blackmail (1929)** While reading a book on the subway, a young boy is pestering him.

4) **Murder (1930)** Walking by the house where the murder was committed.

5) **The Thirty-Nine Steps (1935)** Hitchcock is seen briefly in the beginning of the film, tossing some litter as Robert Donat and Lucie Mannheim run from the theatre.

6) **Young and Innocent (1937)** Holding a camera, standing outside a courthouse.

7) **The Lady Vanishes (1938)** Dressed in a black coat, smoking a cigarette in Victoria Station.

8) **Rebecca (1940)** Towards the end of the film, walking past a phone booth after George Sanders makes a call.

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[170] Hitchcock Cameo Appearances [Online Article] Retrieved September 27 2005 from the World Wide Web: http://hitchcock.tv/cam/cameos2.html

9) **Foreign Correspondent (1940)** After Joel McCrea leaves the hotel, decked out in a coat and hat, reading a newspaper.

10) **Mr. and Mrs. Smith (1941)** Passing Robert Montgomery outside his building.

11) **Suspicion (1941)** Mailing a letter at the town mailbox.

12) **Saboteur (1942)** Standing in front of a drugstore as the saboteur's car stops.

13) **Shadow of a Doubt (1943)** Playing cards on a train travelling to Santa Rosa.

14) **Lifeboat (1943)** This was a tricky cameo to pull off (the entire film was set on a lifeboat). Hitchcock appeared on a newspaper advertisement for "Reduce Obesity Slayer." Hitchcock was the "before" and "after" shots.

15) **Spellbound (1945)** Exiting the elevator in the Empire Hotel. He is smoking a cigarette and carrying a violin case.

16) **Notorious (1946)** Drinking champagne at a party in Claude Rains's mansion.

17) **The Paradine Case (1947)** At Cumberland Station, leaving a train, carrying a cello.

18) **Rope (1948)** One of the most clever cameos…Hitchcock's "logo" can be seen on a neon sign from the apartment window.

19) **Under Capricorn (1949)** Within the first five minutes, wearing a blue coat and a brown hat during a parade in the town square. Ten minutes later, he is one of three men on the steps outside the Government House.

20) **Stage Fright (1950)** Looking at Jane Wymann in her disguise as Dietrich's maid.

21) **Strangers on a Train (1951)** As Farley Granger gets off the train in his hometown, Hitchcock is boarding carrying a bass fiddle.

22) **I Confess (1952)** After the opening credits, crossing the top of a staircase.

23) **Dial M for Murder (1953)** In a class reunion photo in Grace Kelly's apartment.

24) **Rear Window (1954)** Winding a clock in the apartment of the songwriter.

25) **To Catch a Thief (1955)** Sitting next to Cary Grant on a bus.

26) **The Trouble with Harry (1956)** Walking by a parked limousine.

27) **The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956)** Just before the murder, he is watching acrobats in the Moroccan marketplace.

28) **The Wrong Man (1957)** Narrating the movie's prologue.

29) **Vertigo (1958)** Walking in the street, wearing a grey suit.

30) **North by Northwest (1959)** During the opening credits, we see, Hitchcock missing the bus.

31) **Psycho (1960)** Through Janet Leigh and Patricia Hitchcock's office window as she (Janet Leigh) returns to work. He is wearing a cowboy hat.

32) **The Birds (1963)** Early in the film, as Tippi Hedren enters the pet shop, he is exiting with two white terriers.

33) **Marnie (1964)** Entering from the left of a hotel corridor, just after Tippi Hedren passes through.

34) **Torn Curtain (1966)** Sitting in the Hotel D'Algleterre lobby with a baby.

35) **Topaz (1969)** In an airport, being pushed in a wheelchair. Hitchcock gets up from the wheelchair, shakes hands with a man and walks off.

36) **Frenzy (1972)** Centre of attention once again…the centre of a crowd; the only one not applauding the speaker.

37) **Family Plot (1976)** Alfred Hitchcock's last cameo as well as his last film. Seen as a silhouette behind a plate of glass in a door in the registry of births and deaths.

"DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCES": A STUDY OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MANIPULATION OF HIS AUDIENCES.

Rebecca Webber (97 00 33 7X)

A dissertation approved for the degree of Master of Arts by the University of the Witwatersrand.

Johannesburg, 2007

Abstract

This Master's thesis identifies and elucidates upon the motifs/themes/images, which Hitchcock utilized in his films to ultimately manipulate and thereby direct his audience's perception and understanding of his films' narratives.

The devices that are described and investigated in detail in this thesis are found to be recurrent in most of Alfred Hitchcock's films. That highlights the question: why are they recurrent? What purpose do they serve? I believe that the answer to these questions is that these devices were used by Hitchcock to serve the end of manipulating the audience.

The efficacy of these devices as used by Alfred Hitchcock is elaborated on in each chapter that addresses each motif in turn. Each chapter which deals with one of the motifs Alfred Hitchcock used in his manipulation of his audience contains examples from films and investigates how the motifs are used within each film to manipulate audience comprehension. These examples are strengthened with theory from academics, theorists and critics who have made a life-long study of Hitchcock.

My theoretical framework includes audience research and Metz's theory of 'suturing' which addresses the meaning of camera position and the different point of view that the audience take up. By means of this research I aim to explain the way in which Hitchcock consummately manages to manipulate the audience to follow 'red herrings' and ultimately surprise the audience.

This thesis acknowledges the premise that all film directors manipulate the audience and does not attempt to persuade the reader that Hitchcock was unique in this. It does aim to explore and explain how Hitchcock's unique use of specific motifs was utilized in order to manipulate audiences.

This thesis resulted in my understanding Hitchcock's method of directing his audiences as much as his films and I think that in a broader context explains the use and need (both Hitchcock's and the films narrative's) for the repetitive devices for which Hitchcock is renowned, rather than merely investigating them as isolated pieces in Hitchcock's films.

I would suggest that there is evidence in these films of a repetition compulsion, as if the films are attempting to solve a conundrum very much in the way that academics have attempted to solve the conundrum that is the work of Alfred Hitchcock.

Search words: Hitchcock, director, film, thriller, manipulation, audience, double, *Psycho*, scatology, voyeurism, auteur, spectator theory, Truffaut, narrative, scopohilia.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

day of November 2007

Rebecca Webber

Dedication

To my family

with sincere thanks

for their love and encouragement

during the writing of this thesis

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Prof. Jane Taylor for her support and intellectual assistance in the preparation of this dissertation.

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2. INTRODUCTION

The enigma that seems to be Alfred Hitchcock has long been analysed by film critics and academics alike. Hitchcock was a figure who was larger than life, a name that conjures up stories of strange and macabre occurrences. After all, that was Hitchcock's trademark as a director, the strange and uncanny. It was the basis of the persona he projected to other people.

'What *is* he? He's a horror!

'A horror?'

'He's - God help me if I know *what* he is!'[1]

He has been described as eccentric and as a genius and has achieved something of a cult status. In this thesis I aim to discover how Alfred Hitchcock's direction of his films and consequent manipulation of the audience via the use of motifs is unique and specific to him as a director. I do not aim to suggest that Hitchcock is unique as a director in terms of manipulating the audience – as it is inherent in the title of 'director' that all film directors to a greater or lesser degree guide and direct the audience's perception. I am however, venturing to reveal what it is about Hitchcock's direction that is special to him as distinct from other directors.

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[1] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 113

Alfred Hitchcock was a man who thrived on scaring people or rather manipulating people to feel fear or unease:

> Fear? It has influenced my life and my career. I remember when I was five or six. It was a Sunday evening, the only time my parents did not have to work. They put me to bed and went to Hyde Park for a stroll…They were sure I would be asleep until their return. But I woke up, called out, and no one answered. Nothing but night all round me. Shaking, I got up, wandered around the empty, dark house and, finally arriving in the kitchen, found a piece of cold meat which I ate while drying my tears.[2]

It is this memory that Hitchcock recalled of a nascent genius, terrified and alone which perhaps spurred him on to manipulate others to feel as he did. The preoccupation and curious comfort that he found in food also found its way into his films and will be discussed in a later chapter.

One of the first things people think of when questioned as to what is unique to Hitchcock, is the curious relationship Hitchcock forged with his audiences. Hitchcock himself noted, "Is a listener allowed to choose the notes he'll hear? If you free the spectator to choose, you're making theatre, not cinema." [3] Quite obviously, cinema was a means for Hitchcock by which he could achieve the end of audience manipulation because the film audience is given information on many levels that are not available in the medium of theatre. Cutting, editing close-ups and other tools used by filmmakers are solely the domain of film.

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[2] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. (pp.) 18-19
[3] SAMUELS, C.T. 1972. Encountering Directors. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. p. 234

Christian Metz designates the difference between film and theatre in terms of holding the audience's attention as being as simple as the differences in the viewing atmosphere for the audience:

> When a stage actor sneezes…the brutal interruption by "real" reality disrupts the reality of the fiction, it is equally apparent that such interferences exist not only in the caricatural and unusual form of a sneeze, but that they have a thousand more insidious embodiments…since one finds then arising from the audience as well as from the stage, in the "man's pose of independence, in the woman's dress and make-up." By hermetically isolating fiction from reality, film instantly dismisses this set of resistances and levels all obstacles to spectator participation.[4]

Cinema (for Metz as well as Hitchcock) was a more malleable art form especially in the manipulation of audiences than theatre. This dogmatic approach to directing has become a 'trademark' of Hitchcock's directing method and there are many other 'trademarks', themes, elements or motifs that have become synonymous with Hitchcock's work. It is these upon which I will extrapolate and investigate to explain exactly how unique Hitchcock's style and methods of directing are. One of his great admirers, Truffaut, made just this case:

> In recent years there have been countless imitations of *Vertigo*, *North-By-Northwest* and *Psycho*, whether it is acknowledged or not, there is no doubt Hitchcock's work has long influenced world cinema. [5]

[4] METZ, C. 1974. Film Language. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 11
[5] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Columbia University Press. p. 13

So on one hand he has influenced world cinema. It is well known that the term 'Hitchcockian' as a relatively new word, stands on its own in advertising jargon, signifying a masterful control of suspense as well as a guarantee of audience satisfaction. This is clearly indicative of Alfred Hitchcock's legacy of being a masterful manipulator and of leaving audiences relatively powerless as to which subject position they are going to take up. Rather than staying within the boundaries of film and performance, his influence has been translated into an independent concept across various cultural fields.

Hitchcock's tenacity and perfectionist nature all contributed to his obsessive desire to control every aspect of his filmmaking and audiences.

> Hitchcock composed his films with meticulous care, planning every aspect of form, composition, movement, and performance. This makes the practice of close reading especially productive when applied to his work, since it is likely that any given detail was determined by the filmmaker and is not the result of chance or the routine outcome of standardized filming and editing practices.[6]

His attention to detail was of great importance when we consider that Hitchcock was not just a director's filmmaker - he made films first and foremost for the audience – in order to direct the audience. In the following thesis I will argue that Hitchcock was indeed a manipulator of audiences, that he did this using specific themes, elements and motifs and being a very articulate and precise director.

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[6] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 29

The audience was an entity that Hitchcock wanted to control in its reactions to and enjoyment of his films. Hitchcock was always thinking of the audience every time he made a directorial decision. To some directors the audience are secondary to the actual 'art' of making a film, in any Hitchcock film, the manipulation and subsequent control of the audience seems to be the main objective. When investigating Hitchcock's methods of manipulating audience we need to understand how an audience works as an entity in and of itself. In the following chapters on the audience and narrative structure, I will argue that an audience needs to be understood as both a body participating in a group experience but also that the body of an audience is made up of individuals who are at the same time present as just that, individuals.

3. AUDIENCE

> [W]e should consider film viewing as a complicated, even skilled activity. Watching a movie may seem as effortless as riding a bicycle, but both draw on a range of practised acts. [7]

The concept of a film audience is one that is usually taken to refer to a mass of individuals who simultaneously watch a film, at the same moment in time, in the same location, in the same space, a cinema.

Many theorists have tried to pinpoint the exact function, reaction and general formulae which audiences use and have at their disposal in order to enter into film narratives and become spectators. David Bordwell, Noël Carroll and Gregory Currie, are among a group of theorists in the psychology and philosophy fields who strove to define the audience in terms of cognitive film theory. Julia Kristeva, Mary Ann Doane and Tania Modleski are just a few of many feminist film theorists who saw the lack of presence of spectator theory as defined by the female perspective and the work of Roland Barthes, Christian Metz and Jacques Lacan has been applied to theories of spectatorship which concern the viewer's relationship to the connection between language and what s/he sees.

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[7] BORDWELL, D. 1985. Narration in the Fiction Film. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press. p. 33

All of these theorists individually and as a group have contributed valuable and highly pertinent theory and intellectual insight to the ongoing debate that revolves around the constitution of an audience. In this thesis I do not think that all of their theories are particularly apposite to my line of research as my primary concern is how Hitchcock manipulates *an* audience (regardless of the distinctive make-up of that audience) via the use of universal themes. I am not interested exclusively in what racial, gender, economic or political sub- groups make up the body of an audience and how their viewing positions differ or converge. If any specific considerations for a definite sub-group is necessary in examining Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience in the case study of a unique film then they will be made apparent and noted in the discussion when it becomes necessary.

For this thesis I would like to make concentrate on and make clear the differences between the concept of audience as a group entity and audience as individuals within a larger body.

The continuing argument in audience theory is the oscillation between individual and group audience. Are the terms 'audience', 'spectator' and 'viewer' the same? Is the experience of viewing as an individual the same as when experiencing as a collective group? I would argue that there is not so much of a distinction between the two, especially when considering Hitchcock's direction, which is the specific area of question in this dissertation. I say this because the distinction between group and

individual psychology (audience) becomes less clear if we take into account Freud's suggestion stated in *Group Psychology,*

> The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology, which at first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses: but only rarely and under certain conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of words, is at the same time social psychology as well.[8]

Freud explicitly explains that our experience is always linked to our relationships with other people thus we never really view or experience something in total isolation. He further elaborates that,

> Group psychology is therefore concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organized into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose.[9]

An example of 'some definite purpose' would be the act of watching a film in a cinema. In this case, a group of people is sub-divided into national, professional, racial and gender groupings therefore the relation to each other as a collective group is really only coincidental. If any of these individuals experience a film in terms of

[8] FREUD, S. 1959. Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc. p. 1
[9] Ibid. p. 2

their relationships to others, their experience relies more on the people they know in both personal and professional capacities rather than the other strangers in the darkened cinema with them. However this cannot be the only argument in the individual versus group audience dichotomy.

I contend that Hitchcock was in his oeuvre inventing a modern public who despite their differences have one thing in common: a voyeuristic pleasure in watching an attack on an-other (because if it happened to them it didn't happen to me). So a new kind of audience member evolved in a Hitchcock audience.

Freud cites Le Bon in *Group Psychology*,

> Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, their occupations, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a group puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind…[10]

Le Bon seems to contradict Freud but from these statements it is clear that mankind and audiences cannot be investigated as simply an individual or a number of individuals because the groupings change every day according to geography, race and gender. However Le Bon's argument is, that individuals who gather en masse to engage in an activity together such as viewing a film, are placed within a position in which they see the same material at the same time and so in terms of the content of

[10] Le Bon as cited in Ibid. p. 5

what they see and hear, they are all receiving the same information. So for all intents and purposes they are in a type of group mind set. How the audience as individuals processes this information differs and so then the group mind set is no longer at work and becomes broken down into more individualistic interpretations. In film this is where manipulation arises i.e. In a Hitchcock film the you will decide that a certain character is guilty, Hitchcock confirms this and thus misleads you so the audience's reading position is ultimately challenged. It is too simplistic merely to divide the audience into 'individuals' and 'collective group'. Audiences work on both levels. Mankind and audiences can never be investigated as just individuals and neither can they solely be investigated as a group since the dynamics of audiences are continually changing. There will always be groups within a larger group, which in itself constitutes an audience. Within a group audience there will be smaller groups of individuals for whom certain themes in a film will resonate more with than others: the female audience member understands or links herself with certain viewing positions that the male audience member cannot. Certain viewing positions separate men and women because the narrative desire of most Western films places women as the object of the male gaze thus narrative closure for men does not equal closure for the audience member.

Alfred Hitchcock as a director used the idea that there are common fears and desires that affect people on a general level. He worked on the basis of using the audience as a group within which smaller groups of individuals with similar attitudes and perceptions as a result of the similar race, social level, and sexual identity exist.

Christian Metz's theory of 'Suturing' is that filmgoers psychologically place themselves inside the narrative: we experience film as if we are the camera lens – taking up various subject positions. Metz's theory was unwittingly used in Hitchcock's film language in order to allow for greater audience identification in the film - if he enabled the audience to literally be stitched into the narrative to a point where they were consumed by the fake reality then Hitchcock as filmmaker had greater control over the audience in order to manipulate and disturb. Suturing is also about particular ideologies and discourses and positioning audiences in a way that controls ideological responses.

> The text moves the subject, not as a disruption of a fixity, but in a constantly shifting regulation and containment. What moves in film, finally, is the spectator, immobile in front of the screen. Film is the regulation of that movement, the individual as subject held in a shifting and placing of desire, energy, contradiction, in a perpetual retotalisation of the imaginary (the set scene of image and subject.)[11]

Film is a tool by which the spectator is manipulated. Hitchcock realized that the audience was placed in a position where they shift in where and to whom they place desire and contradiction and he set out to be the one who controlled that position and the energy of the audience. The audience was a means to an end for Hitchcock: a means of achieving the goal of having a 'captive' group of people whom he could manipulate and unsettle via his films using fear as a tool. It was to become an audience whose responses he could control. Hitchcock's aim was to scare people be

[11] LAPSLEY, R. & WESTLAKE, M. 1988. Film Theory: An Introduction. Manchester: Manchester University Press. p. 138.

they individuals or a group. He did this to gain power and achieved the power by being the individual who controlled the fear felt by an audience. Fear is a very basic and primordial emotion. When we experience the emotion of fear we are vulnerable and at the mercy of the source of the anxiety or fear. Thus the originator of the fear is in the more powerful position than the recipient of the emotion of fear. Hitchcock was the originator of fear in the cinema for the audiences watching his films because he understood fear as a reward. He as a filmmaker was the one manipulating others to feel and understand the film through their ambiguous avoidance of and attraction to that fear.

For the purposes of this thesis the individual terms of 'viewer', 'spectator' and 'audience' are interchangeable. The Oxford Thesaurus gives 'watcher', 'beholder', 'viewer', and 'observer' as synonyms of spectator.[12] It gives 'spectator', 'member of an audience' and 'watcher' as possible synonyms for the word 'viewer'. [13] From this we can see how the terms for one who engages in watching, seeing and observing overlap and become synonymous within popular usage. They are not distinct from one another. It is for this reason that for the purpose of this chapter and dissertation as a whole, the terms of audience, spectator and viewer will be interchangeable terms for one who engages in viewing a film because for the purpose of this investigation I am interested in popular general attitudes to the concept of audience. I acknowledge that

[12] KIRKPATRICK, B. (Compiler). 1994. The Oxford Paperback Thesaurus. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 763
[13] Ibid. p. 879

in current popular usage ‘viewer’ is taken to refer to someone who engages in watching television and that a ‘spectator’ is one who usually watches sports events but their etymological reference in the Oxford Thesaurus does seem to concur in my understanding that as words they can stand in for each other.

My purpose in this chapter is to describe ‘audience’ in terms that are illuminating for an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock’s manipulation of the audience as a filmmaker.

3.1 Understanding the Audience

> [T]he search for something which, from one point of view, does not exist. Looked at another way, it is something so obvious that its existence is usually taken for granted. It cannot be interrogated, inspected, observed or investigated directly, but it completely surrounds us socially and it permeates our personal identity. It has no bodily form, but it is powerful; by some reckonings it is the ultimate power, being the source of sovereignty. It is a place, but you can’t walk into it, and it is a group of people – a vast group of people – but they never meet. The place and the people are familiar figures, but although you know them well, you have never seen them and you never will, even though you’re one of them. What is it? Who are they?[14]

‘It’ is the audience and ‘they’ are the spectators, the individuals who make up the audience – the subjects of Hitchcock’s manipulation. This quotation highlights the ambiguous nature and tenuous link between individual audience member and group

[14] HARTLEY, J. 1992. The Politics of Pictures. London: Routledge. p. 1

audience. It also underpins the essence of an audience being an indeterminate entity and being an almost ethereal force - a force that is almost impossible to establish as an absolute.

Although the main argument of this dissertation lies in attempting to prove via succinct argument that Hitchcock is a director who uses specific and unique methods of manipulating audiences, I will spend time in this section clarifying what I think is meant by the concept of the audience in general and the audience as it pertains to Hitchcock's films in particular.

The response to films is unequivocally an intense and private experience for an individual member of an audience but as Moores states: "…our being moved in certain ways by works of art, though very 'natural' to us and in that way only too intelligible, involves us in inconsistency and so incoherence."[15] It cannot be said be to be an essentially logical process. We witness events in a darkened cinema and on one level know that what we are seeing is an illusion of reality yet on another level we suspend disbelief to fully believe in the illusion. This response to film is what involves us in 'inconsistency and incoherence'. Our assessments of characters, who they are, what their connections are with each other, continually changes or is made to change by the influence of the director and his/her choices of framing and overall filming. Hitchcock's films specifically make it impossible for the viewer to stay in a position where they know for certain that their assumptions about the film are indeed

[15] MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 8

correct or even that their assumptions are what they think their assumptions are. Hitchcock constantly and actively insured via his direction that his audiences would be involved in 'inconsistency and incoherence.' This chaos serves Hitchcock's direction in enabling him to always be the one in control, the one who makes meaning. The chaos gives Hitchcock a platform from which he can be the supreme dictator and allow the audience to jump to narrative conclusions that are inevitable incorrect. The 'inconsistency and incoherence' also becomes a tool that Hitchcock wields in order to confuse the audience and lead them down paths (in terms of making sense of the narrative) that are in essentially red herrings. A prime example of his use of 'chaos' in order to deliberately mislead the audience is the murder of Janet Leigh in *Psycho.* He bombards the audience with information in the beginning of the film about the female protagonist's relationship with a married man and her displeasure with her job. The audience believes that this information sets the scene and tone for the rest of the film so that when Janet Leigh steals the money and embarks on a road trip to join her lover the audience presumes that this relationship and the issue of the stolen money will be the main story of the film's narrative. This is of course far from what Hitchcock has actually planned. The female protagonist and the actress with top billing is murdered another twist the audience did not expect. The audience's usual and ordered view of how a film unfolds has been shattered and they are plummeted into a feeling of chaos and disjointedness. They are now no longer sure of where the narrative is going or who the main protagonist will be. As the film unfolds the audience identifies Norman as the substitute protagonist and even starts to feel empathy for him because he has a mad and cruel mother with whom to

contend. The audience feels they are sure that his mother is alive because they have seen her shadowy outline behind a shower curtain and they have heard her berate her son. These things they have seen and heard on screen and so believe that the mother figure is a live character in the film's narrative when she really only exists in Norman's head. The director has shown them this (the figure behind the shower curtain, the indentation of a body in the bedroom) and the audience has no reason to believe that the director would actually mislead them. Yet the truth is that Hitchcock has misled the audience. In this case by playing out the psychological truth as if it is the literal truth i.e. the existence of the dead mother.[16] The audience's truth is that the dead are dead– this is not Norman's truth. Hitchcock has placed the audience in positions of chaos and inconsistency so that just when they ultimately think they know where the narrative is heading he takes them down another avenue of possible meaning. At the end of the film it becomes obvious to the audience that what they had thought was occurring in the film was nothing akin to what was happening according to the director's version of the same film. Hitchcock plays the psychological truth as if it is the literal truth – he includes 'mother' as a live character in the narrative when she only has life in Norman's mind. To the audience she is dead but she is only too real for Norman. The director took them on a journey and was the individual in control, they had not for one moment been in any position of absolute control over the production of meaning in the film they had viewed.

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[16] According to Donald Spence within the psychological literature, a distinction has been made between the narrative truth and historical truth, in the suggestion that the subjective truth of the analysand may be a psychological fact even if it is not a historical fact. SPENCE, D. 1982. Narrative Truth and Historical Truth. New York: W.W. Norton.

Hitchcock's ingenuity as a director lay in his ingenious use of methods of audience manipulation in ways in which he knew would have an effect on all stratas of society and not only a select few. "Hitchcock's ability to make his audience comfortable with his conceptions, mainly in the portrayal of his characters' situations as 'normal'…"[16] is what made most of Hitchcock's plot lines plausible to the audience. The chapters on Casting, The Mother Figure, Scatology and the Double all deal with subject matters that any audience of any ethnic group; age, gender and time period can relate to even though the meanings will be different because they deal with psychological fundamentals which it seems Hitchcock believed to be universals. The group is so broad in this specific case because the themes manipulated and addressed in Hitchcock's films are timeless (they are not governed by periods of time and the changing social conventions which operate within those set time periods). His manipulation can be understood in terms of his use of themes, ideas and motifs that are universal (they are applicable to people on all levels of society.) Hitchcock's films balance historical particularities against ahistorical universals, the ideal of virginal beauty and innocence in *Rebecca* is very specific but Hitchcock implies that themes like the love triangle are universal. Having said that, however, there is always an exception to the rule and chapter 5 The Homosexual Other - exhibits the truth of this exception as this chapter depends on the particular 'other' being discussed. The 'Other' is a character that alters according to the main subject of debate. Plausibility

[16] STEVENS, J. Analytical Essay: Alfred Hitchcock, Psycho. p. 1 [Online Article]. Retrieved 15 May 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://web.tiscali.it/andrebalza/stevens.html?

of film scenario and setting also play a role in Hitchcock's ability to manipulate the audience. He achieves this by using fairly plausible settings, characters and plot lines in which most audience members can find a degree of 'believability' that are also consistent as plausibility relies on an internal consistency which is of course naturalism's conservative purpose: to persuade us of the 'reality' of narrative because of the 'reality' of the settings. The first step in manipulation of any kind is to make the subject trust and believe. In this way it is crucial to see that in having motifs, themes and concepts or ideologies that will appeal to a large section of most communities that will go en masse to see a film, Hitchcock was unconsciously appealing to a theory that was formulated much later by D. K Lewis, namely the Counterpart Theory. The Counterpart Theory is the theory that when watching a film and seeing characters act out situations on the screen the audience member makes reference or draws a 'counterpart' to an individual in their own reality or a similar situation to the one on screen, although they know the enactment on screen to be a movie device and in no sense an actuality. Gregory Currie proposes that

> …we experience genuine emotions when we encounter fiction, but their relation to the story is causal rather than intentional; the story provokes thoughts about real people and situations, and these are the intentional objects of our emotions.[17]

Kendall Walton himself provides an early statement of the Counterpart Theory by using the following example,

[17] "The Paradox of Fiction" The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. p. 5. Retrieved 5 March 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.iep.utm.edu/f/fict-par.htm

> If Charles is a child, the movie may make him wonder whether there might not be real slimes or other exotic horrors like the one depicted in the movie, even if he fully realizes that the movie-device itself is not real.[18]

Some variations of this theory go so far as to make claims with reference to possible rather than real people and situations. Hitchcock portrays the situations with Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt* and Norman in *Psycho* in such a manner that makes them seem normal thus the plausibility of the scenario lies in manipulating the audience to identify characters with people in their own lives - who actually exist thus making the subject trust and believe in the constructed reality. Hitchcock as director leaves the audience with the burning question of "do people like these characters really exist?" To implant the seed of doubt that this doesn't only 'happen in the movies' and could be a reality in their own lives, Hitchcock heightens audience fear, trepidation and unease. It is not so much a question of Hitchcock wanting to break down the barrier between reality and illusion as that he wants to heighten emotion by suggesting that characters like Uncle Charlie and Norman exist in the world. For if he were to break down the barrier between reality and illusion this would be counter-productive for his aim of audience manipulation. The audience has to be completely immersed in the world of the film for this manipulation to be possible. In this respect, "Hitchcock's work is based on an 'exact science of audience relations.'"[19] Hitchcock knows which 'buttons to push' in order to elicit a specific reaction from the audience.

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[18] Ibid. p. 2

[19] Jean Douchet as cited in BORDWELL, D. 1989. Making Meaning. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. p. 226

The audience is not homogenous however and does not perceive *en masse* in exactly the same way due to differentials in class, education and gender. This is why,

> …We can usefully analyse the 'you' or 'yous' that the text as discourse constructs, but we cannot assume that any individual audience member will necessarily occupy these positions. The relation of the audience to the text will not be determined solely by that text, but also by positionalities in relation to a whole range of other discourses…elaborated elsewhere, already in circulation and brought to the (text) by the viewer.[20]

In this respect it is important to understand the role that Metz's theory of suturing plays in the comprehension of Hitchcock's control and manipulation of audiences. The film provides various viewing positions. It allows the viewer the opportunity in Christian Metz's term, of 'suturing', to be 'stitched' into the narrative in a discursive position. "…the constitution of unified subjects who…are sutured and positioned in the film."[21] With regard to this it is vital to realise the importance of Hitchcock's manipulation taking suturing into account because, "The coherence of cinematic narration hinges on suturing which reinforces the ideological effect of the subject's positioning."[22] In other words, the film provides a point of view that is confirmed and affirmed by the film itself. Although it is important to note that Hitchcock would not have imagined the process in these terms. This means that the audience member, in order to follow the narrative, fill in its gaps and so on, is obliged to be a compliant viewer – one who accepts the contract of the film. Yet although audience

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[20] MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 16
[21] CARROLL, N. 1988. Mystifying Movies. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 186
[22] Ibid. p. 187

members accept the contract of the film, they also partake in a form of creative energy as Douchet states: "I've always said that the spectator is a creator. I don't know a true film-maker who isn't a real spectator."[23]

There is always an interaction between spectator and film as well as filmmaker. Film is a discourse in that

> [I]t calls for the spectator's participation, if only passively, through his/her willing acceptance of a proffered position in relation to the speaking 'I'. Should the spectator refuse this position and perhaps take up his/her own point of view external to the film, different possibilities open up.[24]

This 'participation' that occurs when an audience engages in the discourse of a film is contrived by the director, especially in the case of Hitchcock. To use Metz's theory of suture again, Hitchcock makes the camera's point of view that of the audience - the audience is stitched into the narrative and follow what he allows them to see (the proffered position in relation to the speaking I as mentioned in the above quotation). There is a discourse between filmmaker and the audience in the making of a film and when discussing Alfred Hitchcock specifically in this thesis we must acknowledge that the predominant genre of his films was that of the thriller and the realist thriller at that. Hitchcock's plots are not fantastical – only able to exist in an imaginary

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[23] Ibid.
[24] MARGOLIS, H. E. 1988. The Cinema Ideal. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. p. 51

domain, they are plausible and only too able to transpose from the screen to real life. They could happen in reality in the day to day life of the audience members.

Moores has analysed the particular contract established in a classical realist film:

> In *Realism and the Cinema*…Colin MacCabe (1974) proposed that 'the classical realist text' works by constructing an illusion of transparency in which, supposedly, spectators imagine themselves to be gazing directly on to a 'real' scene. When the reality of the situation is that they are watching a movie. Hollywood film, so it was claimed, denies its own material existence as text – and in so doing, constitutes a fiction of centred vision and unified subjectivity for the reader.'[25]

Suturing is important in understanding how Hitchcock's films work to manipulate the audience, because it makes us (the audience), "… imagine that we are the source of meaning and identity – when in reality we are subject-ed to the differences of language."[26] Hitchcock is the 'puppet master' who pulls the strings enabling the audience to react in a specific way. He does this without the audience being aware of his manipulation so that audiences believe they are the source of the meaning and understanding of the film, when it is Alfred Hitchcock who is the producer of meaning for the audience. It is he who forces the subject to 'make…the meanings the film makes for it.'

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[25] MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 13
[26] Ibid. p. 13

The audience member can never be said to be a fixed form from which we can assume all audience reaction results because an audience member cannot possibly be an 'everyman' or woman as the case may be. Due to filial, social, economic, racial, political, sexual and especially gender influences there is an infinite set of positions from which an individual will view films. Hitchcock's audiences are also 'subject-ed' to the 'language' of Hitchcock's direction and subsequent manipulation. In other words, Hitchcock sometimes takes a group of individuals and turns them into an audience by playing on something that a certain group of individuals has in common as distinct from another group of individuals.

An example would be the male audience member who watches *Marnie;* the title character would appeal to the heterosexual, male audience member as well as the homosexual female audience member as an exciting and fascinating temptress whose main attraction is that she goes against convention by stealing, that she is a woman of ill repute. She also 'acts up' on behalf of heterosexual women, who would identify with her as a prosthetic self. The character who goes against convention is always more interesting and fascinating than the character who adheres to what is conventional because we as audience members want to know why there is a desire in the character to disregard convention and the 'bad boy/girl' or girl character has always been something of a cliché in terms of sexual allure. The same character is neither perceived nor has the same 'attractive' qualities for an audience member falling outside of the parameters of these three groups.

Hitchcock's audiences are a cosmopolitan array of cultures, ethnicities, nationalities and time periods. Audiences from the 1950s through to the audiences in the 2000s have seen the same Hitchcock films and have thoroughly enjoyed their spectator experience in viewing these films although obviously not in the same way because film technology has become more advanced in the intervening years. The radicalism of Hitchcock's work is kept alive so many years after his initial work was screened for the very first time because of the complexity of his work in terms of mise-en-scene, camera angles, and overall filmic construction. His films are so complex that it is always possible to find something 'new' in subsequent screenings of Hitchcock's films (even if a particular film has been seen multiple times) and in light of this it is possible to see the universality of Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences. His manipulation crosses time periods as well as cultural barriers. The notion of the audience in the investigation of Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences lies less in the ethnography of the audience than in what attributes of people in general Hitchcock 'picked on' to manipulate. Alfred Hitchcock circumvented dissonances between the viewer and the character on the screen by focussing on common denominators between them. Some of these are investigated in the following chapters of this dissertation. Despite historical shifts and changes, there is still a 'universal' human subject. The production of the individual in a dialogue with fear and the unknown is always there. The individual to Hitchcock is similar to the concept of Lacan's conception of the subject as discursively produced which Shaun Moores succinctly summarizes in asserting that,

> …Lacanian psychoanalysis is concerned to emphasize the 'de-centred' nature of subjectivity – its necessary provisional and precarious status, and its production within an external system of signs. We are not, so the argument goes, able to act freely upon the world or to express ourselves freely though speech. Rather, it is the other way around. The social world acts upon us and we are only constituted as subject in the very instance of speaking, as we enter into the 'symbolic order' of language…When speaking, we get caught up in a fiction or illusion that we really do have fixed and unified selves – whereas, Lacan suggests, our subjectivities are constantly in process and always divided.[27]

Discourse is important to our understanding of Hitchcock's manipulation of audiences in that this was a means by which Hitchcock could ensure total audience absorption in the filmic text. It is quite obvious then, that upon finding ourselves seated in a darkened cinema, watching the images displayed in front of us, we create the fiction. "[E]very time we occupy a 'subject position in discourse, as the personal pronoun 'I' is uttered another person is addressed as 'you'."[28] Hitchcock's cameos though, as a means of manipulation, operate in a Brechtian manner, working as a device by which to expose the machinations behind the illusion. This practice was one in which he aimed to show the audience who the author of their present illusion was. The audience may think they create the fiction but Hitchcock is always nudging them along. He used a signature that served to stitch the real (Hitchcock's vision of the narrative) and the illusory (the audience's vision of the narrative) together.

The manipulation that Hitchcock used was often done to make the audience believe in one thing while he planned that the complete opposite would occur. Whilst I am not

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

arguing against David Morley's assertion that "…other discourses are always in play besides those of the particular text in focus - discourses…brought into play through 'the subject's' placing in other practices – cultural, educational, institutional…"[29] I am arguing that a good director is one who in a single film can transcend differences based on personal experience and appeal to the psychological fundamentals within each individual. This is something Hitchcock achieved. He appealed to the primitive human conditions of fear, suspicion and our own innate ability to believe the worst of people without sufficient proof.

The question of audience identity has, in many theoretical investigations, been diverted into the question of spectatorship. In Hitchcock films, the audience is frequently given the uncanny experience of watching someone watching:

> There would be no such thing as spectatorship if the cinema did not function as a powerful form of pleasure, entertainment, and socialization. Some films like *Rear Window* (as well as virtually all of Hitchcock's films) and *Coma*[30] read easily as demonstrations – explicit or otherwise – of the lure of spectatorships. But spectatorship is more than individual film characters who embody spectator roles, by acting, as the characters portrayed by James Stewart and Genevieve Bujold do, as spectators within the film. Indeed, spectatorship entails much more than individual films or even the individual and collective viewing experiences of audiences.[31]

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[29] Morley as cited in MOORES, S. 1993. Interpreting Audiences. London: Sage Publications Ltd. p. 16
[30] Made in 1978 *Coma* is a film about a doctor played by Bujold who suspects mysterious deaths and medical goings on in a hospital.
[31] MAYNE, J. 1993. Cinema and Spectatorship. New York: Routledge. p. 31

To conclude, these methods of investigating the variables inherent in trying to pinpoint the essence of spectatorship although necessary, are not as important to this thesis as how Hitchcock perceived and consequently manipulated audiences.

> To begin with, then, spectatorship refers not just to the acts of watching and listening, and not just to identification with human figures projected on the screen, but rather to the various values with which film viewing is invested. Hence, the pleasures and dangers affiliated with watching and listening, in *Rear Window* and *Coma*, are channelled into powerful cultural and narrative myths of man and woman, social class, private and public life.[32]

The audience is made up of individuals who in their own private capacity as individuals take part in viewing the film and also on another level publicly take part in a public ritual for a set time. The audience vicariously takes part in lives and experiences and thus finds pleasure in even dangerous situations offered by a film text. Hitchcock's main concern in producing thrillers was the that the audiences find pleasure in danger as Jean Douchet explains,

> …Alfred Hitchcock was the one, who within this principle, managed to make the most beautiful films. Undoubtedly because Hitchcock had truly made it the basis of the construction of his universe: the hero, the heroine, are the onscreen projection of the spectator's desires and fears. Hitchcock never leaves the movie-house, he takes the world which is in the head of his spectator and puts it on the screen alongside that which is in the heads of his own characters. He doesn't really begin his film until the moment when the camera, placed imaginatively inside the skull of the spectator, has begun to project that spectator's world onto the screen. It's a magnificent idea, very Hitchcockian, and one that absolutely respects the spectator even if it plays with his or her desires and fears.[33]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Jean Douchet as cited in an interview with A. de Baecque and C-M. Bosséne Retrieved 17 May 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://www.frameworkonline.com/42jd.htm

The spectator is not to be interpreted as a passive individual and according to Margolis must be understood as being able to bring personal experience to the interpretive process. We must remember that Hitchcock did not expect the audience to be passive but he realized that the audience would continually be drawing their own conclusions and thus set out to thwart their process.

> The cinema, it was argued, is a dense system of meaning, one that borrows from so many different discourses – of fashion, of narrative, of politics, of advertising, and so on…theorists argued that the cinema is not just a product of a particular culture, but rather a projection of its most fundamental needs, desires and beliefs.[34]

These 'fundamental needs, desires and beliefs' are what Hitchcock used to manipulate the audience – basic core fears of misogyny, the other, the mother, death, scatology and mental aberrations. All of these can be seen to a greater or lesser degree in virtually all of Hitchcock's films from the 1940s onwards, but specifically can be seen in *Spellbound, Notorious, Psycho, Shadow of a Doubt, Rope, Frenzy, Rebecca* and *Strangers on a Train.* Hitchcock understood that "…individual people are not merely individuals…" They are "…the subjective existence of thought and experience society presents for itself."[35]

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[34] MAYNE, J. 1993. Cinema and Spectatorship. New York: Routledge. pp. 21-22
[35] HARTLEY, J. 1992. The Politics of Pictures. London: Routledge. p. 85

4. USE OF THE 'STAR' SYSTEM

4.1 Casting and Physical types

Hitchcock's films are sometimes categorized as a 'Cary Grant', 'James Stewart' or even as an 'Ingrid Bergman' film and this is because Hitchcock seemed to favour certain actors over others in particular roles. Grant and Stewart each appeared in four of Hitchcock's films and Ingrid Bergman appeared in three of Hitchcock's films. This would seem to suggest Hitchcock's knowledge and awareness of the role that fame and 'star' status played with audiences and also to what ends it could be used in the manipulation of cinema audiences within the viewing process.

In this chapter I will examine Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience when taking casting and physical types of actors into account. Film stars are not just actors – their 'star' quality gives them a certain standing as icons outside of the roles that they portray. There is a moral expectation of 'stars' and Hitchcock manipulates this in his films sometimes casting to type and at other times casting against type. He also manipulates moral ambiguity, highlighting the sometimes minor differences between that which is truly virtuous and that which is purely malevolent.

As precise as Hitchcock was in composing the actual mechanics and technicalities of the film, he was just as pedantic about casting and the physical types of actors he used in his films in order to bring his characters to life. He did not cast actors in a haphazard manner, wanting to cast 'names' to ensure a box office success. Rather he

had specific notions and concepts in his mind, which he wanted embodied on screen – in a particular manner. It is therefore no wonder that Hitchcock was precise and doctrinaire about the casting of his films.

It is well known that Hitchcock chose actors based on what they looked like. When he was working at the Selznick studios an actress walked by - Hitchcock took one look at her and said, and "She'll play in *Spellbound*." The actress was Ingrid Bergman. He hadn't even bothered to concern himself with an audition because she 'looked' the part to him. Bergman herself says of that incident that 'I think he chooses people for what they look like.'[36]

Hitchcock used many actors in his films and like every other component of his films, the actors were carefully chosen in order to convey a certain preconceived notion or idea and also to convey moral ambiguity in film roles to potentially sway the audiences perceptions. He used actors whom he knew would signify a specific idea or image to an audience. He manipulated the audience to view an actor playing a character in a specific way in order to prove them to be incorrect in the assumptions, which they drew by revealing the true intentions of a character during the course of the film. So the fresh and innocent - faced Norman in *Psycho* was not as innocent as he appeared, the haggard appearance and distinctly bizarre behaviour of Blaney in *Frenzy* are not indicative of a demented serial killer.

[36] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 150

The majority of Hitchcock's villains from Norman Bates in *Psycho,* to Bruno in *Strangers on a Train* are never 'thugs'. They tend to be educated and genteel. In fact Hitchcock deliberately arranged with MGM to get Robert Walker to play the suave and elegant villain, casting him against type as he had previously only really had the chance to play the boy-next-door roles. The villains in Hitchcock's films tend to be extremely polite and also to be in possession of boyish charms. Even the murderers in *Rope* are well-educated, well-dressed young men with impeccable manners, the sort not usually believed to commit crimes. In *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock* Durgnat noted that Alfred Hitchcock always said that it is best to make your villain a suave and charming fellow. Obviously indicating that villains who are the stereotypical notion of a thug (coarse and brutish) are not as compelling as 'suave' and charming' villains who exploit our gullibility and our readiness to place our trust in a person based on their background, class and demeanour of a person. The psychopath in *Frenzy* is explored as someone who can dissemble normality: that is his menace. Hitchcock pointed out that nobody ever asks the question "How do these villains get close to their victims?" He put forth the concept that villains need to be charming, loquacious individuals because they need to be in possession of these qualities in order to gain their victim's trust. It is also required for Hitchcock's audiences to feel drawn to these characters – to trust them in order for Hitchcock to take advantage of their credulity and manipulate their expectations.

Interesting to note is Hitchcock's apparent use of singular 'types' in the casting of the male roles in his films. Hitchcock never uses particularly muscle-bound nor overtly

masculine physical types in his films. Prime examples of this are both Cary Grant and James Stewart who are slim, slight men. Whether they are hero or villain, Hitchcock's leading men are cerebral and gentlemanly. Hitchcock works against the preconceived notion of 'butch' masculinity being more threatening than the 'bookish' intellectual type. His villains do not have to be large, muscled, imposing figures. They simply have to suggest a hint of malevolence in order to suggest the inherent evil that lurks beneath the façade. Hitchcock highlights the short-sightedness of both society and audiences who judge villains by set, stereotypical societal constraints.

Durgnat draws attention to Hitchcock's preference for actors who,

> [A]re those with a screen personality so strong that it is often larger than the role they are playing. The identification of the audience is more complete when it is watching James Stewart or Cary Grant…than it is with less engaging performances. [37]

He chose film actors who had a large fan base and whose fans could completely identify with favourite stars. Hitchcock knew the billing of certain actor's names was enough to grab the attention of audiences before they even knew what the specific narrative was concerned with. James Stewart usually played the 'good guy' as did Cary Grant. James Mason on the other hand customarily played the villain. In this way Hitchcock, cast according to type and relied on the audience's absolute belief in the aura of the actor more than in the character the actor played. In *North by*

[37] Ibid. p. 125

Northwest, the character of Van Damme is evil personified but a thin veneer of 'breeding' and genteel overtones cover this evil. Audiences however will readily believe in the evil of the character because the audience expectation of Mason was one of his playing the 'bad guy' in any film in which he appeared. Hitchcock relied on the preconceived ideas that the audience had in order to subvert them.

Hitchcock's villains are not detestable characters. They appear to be charming, elegant and urbane. They are just like their counterparts – the 'heroes' in everything apart from their moral convictions and integrity. Hitchcock uses the values people esteem most highly in heroes, in his villains using this as a ploy to manipulate the audience's loyalty between the hero and the villain. "An examination of the heroes of any given society will reveal what that society values most highly in its people."[38] This is what makes his villains likeable characters despite their tendencies toward villainy. In this way Hitchcock's films highlight the oftentimes astonishingly minor differences between villains and heroes. This is intuitive manipulation on Hitchcock's part because uses traits in his villains that the audience can to a point admire (and one knows that we are never supposed to find redeeming and admirable points in villains!) In this way Hitchcock also raises a significant critique of cultural values and the faulty standards and nebulous boundaries that society uses to judge the abstract notions of virtue and integrity.

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[38]BENSON, L. 1974. Images, Heroes and Self-Perception. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. p. 13

Hitchcock manipulated what the public wanted in their heroes and villains. He knew what their expectations were and used this in his direction of his audiences. In *Spellbound* Gregory Peck was a newcomer on the acting scene and Ingrid Bergman was the draw card. Peck had to play an impostor accused of killing Dr. Edwardes. As he was a 'new' star the audience would not be able to typecast him from the start as either the wrongly accused hero or the villainous murderer. In respect of which question, the audience would be kept 'guessing' until the end of the film. This is masterful manipulation on the part of Alfred Hitchcock. When we consider that *Spellbound*'s main theme is one of ambiguous guilt, to cast the leading man (who plays a character of indefinite rectitude) is fitting and quite cunning of Hitchcock to use an actor whose 'star' status was yet to be determined and whose role 'type' had yet to be established. In this case the ambiguity of the actor was used to synchronise with the ambiguous nature of the character – to keep the audience in a state of vacillation regarding the true guilt of the character.

In terms of hair colouring for the film, Peck was dark and definitely the classical 'brooding leading man' whilst Ingrid Bergman was fair, the classical film heroine, who fights for the virtuous clearing of her love interest's name. *Spellbound* was unlike *Shadow of a Doubt*, where the binary opposite of dark and fair hair represent a thematic difference in characters, the opposition in *Spellbound* exists to keep the audience guessing. It plays on the stereotypical view of the audience that the fair leading lady is entranced in the power of a dark, brooding, (and implicitly untrustworthy) male of dubious moral quality. In this respect we see how

Hitchcock's manipulation of what society in general and his audiences specifically viewed as good or bad, depended on subconscious attitudes towards colouring in terms of hair, skin tone and costume.

In *Shadow of a Doubt* however the two leads seem to be coloured so as to obscure the line between the themes of 'good' and 'evil'. Due to the preconceived idea of white or light colours representing good and black or dark colours representing evil, one would think that the diabolical Uncle Charlie would have dark or black hair whilst his innocent niece would have fair hair. This is not the case. Uncle Charlie has fair hair and his niece has brown hair. Hitchcock however, has blurred the lines between what is typically perceived as moral and typically immoral. Hitchcock does this to such an extent that there seems to be a plausible excuse used in Uncle Charlie's defence of his own diabolical actions describing how the world is 'a foul sty'. We as the audience sympathize with him, as we know how unsatisfactory a place the world can be and can even concur with parts of his defence of why he killed rich widows. On the other hand Charlie, the niece, seems to be spoilt, naïve and rather petulant. The reason for this is probably due to Hitchcock's wanting to make the statement that no person is wholly pure or wholly evil, we have characteristics of both. Even Hitchcock admits that the murderer Uncle Charlie has redeeming qualities:

> …he's a killer with an ideal; he's one of those murderers who feel they have a mission to destroy…There is a moral judgment in the film. He's destroyed at the

> end isn't he?…What it boils down to is that villains are not all black and heroes are not all white; there are grays everywhere.[39]

In terms of fame, once again Hitchcock in this film inverts the usage of fame and inherent 'good guy' status for the leading man. As in most rules there is always an exception. Hitchcock oscillated between playing for and against audience expectation. Joseph Cotten was a popular and well-loved film star. The trick that Hitchcock played on his audience was casting Cotten as the psychopathic Uncle. The audience would not have expected Cotten to be the villain of the piece, even less so that he would portray a character with psychopathic tendencies. So whilst the nice Charlie spends the film convinced of her Uncle's guilt, the audience sits smug in their knowledge that any character played by Cotton must be beyond reproach.

Rope is yet another example of a film wherein Hitchcock casts against type. This was inspired, for Stewart had returned from the war an Air Force hero and had re-established his film career as the platonic form of middle-American hero in Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life.* Stewart is the egotistical professor who impresses young students with tales of intellectually motivated killings that are justified in that they remove lesser mortals from the earth. Hitchcock 'plays' with the audience's expectations of what to expect from any character played by a wholesome American 'hero' like Stewart. The audience is uncomfortable with the idea of Stewart's character being in the least bit responsible for the actions of killers. Hitchcock does

[39] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 98

this to ratify the concept that we are all responsible at some level for what we say, do and think. *Psycho* is yet another prime example where the star status of actors is used to manipulate meaning and keep the audience guessing. Janet Leigh as the star of the film is expected to last the duration of the film or so the audience believes. We all believe at a subconscious level that the heroes of any film should be 'victorious' at the end yet Janet Leigh is murdered less than half an hour into the film. Subsequently Arbogast, yet another hero who is supposed to avenge Leigh's death by finding 'Mother', is also slain.

> A special urgency does result from the death, in *Psycho,* of our two successive identification figures, two brutal slaps in the face of our conditioning by Hollywood into a kind of romantic egoism whereby the hero's best pal may die but the hero, never.[40]

When Marion and Arbogast die the audience is swept into a panic of misdirected allegiance and is confused as to whom to support next. Hitchcock cleverly does this to disorientate the audience members, to make them unsure of their footing and confused. Whereas we usually know who the good guy is and to support him we now start to 'side' with Norman, who has covered up a crime and is in no way completely innocent. We support Norman because our initial figure with whom we have identified has been murdered. This comes as a shock as Leigh is fair haired, petite and defenceless against her attacker whilst the attacker (whom we discover to be Norman Bates) is also slim but dark with a boyish grin. Like so many of

[40] Ibid. p. 32

Hitchcockian villains seen before he has a hint of malevolence that glints from beneath the mask of good-looking, boyish charisma. Hitchcock gives the villain, Norman, dark hair and dark clothing but due to his boyish good looks and charm we as the audience do not believe he could be guilty of murdering a defenceless woman.

Hitchcock does manipulate the audience on two separate levels. On another level Hitchcock seems to set about building towards this retributive act that happens to Marion. The first time we ever see Marion she is in a motel room enjoying an illicit sexual meeting with her married lover. An unsanctioned meeting in two ways – firstly that they are engaging in sexual relations outside of marriage and secondly their relationship is adulterous. Marion wants her lover to leave his wife and marry her - he is reluctant. In her desperation to exert some control over her life decides to take matters into her own hands and lends fate a helping hand. She does this by stealing money that her boss requests that she deposit on her way home. She then embarks on a journey to her lover's home in order that they should run away together i.e. run away from responsibility, away from the strict authority of the confines of societal laws and moral edicts. Hitchcock manipulates the audience to feel condemnation and superior morality to this 'Jezebel'. Hitchcock does all this very subtly where he includes shots like the one where the motorcycle policeman stares directly into the camera (at Marion and us) and so disapproves of Marion (and us). Her guilt is transferred to the audience with this shot and so we feel that in order to stop the censorious gaze of the policeman – Marion needs to be punished in some way. When she is, I think the shock for the audience is firstly due to the unexpected

way in which it occurs and secondly because we subconsciously had wanted Marion's censorship because of the policeman's condemnatory stare earlier. Again we see how moral complexities are raised and how Hitchcock does not shy away from having the lead actress play a character of questionable moral fibre.

'Stars' were a seminal part of Hitchcock audience manipulation. An excerpt from printed dialogue of Hitchcock's in which he spoke of his handling of stars, sums up this chapter quite aptly,

> The point about the star-system is that it enables you to exaggerate from a story point of view. And the stars do bring the audiences into the cinema. A star's name is like a clarion call and brings in the time factor when, for instance, a film is shown and you want people to come and see it on definite days. A film without stars would have to wait to be appreciated….[41]

Perkins joins Bruno from *Strangers on a Train* and Bob Rusk from *Frenzy*. They are all psychopaths, capable of heinous crimes without batting an eyelid, are all seen to be dominated by their mothers and are sensitive and not particularly masculine within the stereotypical ideal of masculinity.

[41] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 178

In the following extract between Alfred Hitchcock and C.T. Samuels, Hitchcock reveals his motivation in casting villains as he does,

> H: But a very attractive man. That's something I always insist on. Movies usually portray murderers as tough and unsympathetic. That always makes me wonder how they ever get near their victims.
>
> S: You wouldn't be interested in a murderer who didn't get close to his victims, would you?
>
> H: No. I've never been interested in professional criminals. The audience can't identify with their lack of feeling. I'm also not interested in the conventional detective. That's why, for example, in *Frenzy* I invented the discussion of the crime outside a professional context.[42]

Crime is such a core of Hitchcock's films because of the 'otherness' of the criminal. In our law-abiding everyday lives, we the audience have no comprehension of leading a life of crime and or violence. The other is thus a threatening character for the audience, a character that embodies tremendous dread and unease for us.

[42] SAMUELS, C.T. 1972. Encountering Directors. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons. p. 238

5. THE HOMOSEXUAL OTHER

According to Lacanian psychology, we depend on the existence of the other to fill in the gap of our desires, to create, if only for a moment, the wholeness before our subjectivity, before there was an Other. How this relates to otherness can be explained by the importance of the gaze or more specifically the image of the Other. Images constitute the self. Images of the literal other create 'lack' - a separation because it is through that difference that we are constituted but also as we look toward the other, it is with the desire of being a unified self. So we depend on the other both to create the self through difference and somehow to fill up the gap created by our subjectivity because the other represents this unified self we have lost.

This chapter explores the role that the homosexual (Other) character played in Hitchcock's films and in his manipulation of audiences specifically. Homosexual characters can be found in *Rope, North by Northwest, Strangers on a Train and Murder.* They have significance in their role to manipulate audiences and to be main characters in narratives that are based on heterosexual lines. Why did Hitchcock use them when he could have just as well used a heterosexual character? By definition the other is that which the subject is not. The mainstream audience of the 50s and 60s were middleclass, white and straight – so the homosexual would have been the other to this audience. (Of course for homosexuals, the homosexuals in the films are not the other!!) The answer lies in the 'Otherliness' of the homosexual character and how Hitchcock exploits this in order to manipulate his audiences.

I admit that this is a generalized idea of the audience watching Hitchcock's films but the films produced at this time were produced for a homogenous audience as delineated above and it was for this section of the populace that Hitchcock generally made his films and attempted to manipulate.

Homosexual characters and characters with only a hint of sexual ambiguity are to be found in quite a few of Hitchcock's films. (*Strangers on a Train's* Bruno; *Rope's* gay 'couple'; Van Damme's assistant in *North by Northwest)* all fall into the category of homosexual 'other'. The homosexual character has become an almost mythical figure in Hitchcock's films due to its being hinted at but never realized to its full potential. This was due to the fact that homosexuality was a forbidden subject on the long list of subjects that were verboten in accordance with the Hays Code. Bruno Anthony, Leonard and Van Damme and the aesthetes from *Rope* are all portrayed as suave, slightly effeminate and lacking in any traditional notion of being 'butch' which is of course a perceived stereotypical notion of heterosexual manliness. Hitchcock not only used homosexuality as a narrative tool in his films but also,

> [E]mployed actors who were known or rumoured to be homosexual since he presumably believed that homosexual actors have the capacity to bring to their acting a self-conscious sense of performativity and to project their masculinity as a lure or mask. [43]

[43] ALLEN, R. & GONZALES, I. S. (Eds) 1999. Alfred Hitchcock Centenary Essays. London: British Film Institute. p. 234

This links back to the previous chapter's discussion of casting and Hitchcock's manipulation of audience expectations of 'stars' in his films. By deliberately using actors who were rumoured to be homosexual Hitchcock used this to his advantage in manipulating audiences. If these homosexual actors 'projected their masculinity as a mask or lure' then Hitchcock knew that the audience would be ambivalent about the nature of the character that they played. The Hays code forbade any portrayal of homosexual behaviour and so the nature of the character's sexuality would be left to nuances in performance that were also ambiguous. In this way Hitchcock leaves the audience with an uncertainty about certain character's sexuality. The otherliness of the character is not firmly established as fact – Hitchcock leaves it as an uncertainty. Yet although the audience is not necessarily consciously aware of it, Hitchcock has already sown the first seeds of doubt and unease by placing this homosexual Other as a key figure in the narrative as the 'Other' that is different to us. According to Lacanian theory the other fills in the lack found in the self. This lack causes unease for the self. Mary Klages in her discussion of Lacan illustrates that during the mirror phase,

> [W]e imagine a self that has no lack, no notion of absence or incompleteness. The fiction of the stable, whole, unified self that we see in the mirror becomes a compensation for having lost the original oneness with the mother's body…according to Lacan, we lose our unity with the mother's body, in order to enter culture, but we protect ourselves from the knowledge of that loss by misperceiving ourselves as not lacking anything – as being complete unto ourselves.[44]

[44] Retrieved 19 January 2006 from the World Wide Web: http://www.Colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/2004lacan.html

This is why the other causes great unease due to the fact that we protect ourselves from the acknowledgement of the difference that exists of the lack that we have. Hitchcock makes the murderer homosexual and both the figures of the murderer and the homosexual are 'Other' figures. Hitchcock conflates the two making the villain a doubly threatening figure.

Seeing that the majority of the audience watching these films in the 50s and 60s were straight and white (the dominant representation of middle-class America) it is fascinating to see how Hitchcock continually oscillates between making the audience feel at ease with the villain/homosexual and then making the differences (between the villain and the audience or between the self and other) noticeably apparent.

In this chapter I am looking at the use of the homosexual as a character that constitutes the Other and as a character that invariably is the villain of the film. Hitchcock deliberately used the homosexual character as one of doubtful virtue and I believe this links in directly with the manipulation of stereotypes of the 40s and 50s and to a lesser extent the 60s. The villain then becomes a character that is portrayed by an (Other) and thus should be doubly threatening and yet is used by Hitchcock as a lure for the audience because the audience are drawn in by the Other as the villain and trust them – allowing for Hitchcock to make them follow a series of red herrings. This is achieved by Hitchcock because he makes the audience feel uncomfortable over their own prejudices against the Other and yet forces them to be beguiled by the disarming charm of these villains.

> For the point is not that Hitchcock represents homosexuals as criminals, but rather that he uses these characters to stage the performance of gentlemanliness beneath which the darkest secrets are harboured.[45]

The Other also functions (in this case the homosexual) as an area of unease and fear. We acknowledge the lack that exists and creates a divide between the Other and ourselves but the knowledge of this difference does not rest easily with us. The fact that Hitchcock uses the homosexual Other as a character from which to stage the 'performance of gentlemanliness beneath which the darkest secrets are harboured' is an interesting choice as he uses the Other as the bearer of dark secrets or to quote Pinter "The weasel under the cocktail cabinet."[46]

Although Pinter insists that the phrase means absolutely nothing it is generally accepted to mean the dark underbelly of society that is masked by the veneer of polite society. Hitchcock makes the other sinister as it is the other who as the villain charades as something s/he is not.

I do not think that this ploy of Hitchcock's would have the same effect with a twenty-first century audience. There has been a dramatic shift in contemporary popular culture, in how homosexuality is understood and perceived, yet we have to remember that these films were made when homosexuality was more stigmatised than it is today.

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[45] ALLEN, R. & GONZALES, I. S. (Eds) 1999. Alfred Hitchcock Centenary Essays. London: British Film Institute. p. 234

[46]

Hitchcock's tendency to cast actors who were rumoured to be homosexual to portray sexually ambivalent characters leads to a manipulation that Hitchcock uses in order to portray the homosexual other as benign and not overly threatening. An example is *Strangers on a Train* where we are introduced to gentlemanly Bruno, who '…is wealthy, sybaritic, and suavely homosexual.'[47] He is the antithesis of Guy who comes from a humble background and is prepared to work for his wealth and status. Bruno is (as all Hitchcock villains tend to be) charming and loquacious. Hitchcock – masking Bruno's homosexuality with debonair flamboyance - has made his 'Otherliness' more acceptable for the audience. Audiences would immediately warm to this character and Hitchcock knew this. Even when Bruno starts to propound a ludicrous and even insane project to murder individuals, the audience laughs it off as idle talk on his part. The question that Hitchcock poses in a manipulative manner is: "how dangerous could a homosexual be?" He might initially make us feel uneasy but he is portrayed by Hitchcock as a friendly, exceedingly beguiling individual. These characteristics bridge the difference between the other and the audience and make the audience feel less apprehensive. This is because Hitchcock constantly manipulates the audience to feel unease and then portrays the character that engenders this trepidation as a character that needs no second glance. He deludes the audience – only to subvert their feelings of ease later on in the narrative as the initial question is answered by Hitchcock in a cold and cynical manner. The murderers in *Rope,* Philip and Brandon are a homosexual couple that kill a college classmate yet only ten minutes into the film the emphasis seems to shift marginally from the death that we as the audience have just witnessed to the interactions between the two men and the dynamics of this relationship. Brandon appears to be the more dominant in

[47] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 218.

the relationship and seems to take charge of looking after Philip – he solicitously removes Philip's gloves after the murder and reassures him. Hitchcock gives us slight yet meaningful glances between the two men that speak volumes about the nature of their relationship. We can see their mutual affection and when Philip looks at Brandon after describing how they first met we witness the puppy-dog look of a person besotted with their lover. Hitchcock is exploiting the audience's interest in exploiting homosexual identity rid the vicarious identities provided by film. In the beginning of the film when Philip describes Brandon's ability to frighten him, he says that that is part of Brandon's charm which echoes Hitchcock's attempt to make the other and the villain charming characters despite their ability to provoke unease. In this way I agree with Durgnat that the audience's resonance might (and did) come from the story of the seduction of the one man by 'the other'.

> A profounder resonance with the audience's own attitudes might have come from the story of the seduction of the sensitive, ordinary youth (Farley Granger) by the other. And later this is just the form of *Strangers on a Train*.[48]

In a way it could be seen as a seduction of the audience by the Other. This can also be seen in *Strangers on a Train* and to a lesser extent in *Murder.* Hitchcock portrays this other through a rose-tinted camera lens in order that the audience do not recoil in discomfit. It is this fascination with the relationship of 'the Other' that Hitchcock utilizes in order to allow the audience to feel a fair amount of calm curiosity until we realize that far from being 'harmless homosexuals', one in particular, Brandon (John Dall) is a sociopath bent on some kind of quest to prove himself as an Übermensch.

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[48] Ibid. p. 206

In *Rope* Hitchcock ingeniously blends or merges two 'Others' into one character, the woman (femininity) and the homosexual. Durgnat points out that John Dall plays the more dominant of the couple as a kind of Vincent Price Jnr. - combined with an enigmatic ambivalence between the male partner to Farley Granger and feminine to James Stewart.

Clearly there is a constant vacillation on Hitchcock's part to portray a categorically 'evil' character. These characters are always made less intimidating by using their 'Otherliness' to take away from their potency as an evil threat to the audience when if left it is their otherliness that could make them appear sinister, after all what kind of a threat could a gay man pose? It is this oscillation that keeps the audience 'on their toes' so to speak in terms of understanding in their own minds who is guilty of what crime. In *Rope* for instance, John Dall (Brandon) and Farley Granger's (Philip) characters murder their college friend but it is their Professor (James Stewart) who actually plants the intellectual seed or idea that galvanizes the two young men to plot murder. So the ultimate responsibility for the murder could lie with Dall and Granger's characters or with Stewart's character depending on which side of the argument the viewer thinks is stronger. Hitchcock constantly uses the ambiguous sexual nature of the relationship between the characters of Philip and Brandon in order to make the ground of 'knowing what's going to happen next' shift. There is a diametrically opposed view of the characters put forward by either viewing them as effeminate men who really are not that dangerous or as the stereotype prolific in 1940's as Robin Wood points out,

> Brandon in *Rope* and Bruno in *Strangers on a Train*, conform to the homophobic stereotype of the murderous gay, the homosexual as perverted psychopath. [49]

In the 1940s and 1950s there was a grossly generalized stereotype of homosexuals (particularly male homosexuals) as over the top, sensitive, emasculated men who were perverse in their everyday dealings – not just in their sexual proclivities. Hitchcock was manipulating the audience to move past these preconceptions and not believe the worst of the Other, though it was not his audience's a natural inclination to do so.

In *Rope* the character played by James Stewart is seen to be guilty by the audience because he is a white, straight male. We the audience think that by virtue of these facts he should have known better than to expound upon a thesis that talked of killing lesser mortals. Conversely the two homosexuals could be excused due to their moral aberrations and inability to rationalize like 'real' men due to their seemingly feminine attributes.

The 40s and 50s stereotype of the weak 'mother's boy' is yet another stereotype manipulated by Hitchcock. *Psycho's* Norman Bates and *Frenzy's* Bob Rusk are yet another pair of sensitive men who seem to be unhealthily attached to their mothers. Rusk even has dyed orange hair like his mother. Yet these slightly effeminate, mother-bound murderers are not homosexual albeit they are not strictly the stereotypical slightly effeminate straight man either.

[49] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 65

The 50s notion of a 'mother's boy' links in with this chapter's theme of the homosexual other – only in that there is a stereotypical notion of emasculated, weak being either dominated by a strong mother figure or are homosexual. Hitchcock's use of men who are overly attached to their mothers and homosexuals as villains is quite noticeable. Hitchcock must have thought there was some way in which villains of this nature could manipulate the audience to a greater extent, otherwise why utilise them in a canon of work that includes varied villains? Hitchcock's use of definitive concepts in casting and particularly in using certain characters is always to aid his 'master plan' of manipulating the audience and leaving them in incoherence and inconsistency. I believe that Hitchcock's 'mother's boys' are portrayed as such in order to lead the audience to completely buy into the stereotype of the mother's boy prevalent in the 40s and 50s. This is of overly sensitive, sweet-natured men who by virtue of being so close to their mothers in adulthood must be 'good' boys and definitely not murderers or as in the case of Bob Rusk, psychopaths. The homosexual and mother's boy are stereotypically seen to be less than heterosexual men in virility and strength. This is a view that Hitchcock manipulates because they prove to be murderers who do not use brawn to kill but brains. There also seems to be a nudge and a wink on Hitchcock's part to insinuate to his audiences that perhaps mothers are the root of all evil murderous lust – that families are the ultimate threat – not the other.

Norman Bates and Bob Rusk are two Hitchcock villains differ from the rest because they are in a different class. These are two psychopaths with no conscience or remorse. They are evil and insidiously cunning. Yet they are simultaneously charming and appealing,

particularly Norman Bates. They are both mother's boys who have unhealthy attachments to their mothers. Hitchcock's manipulation lay in exposing the proclivity of human nature to turn 'sour', that we are all able of committing atrocities in both the private and public realms. He laid bare this truth to the audience, demonstrating that the audience have just such a tendency. Hitchcock uses the dual models of two distinct moral realities in his films as a regular feature as Spoto notes of *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train*,

> …while the two Charlies in *Shadow of a Doubt* located two moral realities within a single family, *Strangers on a Train* locates those double realities in separate social and political arenas that Hitchcock overlaps.[50]

Despite their murderous inclinations Bob Rusk and Norman Bates are 'likeable' characters simply because they are mommy's boys. In the beginning when we have no inkling as to what their diabolical plans are, we can find them interesting and vaguely familiar. They are not evil all the time and exhibit moments of kindness and genuinely likeable characteristics. Hitchcock makes his villains genial and urbane in order to allow the audience a greater feeling of betrayal when they become the psychotic killers that they are. Included in this group is also 'Uncle Charlie' from *Shadow of a Doubt.* Hitchcock portrays him as an Uncle who is the most lovable man in the world. He is seen through the eyes of an adoring niece and sister. Naturally the audience identifies with these characters and believes that Uncle Charlie must be one of the 'good guys'. Hitchcock allows the audience's identification with the family so that the audience will

[50] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 328

be kept guessing as to whom it is they are to believe - the doting unbelieving sister or the police.

Murder is a film in which Hitchcock, in his usual daring manner, includes a transvestite character who regularly performs in drag. He is called Fane and it becomes evident that he is the murderer in this film. He serves to contrast with the hero of the film, Sir John.

> Sir John is a 'real man', he incarnates the sum of the identificatory features that are considered 'the manifestation of masculinity': he is strong, successful, handsome, unbendable…Fane is the exact opposite: unhappily in love, unsuccessful, of 'impure' race and uncertain gender. He is not only half-caste but also 'half-gender'; his entire appearance is wrapped in sexual ambiguity and transvestism (on the stage he often performs dressed as a woman). At the beginning of the film somebody describes him as ' a hundred percent he-woman.' As for his sexual identification he is closer to the feminine side. Sir John and Fane are thus the opposites of one another; more precisely, each represents everything the other is not.[51]

This opposition also explains why Sir John hates Fane; Fane embodies everything that is threatening to Sir John's masculinity. "Fane reminds him of some uncanny dimension of his own desire, of the mortal feature of 'The Thing' around which his desire circulates"[52] As the 'other' Fane is more a threat to Sir John in his capacity to undermine his masculinity than he is a murderer of unsound mind.

This character is used by Hitchcock to have an unsettling effect on the heterosexual male audience member. Fane's threat is not in the fact that he is a killer capable of taking life, but by the mere fact that he challenges male heterosexuality by his transvestism and

[51] ŽIŽEK, S. 1992. Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Lacan…But Were Afraid To Ask Hitchcock. New York: Verso. p. 97
[52] Ibid.

enjoyment of it. Heterosexual men both fantasize and blanche at the thought of dressing up as the 'other' – the woman, but Fane revels in it. So he is the enemy not only in the fact that he is a murderer but also because of his transvestism and sexual ambiguity. The enemy that lurks within is the basis for most thrillers - that is what gives the audience the greatest sense of betrayal. In this case the enemy is not only 'within' in that he is known but he assaults the inner security of male heterosexuality. He is a complex and multi-faceted villain, used by Hitchcock in brilliant manipulation of the male members of his audience.

It is film myth that the villain was usually Hitchcock's favourite character, yet it is interesting to note that he never favoured the hero or if he did as in *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* they are heroes with flaws. The less than perfect figure was the character with which Hitchcock could manipulate the audience to greater effect. A less than perfect figure is more malleable and is less predictable for the audience.

The 'other' whom Fane sought to emulate was the woman. The representation of women has been known to be an area of sometimes-heated debate for academics who have analysed Hitchcock's oeuvre; everyone has an opinion on Hitchcock's filmic use of women. As I will explicate in the following section it is a far more complex aspect of Hitchcock's films than people really give it credit for. Intrinsic to this section is an exploration of Hitchcock's proclivity towards voyeurism and voyeuristic filming.

6. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Hitchcock has become famous, amongst other things, for supposedly being a misogynist. This is a debate, which is strongly contested by academics, and critics alike who have many divergent views on Hitchcock's state as a misogynist or not as the case may be.

However, my aim is to discover how Hitchcock's use of women, be it misogynist or otherwise, to manipulate the audience in film is unique to him. In the following chapter I will investigate the extent to which Hitchcock used scopophilia and voyeurism (both related to women) in his filmmaking and will also investigate the role of 'the blonde' and 'the mother' in his films. I will explore what their recurring role is in his films and how as iconic figures they are used to influence audience perception.

6.1 Scopophilia

The use of voyeurism/scopophilia in Hitchcock's films is quite varied. Examples range from the prying camera lens of James Stewart in *Rear Window* to the Peeping Tom antics of Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*. The voyeur is evident and in plain sight.

The 'love of looking' is also ascribed to us, the audience as we watch the intimate machinations of stranger's lives. What else can film be described as, but the legitimisation of the 'Peeping Tom' syndrome in which we achieve pleasure from

looking at other people on a screen? It is a complex concept in film, which Hitchcock exploited, in his endless pursuit to engage the audience in the film process. *Rear Window* is one of the films in Hitchcock's canon of works that is self-reflexive and which comments on the attitude of all of us as people who watch others, how we condemn people as perverts and socially aberrant for doing exactly what we ourselves are doing in essence, every time we sit in a film theatre.

Hitchcock was not only a director who actively took charge of what others saw. He was himself an avid theatre-goer. Hitchcock was known for his fascination with the theatre and all things which had any aspect of performance. What is actually riveting is his penchant for using aspects or motifs of performance in his films. This discussion will be dealt with more substantially in my discussion of the voyeur 6.4.

6.2 Performances within Performances

During the early part of Hitchcock's career, staged performances were a major source of film material. It is from this that Hitchcock's fascination with theatrical behaviour stemmed. Starting with *Downhill* in 1927, 14 of his 53 feature films were based on plays.

In terms of opening sequences, *Stage Fright*'s is possibly one of the more manipulative and indicative of Hitchcock's desire to incessantly impose upon his audiences the idea that play and real life are only a whisper in difference from one another. In the opening

of this film, the credits of the film dissolve against a rising theatre safety curtain (that which protects the audience in the theatre and the audience watching the film) and the scene which is presented after the curtain rises is not a stage set but London itself. When the curtain rises the audience member is drawn directly into the world of the play. Hitchcock ensures that the line between sitting in a cinema acting as a voyeur and actively participating is crossed and the audience member becomes proactive – mirroring Metz's theory of suturing the audience into the narrative. As the story unfolds we realize that everyone in the film is 'acting a part' in life and in actual art, so there is a blurring of the lines that occurs which separates the two from each other. The world of performance is seen to be a treacherous world in which no single person can be trusted and in which everyone plays a role. Nothing is certain or true. Everything is in a state of flux as illustrated in *Psycho* where Janet Leigh is observed to perform within a performance in the scene where she is seen to be entering the bathtub.

> … she draws the shower curtain, a theatrical gesture that closes off two "performances ": the crime, of which she has now repented, and the "act" she has unwittingly put on for her voyeuristic observer. (Norman)[53]

This is because this is a scene of great change and flux for the audience as the protagonist is killed and they are left without a central identification figure.

In *Notorious* there is the example of the scene in the wine cellar. In this scene Ingrid Bergman and Cary Grant's characters put on the charade of having an affair to fool Claude Rains' character into thinking that the real reason they are down there is for a secret assignation and not to find out about the uranium. In actual fact they are in love

[53] HUMPHRIES, P. 1986. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Routledge. p. 107

with one another, the pretence however, is actually reality. It is this element of pretence being reality which Hitchcock deliberately includes in his films that comments on the audience's complicity in an act of voyeurism although they aren't always consciously aware of it. In this case, the audience initially think that Grant and Bergman are putting on a pretence, until the kiss becomes too passionate to be merely part of a performance. It is at this point that the audience realise that they have actually been voyeurs in a private moment. We all 'act' in life and watch the performances of others in our everyday lives; Hitchcock uses this motif to some startling effect in most of his films.

> Generally speaking, curtains and windows in Hitchcock indicate the imminence of performance, usually intended for private "audience" and often not consciously conceived as performance at all, but as "spontaneous" behaviour…Brandon and Phillip staging their "theatre piece" in *Rope*, Uncle Charlie's ordinary-guy masquerade in *Shadow of a Doubt* and the twin case of Roger Thornhill's forced role as Kaplan and Eve Kendall's voluntary role as Vandamm's lover in *North by Northwest*.[54]

In each of the above cases there is at some point the manipulation or show of curtains, a ploy that has the effect of highlighting the actor's role as performer and simultaneously calling attention to the performance within a performance that is created. There is a scene in *The Birds* in which Lydia, Mitch's mother closes the curtains even more closely together to ensure that no glimpse of the birds will be seen or perhaps more accurately that the birds will not see her. This can be extrapolated even further, to say that Lydia closes off her space from the camera's prying lens (eye), but as in all good thrillers the threat is evident on the inside, the camera is inside and cannot be closed off. As we already know, Hitchcock uses the images of curtains as either a shielding/hiding device

[54] Ibid. p. 114

or as a theatrical facet to the actions of each character. In the above instance, Lydia tries to hide from the birds but also acts out her fear over the birds' ability to both attack and observe, ergo possessing the ability to locate her family. Another way of interpreting this is to see the closing of the curtains as the barricading off of the film world from the 'real' world i.e. to give the audience a sense of protection and safety. Lydia curtains her interior world of the house off from the 'outside', the unknown world which contains the 'unknown' creatures that stare and peer, those 'creatures' are the audience who observe from the 'outside' from an alien perspective in addition to being the actual birds. Hitchcock plays with the idea of perspective and who is on which side of the curtain, who is the viewer and who is the spectator? Hitchcock has once again played with the audience's fear of the unknown, everyone has experienced the uncanny fear that there is something in the dark outside your window peering in at you, the observer who is unseen, and has made the audience that which they fear, they have become to the characters of the film world the unseen observer – threatening in their omniscient anonymity.

Hitchcock "…achieves both a Brechtian alienation effect and a sense of intimacy … between the on-screen world and our worlds as spectators."[55] This Brechtian alienation effect is a form of alienation that serves to highlight the audience's involvement in the act of voyeurism that they condemn or secretly admire as the case may be in the character they watch on film. This only highlights the equivocation that goes on in the audience's justification of how their watching of a film is vastly different from the actions of a voyeur.

[55] Ibid. p. 108

Stage Fright and *Murder* are two films in which theatre comes to the fore as an ever-present Hitchcockian preoccupation, which becomes an explicit subject. Again we see the inherent reflexive nature of an audience watching a film about other people which comments on their own lives.

Young and Innocent, like *Stage Fright* was of particular interest to Hitchcock in his attempts to manipulate his audiences, because of the opportunity to portray a player within the realm of theatre and performance art. The hero dons glasses to mask his identity. A tramp disguises himself as a dandy to aid in exposing and capturing the criminal. A villain is disguised in blackface to play in a band. The murder victim is actually an actress. The innocent man who is running from the law is a screenwriter and Hitchcock makes a superb cameo as a photographer, holding a small camera in front of his huge person and trying in vain to get a shot of the commotion outside the courthouse. Everyone in this film deals in creating illusions. *Psycho* contains scenes, which promote the motif of performance within performance or the issue of alerting the audience to the fact that the performance, which is going on, is not situated in reality at all. Even the cabin to which Anthony Perkins accompanies Janet Leigh is a place of performance. It is within the confines of this space that Anthony Perkins stares unsolicited at her through a hole in the wall. It is also the place where the gruesome murder takes place, which is a grotesque parody of a performance in itself. These illusions of performance are the means to manipulate and disorientate the audience. Watching a performance the audience understands that it is an illusion but when illusions are created within illusions (the film) and when performances are exhibited within performances – the affect on the

audience is similar to that of placing two mirrors opposite each other, the reflection of the reflection becomes an infinite and confusing phenomenon.

The murder scene in *Psycho* is one of the most scrutinized and analysed sections of film in film history. The fact that it is so well executed has long fascinated film critics and students alike. It is the fact that it takes place inside a space within a room, which almost parodies the notion of the performance within a performance. Hitchcock deliberately shoots the murder in the shower cubicle; this is not a desultory placing. It is as if Hitchcock reiterates to the audience all the time that performances are not solely happening on celluloid and in theatres, we are living performances. "The shower curtain, to which Marion's back is turned, hangs from a bar at the top of the screen, and forms a frame-within-a-frame."[56] This frame can be seen, as the 'stand in' for the film frame to make the statement that the world we see is framed and performed.

> When the frame-within-a-frame of the shower curtain comes to engulf the entire frame, it is as if we have crossed a barrier. The camera's gesture deepens its declaration that what we are viewing is a film. At the same time, paradoxically, it asserts the identity of the shower curtain – an object within the world of *Psycho*, however it may symbolize the film frame – and the real movie screen on which our views have been projected. [57]

After the unexpected and shocking murder scene, Anthony Perkins as Norman enters the bathroom and he pauses just before entering. He is framed, with his back to the camera, framed within the frame by the outline of the doorway. This combined with William

[56] Ibid. p. 297
[57] Ibid.

Rothman's[58] assertion of the audience's identification of the shower curtain with the movie screen, "… that 'safety curtain' we assumed would separate us from the world of the film…"[59] intensifies the experience for the audience. When the shower curtain is ripped open and the hazy, nebulous figure of the attacker is seen we, the audience feel as though the safety zone of film and reality has been violated. In this instance instead of showing the audience the indistinct lines between fact and fiction, Hitchcock forces images and sounds onto them in an attempt to almost physically allow the performance within a performance to blur the line between fantasy and reality.

A scene in which Hitchcock jokes in a chilling manner is the scene in the kitchen where Norman sits after having disposed of Marion's body. He looks directly at the camera and smiles. The look suggests that Norman knows that he is being watched by millions of pairs of eyes. This is a disturbing section of the film as the audience is not sure whether the smile is one that suggests relief that everything has been cleared up or whether it is a sardonic smile that acknowledges the audience's passive complicity in the actions of the film. Hitchcock again draws the audience's attention to the fact that he is the one who controls the world of the film and they are at a complete loss to influence any outcome. Norman's glance almost makes one believe that he is smiling to congratulate both himself and us on a job well done. This time the boundary between fact and fiction has become so blurred that even we cannot distinguish between a simple grin and glance of a character or of that of an actor into a camera.

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[58] "The identification of the shower curtain with the movie screen – that 'safety curtain' we assumed would separate us from the world of the film – makes this dramatic gesture even more terrifying. For it presents the monstrous figure not simply as a denizen of a world safely cut off from our own, but as real." Ibid p. 299

[59] Ibid.

This notion of reality in the film and reality as is, is extended to the scene in the parlour where Norman Bates rants and raves in response to Marion Crane's suggestion that he should put his mother in a home. "Have you ever seen the inside of one of those places? The laughing and the tears, and the cruel eyes studying you?" These words uttered by Norman in the film are eerily apt when applied to characters in the film that we, the audience watch. An analogy can be drawn between the inmates of an asylum being watched and analysed to the characters of this film. We watch every move any character makes and we laugh with them and empathize with their tears. We analyse them and their motives. Hitchcock uses this monologue in the context of this film to comment on our own fear of institutions being incompatible with our need and desire to watch other figures trapped in the confines of the filmic narrative, living out their struggles and hardships on film. Hitchcock was a director who always liked to remind people he was there, that his films were not simply about the starring actors, hence his cameos in almost all of his films. Norman tells Marion in the scene in the parlour, "It's all for you." We assume that he is talking about the food. Yet William Rothman posits an interesting theory, he believes that Norman's covert meaning of the 'act' he puts on being for the sole benefit of Marion is actually Hitchcock's remark to the audience.

> Indeed, it is crucial to my understanding of this part of *Psycho* that the entire encounter between Marion and Norman stands in for the viewer's encounter with the film author.[60]

[60] Ibid. p. 288

Hitchcock was always well aware of the audience's identification with the stars of his films first and took note of the director second, thus he wove into his films the ability to leave a note that was distinct to him. That 'calling card' is what made him distinct and definitely unique. The 'calling card' is evident in the motifs that are being expounded on in this thesis. Hitchcock was very cognizant of the audience's complicity in the events that happened on screen. He also knew that the audience were not always conscious of this fact themselves. One of the most distinct 'Hitchcockian' moments in *Psycho* is the series of shots that make up the scene where Norman spies on Marion in the adjoining room. The camera cuts to Norman as he is viewed in profile as he peers through the hole he has made in the wall. "This shot withholds Norman's view from us, allowing us to recognize our wish for it."[61] Before this shot we see Marion preparing to undress, the film cuts to a shot of Norman's equally naked staring eye. When the film cuts back to Marion she is enveloped in a robe. We feel cheated by Hitchcock simply because he didn't allow us the same point of view as Norman. Norman saw the 'forbidden' nakedness of Marion and we, because we are complicit, wanted to see forbidden images just as much. Hitchcock knowing this to be the audience reaction deliberately leaves the audience with a feeling of lack of fulfilment in this scene. Hitchcock does this in order to intensify their identification and support of Norman.

The supposed obsession with the performance within a performance was simply a device utilized by Hitchcock in order to make his presence as the director both felt and known. By ensuring the attention of the audience to the notion that this world that they see is indeed an artificial construct, once they have suspended their disbelief is one of his

[61] Ibid. p. 289

greatest achievements. He contrived to 'awaken' the audience's attention to the fact they were viewing a film without disturbing their train of thought connected with the narrative. He was never intrusive, just deliberate.

Hitchcock's early sound film *Blackmail* is one of many films in which Hitchcock plays with notions of theatricality and performance.

> As already discussed, he was fascinated by the slippery relationship between reality and illusion – one metaphor for this being the relationship between cinema (filmed "reality" and theatre (staged "illusion").[62]

In *Blackmail* the motif of the performance is obvious in the scenes which concern themselves with Crewe's studio. In the studio we see the mask. It is strange and oddly out of place in this setting. It is so out of tune with the rest of the settings that it seems as though Hitchcock deliberately placed it there in order to bring the audience's attention to it, in order to emphasize that this is a piece of set dressing for a performance.

> The next clear signifier of theatricality is Crewe's handling of his bed curtains, a gesture indicating that the studio (and particularly the bed itself) is a place where he can arrange and control whatever performance he wishes. Meanwhile the policeman goes through his thoroughly rehearsed paces outside the window; this also serves as a proscenium, and the spectator of *Blackmail* as a screen within the screen. [63]

Humphries in the above excerpt describes the setting that Hitchcock presents in a few scenes in order to convey to the audience the idea of an extra special performance about to take place. The murder of Crewe takes place in the studio within the curtained

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[62] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Routledge. p. 22
[63] Ibid. p. 38

confines of the bed. These areas are Crewe's domains as the film world is Hitchcock's. Crewe believes that he has absolute control in these areas as does Hitchcock in directing a film. Yet it is in these areas that were seemingly unassailable, that Crewe is murdered. It would seem that Hitchcock infers from this, that for the spectator, the world of the film is not as 'safe' as it seemed. The boundaries are not as clearly defined as we the audience would prefer. Just as Crewe's control is subject to the pliable nature of others so too is Hitchcock's control dependant on other people's whims. This simultaneously points to Hitchcock's lack of absolute control over all that exists in his domain of the film world and also is used ingeniously by Hitchcock to cause unease in the viewing public, to create a sense of the film world being a part of reality. Hitchcock in a certain way deposits onto the audience his feelings of insecurity about the order of things in real life and in filmed 'reality'. They become his guinea pigs. Near the end of the film, Frank receives a call from another policeman informing him that Tracy has become a suspect, partly due to the fact that he already has a criminal record and partly due to the fact that he was seen at the scene of the crime. During this conversation Alice's father strains to hear what is being said, but is thwarted in his efforts as Frank closes the phone booth door, thereby ensuring that he can't hear what is being said. This acts as a closing off of yet another performance, a performance that both a character and the audience feel cheated out of.

Hitchcock's characters also have a tendency to 'act' for more than one audience. They act not just for the director or the audience, they act for each other.

> They perform for their own gratification or protection à la Norman Bates. They perform for us as we watch their movies. And they perform for Hitchcock himself

> whose camera observes and records their activities. Hitchcock, furthermore can be considered a performer in his own right – explicitly in his cameo appearances; and implicitly as he manipulates the figures in his films, who act for him on-screen.[64]

Hitchcock made numerous appearances in his films and it has become yet another trademark that belongs to Hitchcock which distinguishes him from other directors. His direction was not just a passive observance of other people's actions he too became active in his own films. Hitchcock's presence in his films, I believe, was motivated by his wish to both observe and control, and be both apart from and part of the visual aspect of his films. David Sterritt makes the insightful point that Hitchcock's need to control by observing and his need to be close to his characters finds its expression in two ways. One is his use of point-of-view shots and the second is his habit of situating himself in the world of his films both as a director via the camera and in his multiple cameo roles in which he took great delight in teasing the audience.

> He does this not by becoming a character...but in two other ways: through his famous cameo appearances, which allow him to enter the action directly, costumed unmistakably himself, and through his use of characters and objects that serve as surrogates for his own presence.[65]

Hitchcock's desire to claim absolute control over all that he directed, included the need to 'remind' the audience that he was there behind the actors and the script and the sound track, pulling all the strings. This desire to control extended to actually appearing in his own films.

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[64] Ibid. p. 9
[65] Ibid. p. 11

6.3 Hitchcock's Cameos

Hitchcock's cameos are as much a part of the 'Hitchcock' experience as are the inevitable murders that take part in his films. Ever since *The Lodger*, in which Hitchcock assumed a bit part to 'fill the screen', he appeared in each of his pictures. Most people have at one or more times when viewing a Hitchcock film tried to discern with great amusement where Hitchcock was going to appear in the particular film they were watching - another way in which Hitchcock manipulated his audiences. It has become something of a game amongst audiences to spot Hitchcock's appearance in his films. This chapter will elucidate upon how these cameos were used as yet another method of manipulating the audience by Hitchcock who always brought the audience's attention back to who the creator of meaning in the narrative was.

> Hitchcock's cameos are self-publicizing jokes…They also have perkily non-dramatic and illusion-breaking qualities. Yet our willingness to point and chuckle at them needn't stop us from seeing them as something more resonant: manifestations of Hitchcock's deep-seated wish not only to speak through, but to become physically integrated with, his films.[66]

Hitchcock's wish to become physically part of his films indicates the extent to which he may have wanted to control his films and his audiences. He desired to simultaneously observe the action of the film, partake in that action and by virtue of appearing in his own film enforce his presence onto the audience member. His onscreen presence is a signature that posits his absolute control over the narrative, its diegesis and so too the

[66] Ibid. p. 12

audience. Hitchcock has also made use of surrogates to stand in for his own form or presence. They can be human or not. David Sterritt asserts that,

> … his iconography often includes human (or humanlike) figures and faces that have no necessary function in the mise-en-scene, or which carry a weight out of proportion to the function they do have, and that these can be taken as signifiers of the filmmaker's presiding influence over the narrative.[67]

In *Blackmail* there are a number of these examples, one of them being the painting of the laughing jester in Crewe's studio and another is the huge and gloomy sculpture in the British museum that looks on as a scapegoat vainly flees from the authorities. Hitchcock seems to insert signs of his presence when the moment is filled with great irony. The figure and mask found in the artist's studio are reflective of death masks that look on waiting for death to finally fell Crewe in that room. The mask in the museum waits as a witness, like an omniscient presence that watches the futile attempts of a terrified man to flee capture. Bringing the audience's attention back to the realisation of who controls the narrative that they watch – that it is Hitchcock who influences the outcome of the fate of the characters on screen. Other examples are the faces on Mount Rushmore in *North by Northwest* and the statue of liberty in *Saboteur*. Once again these surrogate, inanimate stand-ins serve to observe the characters in dire and perilous situations wherein they literally dangle between life and death. Like the audience who is subject to the whims of Hitchcock, these character's lives and the audience's reaction to their fate lies solely in Hitchcock's hands.

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[67] Ibid. p. 13

At other times Hitchcock is likely to appear in person in a form that comments on what is happening in the narrative, or as an observer. In *Blackmail* Hitchcock's cameo is as a passenger on a bus. A little boy nearby pesters him and becomes annoying to the point of bullying. Hitchcock's reaction to this is to sit and stare with an expressionless look on his face. This expresses his impervious attitude taken to detractors of his work and is a signifier to the audience of Hitchcock's implacable resolution in being the master of all that they see. However much the audience pokes and prods and tries to work out the intricacies of the plot before Hitchcock reveals the denouement – Hitchcock as implacable as ever shows that the narrative and its surprises are not over until he decides so.

In both *Under Capricorn* and *Frenzy* he is seen listening to a speech. In this case he acts the part of the impartial observer, surveying his work from the inside, scrutinizing it for flaws and mistakes and also observing the audience. In *The Birds* and *Psycho* he is seen walking his dogs and standing outside a window respectively. In these cases Hitchcock's main aim seems to be simply to enmesh himself in the film itself, become one with the diegesis of the film. In this way enabling Hitchcock to manipulate the audience and influence them from within the film's narrative itself – not just from the outside looking in.

To become one with the narrative is to be the tool that manipulates the audience not merely the man who creates the tool (narrative). In *Dial M for Murder* and *Lifeboat*, Hitchcock takes on a more stationary approach. Hitchcock stares out at the audience

from an old college picture in *Dial M for Murder* and is the model for an advert for losing weight in a newspaper in *Lifeboat*. In these two cases we see exactly how Hitchcock loved to enjoy a joke at both his own and the audience's expense. He includes the audience in this 'joke' although still exerting authorial control. Included in these small groups must be Hitchcock's cameo in *Vertigo* where he enters the frame from a door in a hallway and pointedly stares at the camera with an irate and irritated expression on his face. Here we see Hitchcock gazing back at our gaze. The man who is usually complicit in our gaze stares back at us. He snaps us out of our reverie and forcibly makes us confront him on his own turf. In this situation we are slightly shocked because Hitchcock dared to break one of the codes and conventions of cinema that we expect, that of being able to be a voyeur and not be 'caught' in the act. What makes this experience even more unnerving is the fact that it is not one of the characters that we are watching who looks at us with an accusatory stare but it is the director himself. The man whom we rely on to furnish us with voyeuristic images has turned the tables and in a non-verbal, accusatory manner takes us to task for our voyeuristic behaviour. By doing this to his audience Hitchcock sardonically brings us to the realization that we on a subconscious level understand that we partake of the fetish of voyeurism and enjoy it whilst watching a movie.

Hitchcock revels in the discomfit he has engendered in revealing this aspect of his audiences to themselves. In so doing he also forces the public to acknowledge the presence of the director in the film because he is literally appearing in the filmic world and not just controlling the content of that world. He no longer hovers on the edges of

people's minds in the fact that they know who the director is. He actually appears to them and accuses them, enforcing feelings of guilt, which is in itself, typically Hitchcockian.

Another aspect of Hitchcock's cameos is his relationship (as an onscreen presence) to the other characters onscreen sharing the performance space with him. Does he identify with them or not? David Sterritt says that the answer can be found in the mood of detachment that characterizes his appearances. He pictures himself as a comic, almost painfully ordinary character in most cases, dropping into but barely participating in the world of the story and never suggesting an air of superiority to the characters around him. Although he never assumed superiority over the characters in his films we can see his incursions into the actual world of his films as his being able, metaphorically, to 'check up' on his characters. He is able in this way to control the narrative from the closest possible vantage point and in controlling the narrative, controls the audience's understanding of the narrative.

A final point to this chapter is a strange yet highly original assertion by Sterritt that in *The Birds* the character of Mitch is actually Hitchcock's own stand-in for himself.

> Mitch's futile attempts at verbal solutions to the crisis foreshadow the film's outcome, making him as strong a surrogate for the filmmaker as Scottie or Jeffries ever was. Hitchcock's last classic film thus pivots on the simplest and most revelatory of equations. Mitch=Hitch.[68]

[68] Ibid. p. 143

Although to find any physical similarity in these two would be difficult, we realize that Hitchcock again is the one who is in control and we are merely players in a bizarre performance of which we do not consciously partake. Hitchcock by placing his surrogate as a lead character in the film becomes a voyeur watching the activities within his own creation. This also reinforces Hitchcock's control over the narrative for the audience. He serves as both director and as his surrogate is a lead character Hitchcock also serves to be a catalyst in his own films, exerting double control over both his audience and meaning in his films.

6.4 The Figure of the Voyeur

When critics and people who are film aficionados talk about the work of Alfred Hitchcock, invariably we find that the figure or theme of the voyeur is one that features greatly in such debates.

This 'voyeuristic' tone is characteristic of several Hitchcock films and used to great affect in manipulating audiences. We move from outside to the inside to the interior, and become "Peeping Toms", in *Foreign Correspondent, Notorious, I Confess, Rear Window, Psycho* and *Topaz*.[69] As John Irving said in *The World According to Garp*[70] "I was brought up to be a spectator…I was raised to be a voyeur."[71] There is something intrinsically nosey about humankind and we all yearn to be spectators of forbidden sights.

[69] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 186
[70] IRVING, J. 1995. The World According to Garp. New York: Random House, Inc.
[71] DENZIN, N.K. 1995. The Cinematic Society – The Voyeur's Gaze. London: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 1

This is what Hitchcock plays on in order to manipulate his mass audiences. He stated to Francois Truffaut:

> I'll bet you that nine out of ten people, if they see a woman across the courtyard undressing for bed, or even a man puttering around in his room, will stay and look; no one turns away and says, 'It's none of my business.' They could pull down the blinds, but they never do; they stand there [never obtrusively always covertly][72] and look.[73]

Just as Hitchcock manipulates the audience, by tantalizing them with films based on the illicit desire to gaze upon others, so too does he acknowledge the inherent power implicit in the act of gazing and being unseen – something which he 'allows' the audience to do.

> The Voyeur's Gaze: 'Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he [she] is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against him [her] self. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost.'[74]

In fact, Hitchcock is greatly admired for one of the most intricate plots of film, that of *Rear Window* which is about a man, who peers from his window spying on his neighbours, although he is eventually absolved from any sin in so doing because he apprehends a murderer. Hence, the act of voyeurism is given a sort of temporary 'stamp of approval' by the narrative, the director and the audience.

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[72] The fact that this watching one's neighbour is done covertly seems to show that this is an activity which society knows to be less than honourable.
[73] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 321
[74] Foucault, as cited in TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 1

> Yet another film in which the voyeur is one who goads the audience into sympathy (Norman Bates in *Psycho*), the act of voyeurism is again, exhibited to be an act of a perverse person. 'The voyeur is presented as a 'diseased', often paranoid, violent individual who violates the norms of everyday life.'[75]

> The cinema and the cinematic director (Hitchcock)[76] turn the audience member into a voyeur too, making them complicit in the on-screen character's illicit act of viewing the forbidden. In such moments, '… the viewer-in-the-theatre may experience the emotions of shame, embarrassment and fear that are felt by the illicit looker who has been caught looking.[77]

We see that Denzin in the above quotations sees the character of the voyeur in the film is used as more of a substitute for the audience member than purely a filmic character. James Stewart becomes the audience member who has peered at their next-door neighbour and Norman Bates is the stand-in for the male audience member who has frequented peep shows. Hence the identification becomes stronger and elicits greater feelings of failure and guilt on the part of the audience. Perhaps it is one of Hitchcock's famous 'practical jokes' that the Peeping Tom character of Norman Bates becomes so used and abused by 'Mother'. Hitchcock preys on the inherent fear of men, that their Mothers will find out about their sexual mores. The fact that Norman is initially portrayed as the proverbial 'Nice Guy' only serves to greatly confuse the audience and consequently Hitchcock 'leads them up the garden path' so to speak.

> If *Psycho* has successive identification figures (Janet Leigh, Vera Miles, Anthony Perkins), it is because it has no principal identification figure; it needs only a butt, a

[75] DENZIN, N. K. 1995. The Cinematic Society – The Voyeur's Gaze. London: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 58
[76] My own insertion.
[77] Ibid. p. 3

> fall guy, that is to say, the audience, which thinks it understands the rules of the world, and of melodrama, only to discover that fate, and Hitchcock, have a few uglier tricks up their sleeves.[78]

Hitchcock has portrayed in these two films, two distinct 'types' of voyeur each with a separate function. On the one hand Hitchcock redeems James Stewart's character by having him solve a crime and be a seemingly 'philanthropic' character, whilst compounding the aura of evil that surrounds the voyeuristic acts of Norman Bates by having him be a transvestite, the ultimate 'other' to the average male audience member and by having him be a misanthropic character. Stewart spies on people in their personal every day doings, but in *Psycho* Norman spies on Marion in the most private of activities - ablution. This as Hitchcock must have known, is beyond the pale for most people, we draw the line between observing our neighbours wash the car, hang washing out - normal everyday public occurrences, and looking at them in private situations which include activities of ablution and bodily functions, as this is seen as taboo. However, Hitchcock foists this seemingly lascivious voyeurism onto his audience – we see what the director chooses to show us. When we see Janet Leigh soaping herself in the shower, a cubicle that is surrounded by a shower curtain which is for all intents and purposes off-screen, Hitchcock allows the camera entry to an otherwise out of bounds area. The voyeurism is given added symbolism in that in order to uncover the peephole which he has drilled into the wall, Norman has to remove a painting of a classical rape scene. This rape scene prefigures Norman's voyeurism as an act of visual rape, of looking when permission was not granted. When the camera swings round to focus on Norman's eye as he watches Marion and then, becomes the eye, Hitchcock in this shot makes us the voyeur, as we

[78] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 53

watch from inside Norman's eye. We are manipulated by Hitchcock to see from Norman's point of view, viewing exactly what he sees and how. This voyeuristic tone is not singular to *Psycho*. In *Rope*,

> [T]he film opens as the credits appear against an overview of a New York street scene. The camera then draws back to the apartment terrace and closed, curtained window, thus establishing our involvement with what is enacted in privacy. (This "voyeur" tone is characteristic of several Hitchcock films – we move from the outside to the interior, and become "Peeping Toms", in *Foreign Correspondent, Notorious, I Confess, Rear Window, Psycho and Topaz*.)[79]

Right at the beginning of *Notorious* the legend 'Miami, Florida. Three-twenty p.m. April twenty-fourth, nineteen forty-six,' can be seen on the screen, just as it is used with other times and dates in *Psycho.* This exact depiction of date and time is reminiscent of films based on actual events where dates and times are inserted in order to establish congruency and continuity. It would seem that Hitchcock ingeniously uses this in order to make the voyeurism seem even more 'real' to the audience member, who, due to their suspension of disbelief, might actually be so drawn into the events depicted on screen that they might feel they actually are voyeurs watching somebody else's real life.

In the case of *Rope* the act of voyeurism is almost literally pointed out to us – Hitchcock takes us from the outside of a building right into the interior of a flat. In *Rope* the film begins with a scene of a street. It could be any street anywhere in the world; the camera swings up to a terrace and a set of curtained French windows. We, the audience, are immediately established as being the camera's 'eye' we move from the exterior to the

[79] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 187

interior and 'peep' behind the curtains to that which is enacted in privacy. The result of immediately identifying the individual audience member with the camera's point of view is actually very clever on the part of Hitchcock, because he makes us the Peeping Toms before we have the chance to say 'No' and actually become aware of our own voyeurism – he manipulates us into this act of voyeurism.

When it comes to the theme of watching others Hitchcock's film *Rear Window* is the one which best presents the Panoptican. James Stewart (due to his position across from his neighbours) acts as the guard in the central watchtower where he is able to watch, observe and judge the people in the flats on the other side. As in the Panopticon, the flats opposite are arranged like cells, exposed to Stewart's prying eye. However, unlike in the Panopticon where the inhabitants of the cells live in fear of the other in the watchtower, in *Rear Window* the other who watches is in fear of missing something that he is watching. James Stewart's character (Jeffries) becomes a prisoner of his own gaze, he fears that he may 'miss' something - which he does as he is asleep at the time of the murder. The audience also 'miss' the same thing as Jeffries because the audience doesn't see what Jeffries does not see. We are as hindered as he is seeing that Jeffries is the audience's substitute in the narrative. So it is safe to assume that it is not 'the other' that frightens James Stewart's character (which would be understandable, as he fears marriage to Grace Kelly) rather it is his own gaze he fears because his own gaze is not as it is in the Panopticon, omniscient and ever-present. The omniscient gaze belongs to Hitchcock only. If the audience's 'double' in the film is Jeffries then we too are subject to the omniscient gaze of Hitchcock's camera showing us what he deems necessary.

> Precisely because it violates the rule, the single moment in the film when we do not see with Jeffries' eyes carries great significance. As he sleeps, Thorwald leaves the apartment with a woman dressed in black. Is it his wife? His mistress? At this moment we become the voyeur, but we are not certain of the meaning of what we see. Jeffries would very likely attach a definitive explanation to this detail. We cannot, though we want to. And it is the forcing of interpretations to suit our will that *Rear Window* denounces.[80]

Through the title of *Rear Window* Hitchcock asks the viewer to appropriate the role of the voyeur. We do not however, only peep into the neighbours across the way with Stewart's character, we are also privy to hear and see what goes on in his apartment. So in actual fact, the audience become the rear window "We are looking into the mirror called the rear window."[81]

The voyeur in Hitchcock's films is a complex character. The voyeur, we the spectators, the actor and the director are all complicit in the act of watching. In life we watch people crossing the street, drinking tea, mowing the lawn, playing with their dog in a park - inherent in our make-up is a natural curiosity towards other people, the others. Also inherent in our make-up is a fear of others watching us, which is why we are so uncomfortable about watching other people, because if we do it, some one else could be watching us. A censorial gaze that is included in *Psycho* where there is a shot of the policeman who stops Janet Leigh, he is the only person whose eyes we do not see. It is my contention that Hitchcock included this shot because we cannot identify with someone whom we cannot look in the eye. He is there to be an authority figure, a figure that watches over Marion and us, the spectators. He is the figure whom we fear, the

[80] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 262
[81] DENZIN, N. K. 1995. The Cinematic Society- The Voyeur's Gaze. London: Sage Publications, Inc. p. 54

figure of power and authority that will 'punish' us as well as Janet Leigh for illicit activities i.e. the figure in the watchtower in the Panopticon: looking but not seen.

I think that Hitchcock was so intent on making the audience voyeurs in a film before they even realized it themselves because in being voyeurs we essentially find out more about ourselves. As children we would listen at doors when we were in trouble. Why? Because we all think that what people say behind our backs is what they really think. So too, by watching others, we can gauge our own reactions and realize how we feel towards certain situations. As a consequence Hitchcock serves to teach us something about ourselves, as he teaches himself in the act of directing in a voyeuristic manner. In this way his intent is two old, firstly to manipulate the audience into unconsciously becoming voyeurs and secondly in making them aware of their own humanity and foibles by doing so. Just as Stewart's character in *Rear Window* sees in his neighbours what he lacks in his own life, so do we.

> I should argue that Jeff's 'voyeuristic' tendencies are unusually developed, and well within the range of psychological normality, but benign in the medical sense and in no need of apology or punishment. Moreover, one must be aware of the extent to which 'voyeurism' is in this context an insidiously loaded word for what might equally be described as journalist's, or artist's, or humanly ordinary, interest in other people's lives.[82]

Stewart's character uses a long lens to spy on his subjects and one can't help drawing an analogous relationship between Stewart's camera and Hitchcock's, especially if one considers Stewart's remark to Grace Kelly. "I wonder if it is ethical to watch a man with binoculars and a long lens. Do you suppose its ethical even if you prove he didn't

[82] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 240

commit a crime?" To this Grace Kelly replies, "I'm not much on rear window ethics … Look at you and me plunged into despair because we find out a man didn't kill his wife. We're two of the most frightening ghouls I've ever known."

This provides a fairly accurate summary of what Hitchcock does for a living, albeit that he watches fictional people. He still 'watches' and records the details of what he 'sees' for a living. He works in the ghoulish art of murder, mystery and the darker side of people's natures. Jean Douchet compares Stewart's character that is the photographic viewer to us, the cinema spectator, immobilized and peeking through a lens). The wall opposite Stewart's flat is the screen opposite us. What he sees we see. We want a murder to be committed just as much as he does, because we want that 'excitement'. We don't get punished for our illicit expectations but he does. Hitchcock wants us to be 'purged' of our voyeurism cathartically through the punishment of Stewart's character in the end. Hitchcock in actual fact 'sets up' the audience so that they revel in the act of watching others who are totally unaware of being watched. When thinking of voyeurs we usually think of dirty men, vicariously getting sexual pleasure from watching others engage in sexual intercourse or via watching unsuspectingly women in their dressing, undressing and overall private ablutions. Women whom Hitchcock preferred in his films, in this Peeping Tom fashion were after 1957, mainly all blondes. The blonde was of course yet another stalwart in the litany of recurring motifs in Hitchcock's canon of work.

6.5 The Elusive Blonde

Alfred Hitchcock was a man who made a living by delving into the dark and mysterious under-belly of humanity and life in general. All things brooding and mysterious were of interest to Hitchcock. Nothing was taboo, sacrilegious or prohibited. This chapter will investigate how the blonde became one of Hitchcock's most noted tools of manipulation.

The figure of the elusive blonde is both universal and particularly specific to Hitchcock. Whenever critics discuss the films of Alfred Hitchcock, the blonde is an area of interest and speculation.

> In addition to his obvious personal preference for fair-haired heroines, Hitchcock may have been aware that in late nineteenth-century culture, a serious emotional nature was typified by brunettes in art. Blonds in fiction were ordinarily naive or frivolous. In Eliot's *Middlemarch*, for example (1871-1872), noble, self-sacrificing, dark haired Dorothea is contrasted with the shallow, selfish, pale blond Rosamund.[83]

The same can be said of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* where Laura, the blonde beauty is weak and irresolute whereas her sister, the comely dark-haired Marianne is determined, intelligent and steadfast. Many critics, including Robin Wood, have argued that the blonde is a character that Hitchcock takes great pleasure in 'punishing'. However, the blonde serves a more purposeful function than merely to be a 'body' onto which Alfred Hitchcock projected misogynistic punishments, if any. The blonde is a figure in which Hitchcock took great delight due to stereotypical estimations of the nature of women with fair hair (virginal, pure, calm, cool, dispassionate). This was yet another

[83] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 86

perfect opportunity for Hitchcock to toy with the audiences' expectations and perceptions of the reality of the film and real worlds. In a radio interview with the BBC Hitchcock explains that the figure of the blonde is of particular interest to him because of the seemingly cool exterior, which probably masks a passionate psyche. The interest for Hitchcock is in the perception being of extreme difference to the reality of the nature,

> Interviewer: It looks to me as though you had 45 of them, now 40 out of these 45 were blondes, now what is it that attracts you to blondes? What does the blonde woman symbolize for you?
>
> Hitchcock: I really think it's not my attraction to them, I think it's traditional. You see it seems to me that ever since the beginning of movies the leading lady starting with Mary Pickford was the blonde and the leading man has always been a brunette. The only difference is that in many cases my leading ladies are a little more svelte they don't have their sex hanging around them like baubles … in other words, the obvious blonde even the Marilyn Monroe type wouldn't appeal to me at all because there is no mystery in the sex, the sex is so obvious and I would rather have the sex discovered, I suppose the first was Madeleine Carroll in *Thirty-Nine Steps*.
>
> Interviewer: You once said to me that you thought the blonde was the more passionate of the female types.
>
> Hitchcock: It comes under the heading of the mystery of the...(unintelligible), you see in other words if you take the Irish woman or the North German or the Swedish woman, sometimes they can even look like school ma'ams but boy when they get to it, they're uh…quite astonishing in their shall we say um…perspicacity… and their sex. I believe it's got something to do with the climate, I believe the further south you go in Europe the more obvious the sex is, after all look at the circumspection of the French woman she's not what the old-fashioned French used to be …ooh la la. She's a carefully guarded woman by her family and the Italians, you know they look passionate and so forth but I don't really believe they are. I think it's all on the surface. But when you get to the Swedish woman, take my friend Ingrid Bergman; she used to refer to herself as the apple-cheeked blonde, peasant girl type. Well as you know subsequent events, shall we call them extra-curricula events…Showed that that again was a surface matter. . …The Irish women of course were very similar.[84]

[84] Taken from the BBC radio archives. Retrieved 20 May 2003 from the World Wide Web: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/hitchcocka1.shtml

The first in a long line of blondes seen in Hitchcock's films is the golden-haired woman who is killed by The Avenger in *The Lodger.* She is a character whose only use seems to be that of dying i.e. she is the catalyst to enable the narrative to move forward yet she is a figure of mystery who disappears, and this is a section to be dealt with later on in this chapter – the vanishing lady.

Often Hitchcock's blondes are simultaneously weak and vulnerable and strong and cunning. The list would include *Marnie*, Marion Crane in *Psycho*, Pamela in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, Judy in *Vertigo*, Melanie Daniels in *The Birds,* Jo McKenna in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and Alicia Huberman in *Notorious.* The use of these characters in the manipulation of the audience lies in Hitchcock's representation of them as duplicitous in nature. The audience is never completely certain of the nature of these characters. They could be timid and then turn out to be strong-willed and tenacious and vice-versa.

> Hitchcock's blondes are more than stereotypical, cut outs, that are atypical and 'grey', rather they are usually sophisticated women, who know what they want and will manipulate men in any way they can to get their own way. Grace Kelly portrayed, 'Hitchcock's favourite kind of sexuality where a cool, blond, poised outward appearance conceals an almost unbridled passionate drive within.'[85]

An example of this kind of woman is exemplified in *To Catch a Thief.* Cary Grant is no match for the wiles and perfidious nature of Grace Kelly who stalks him as much as a creature would stalk prey. "The girl uses sex as a toy and, in one of Hitchcock's most

[85] PERRY, G. 1975. The Movie Makers: Hitchcock. London: Macmillan Publishing Ltd. p. 87

impudent scenes, seduces Robbie by exploiting his taste for jewels."[86] Ingrid Bergman in *Notorious* is initially in the same position of power because she entrances Cary Grant. The elusive blonde is a character of mystery, intrigue and sexual fantasies for Hitchcock's leading men. She is the antithesis of all that is expected of the virginal blonde and thus expected by the men in the audience. As he stated in the BBC interview, Hitchcock is essentially using the blonde as a traditional female lead but rather than painting the traditional 'purer than the driven snow' character, is portraying the distinct and perhaps more realistic notion of women of desire, desire for power, wealth, men and love - Marnie, resorts to stealing from men because, she feels a need to 'punish' men for what happened when she was a child. She steals from men, to buy gifts for her mother in order to gain love and acceptance from a cold mother figure. Marion Crane in *Psycho* is a woman who steals money in order to be able to marry her lover who is in debt and who uses this as an excuse not to marry at the present time. Both Eva Marie Saint and Ingrid Bergman in *North by Northwest* and *Notorious* respectively, portray women who use their power and sexual attractiveness, in order to further their country's political power and bring about the downfall of villains who plot to cause the downfall of democracy.

The elusive blonde is a refined character, but she is a character who is remote and often complex, not even the audience who is usually complicit in the characters' inner thoughts and rationalization is at a loss as to the inner motivation. In this way Hitchcock manages to keep the audience enthralled, in order to establish what, if any are the actual motivations and outcomes of the blonde's actions.

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[86] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 255

William Rothman points out that the framing used in *Psycho* invokes another of Hitchcock's paradigms, that of man's desire for woman, which is, crystallized in his obsession with her hair. As Marion is an object of desire, the framing used in *Psycho* illuminates this point. In *Vertigo*, Scottie buys Judy the same gray suit and black evening gown that Madeleine wore, but his final transformation in this process is to change Judy's hair from her natural dark brown to blonde. Donald Spoto points out that, "There is something sensuous yet aloof about this woman, we with Scottie, want to pursue her, but something forbids us."[87] Hitchcock draws the audience member into Scottie's obsession and dilemma. As in *Psycho*, Hitchcock uses framing to bring attention to Judy's hair, especially the spiral configuration in her hair, which is reminiscent of Carlotta Valdez's hair in the portrait. As a Catholic Hitchcock would have seen at the time the custom of women covering their heads with a lace shawl during Mass, in order, apparently, not to tempt men's thoughts away from God by displaying their hair which was emblematic of their sexual allure. Hitchcock exploits the audience's identification with the siren-like ability of women to entrance and lure men away from their daily obligations. The blonde is emblematic of all women; she is the cool, seductive and dangerous woman who men should be wary of.

Hitchcock is very astute in portraying this woman in such a way that she becomes an identification figure for both the men and the women in the audience due to the suturing of the audience member into the narrative in such a way that allows the audience members to identify with aspects of the blonde - the men identify with the feelings of attraction and fascination whilst the women, identify with the power that this woman

[87] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 308

yields over men, women want to be in possession of this power, whilst the men desire the woman as an object.

Hitchcock, specifically in *Marnie*, exploits the desire of the men in the audience,

A.H: The fetish idea. A man wants to go to bed with a thief because she is a thief, just like other men have a yen for a Chinese or a colored woman. [88]

Hitchcock understood the idea of giving men what they want in the cinematic context in order to have them totally engross themselves in the film. He enables them to take a subject position in which they desire a fictional character and thus they are sutured into the narrative. He understood what kind of fascination a cold, hard woman and a thief holds for men whilst women yearn for this kind of attraction to be theirs in order to have men 'eating out of their hands' and be in a dominant position. Hitchcock was very intuitive and clever in his use of sexual and gender politics in order to have both gender types in the audience to identify with the elusive blondes in separate but equally emotive manners.

In *Vertigo*,

> We watch a woman become a mannequin, or even a magazine illustration: it is all Jeffries can accept. She turns herself into a public performance, a spectacle to be watched from the other side of the footlights.[89]

[88] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 464
[89] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 187

Hence, Hitchcock as well as Jeffries turned the blonde Judy into a show. Again Hitchcock manipulates the performance within a performance to highlight the artificiality of the situation. This part of the film also brings out the point mentioned earlier about Hitchcock's use of casting. Hitchcock made sure that his leading ladies were always, statuesque and beautiful.

As Donald Spoto observes Hitchcock's camera moves during a scene in *Vertigo*,

> … finally stopping and tracking into an ethereally blond woman, her back to us and her sublime profile slightly turned. There is something statuesque about her. She represents something eminently desirable and yet infinitely remote – the quintessence of the mystery of Woman.[90]

The mystery of woman is the mystery of the elusive blonde, a figure who is both remote and near, cold yet with a hint of compassion – a figure who is desirable because of her aloofness. There are however two exceptions to the 'rule' of the elusive blonde being portrayed as a hard personality in Hitchcock's films: Gay Keane in *The Paradine Case* and the second Mrs. de Winter in *Rebecca*.

> If Mrs. Paradine is the exotic but fatal mystery woman, who degrades all she comes near, then Gay Keane is her antithesis in the structure of the film as in her husband's life. She is blond, clothed in white or at least soft light colors throughout, whereas Mrs. Paradine is a brunette dressed in black.[91]

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[90] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 308
[91] Ibid p. 178

In this case as in *Rebecca*, it is the brunette who is the cold, evil, misanthropic character simply because the blond is the heroine and can't be seen to be in any way totally warped and without redemption. If this were so Hitchcock realized that there would be no audience sympathy for the heroine in such a case. The 'arch rival' according to film tradition has always worn dark colors, symbolic of evil and general ne'er do well. Both the blondes in these two films are sweet and vulnerable, thus Hitchcock had to have blondes because even their hair color is symbolic of white, which is symbolic of purity.

These are only two cases out of a number of Hitchcock's blondes and we must remember that the majority of his elusive blondes have a difficult time in the narratives in which they are featured. In *North by Northwest* Spot proclaims that the blonde in this film is,

> …the deceitful blonde (more deadly here than in any other Hitchcock film…the disturbing moral ambiguity of the film depends on our recognition that Eve (like Alicia Huberman *Notorious*) is blithely sold like a commodity, crossing from the hands of the intelligence men to Tandem's to Thornhill's. She may be Hitchcock's classic two-faced blonde, but her deadly kiss – very like Madeleine/Judy's in *Vertigo* – brings her suffering and regret, too.[92]

The elusive blonde often pays for her misdemeanors and vanishes like Madeleine in *Vertigo* and Janet Leigh in *Psycho*.

[92] Ibid. p. 344

6.6 Characters Present In Absence

6.6.1 The Vanishing Lady

To be influential in absence is probably one of the most powerful ways in which any single person can make an impression. It suggests our fear of loss. Many of Hitchcock's characters are present more in their own absence than presence. This chapter explores the relevance that this recurring theme has to audience manipulation and if so, how.

The title for this subsection comes from the title of Hitchcock's film *The Lady Vanishes* in which an old lady by the name of Miss Froy mysteriously disappears from a moving train. Although Miss Froy hasn't actually disappeared, she is the first in a long line of characters who are conveniently removed by the unfolding of the narrative and by characters in the narrative in order to set the film's narrative into motion. Miss Froy's 'disappearance' becomes the focus of the film and her vanishing creates a presence in absence.

The myriad of absent characters found in Hitchcock's film's narratives tend to serve three functions they can be a) Catalysts or MacGuffins that are a means for the narrative to commence (e.g. Carlotta Valdez in *Vertigo*), (b) A red herring that serves to confuse the audience (e.g. Miss Froy in *The Vanishing Lady*) c) A character that casts doubt on the adequacy of another character (e.g. Kaplan's mother in *North by Northwest*)

Hitchcock's manipulation of his audiences becomes embodied in the characters that appear in so many of his films but who take no physical, concrete form.

In *Rebecca* the presence of the first Mrs. de Winter (who is the quintessential character present in absence) is almost tangible, her initials are embroidered on napkins, handkerchiefs, pillowcases etc. Maxim seems obsessed to the point of mania with thoughts of his first wife and her former servant, Mrs. Danvers' sole purpose in life seems to be to make life as difficult as is humanly possible for the second Mrs. De Winter. So Rebecca becomes a character who has as much influence in death as she did in life. (Just as Hitchcock is as much a manipulative force within his films, as he is outside of these.) This particular character is such a strong entity within the film narrative that she becomes a surrogate for the off screen presence of the invisible director – she manipulates the characters within the narrative as Hitchcock manipulates the audience. This character is used by Hitchcock to increase the audience's feelings of sympathy with the female protagonist who is such a bland, insipid and meek character that we are never even furnished with her Christian name. If it were not for the fact that she is almost haunted by the ghost of Rebecca and seen to be an interloper, detested as such by Mrs. Danvers – the audience could find no reason to 'side' with the female protagonist in *Rebecca*.

In one of many ways in which Hitchcock's brilliance is made apparent, Rebecca's presence is made most clear in the scene in which Maxim tells his wife of what happened on the night upon which Rebecca died.

> … the camera follows Rebecca's movements in a lengthy tracking shot. Most films, of course, would have resorted to a flashback at this moment, allaying our anxiety over an empty screen by filling the 'lack.'[93]

Consequently, not only is it stressed by Hitchcock to the audience that Rebecca is absent, but the audience is also made to experience it as an actual force. The 'lack' that is filled is both physical and psychological. The absence causes unease for the audience as they expect to see Rebecca and not experience the lack of physicality in a flash back scene – Hitchcock does not assuage this anxiety concerning the lack and manipulates the audience to feel unsettled and a little in awe of the character of Rebecca.

Rebecca and other characters present in absence seem to lurk in the 'wings' of the audience's minds and in this way occupy off-screen space in the film.

Pascal Bonitzer discusses the power of the off screen space to terrorize the viewer:

> Specular space is on-screen space; it is everything we see on the screen. Off-screen space, blind space, is everything that moves (or wriggles) outside or under the surface of things, like the shark in *Jaws*. If such films 'work'. It is because we are more or less held in the sway of these two spaces. If the shark were always on screen it would quickly become a domesticated animal. What is frightening is that it is not there! The point of horror resides in the blind space. [94]

Hitchcock's preoccupation with the absent character extends to actual preoccupation with dead bodies. Bodies being signifiers of what were once present persons. In *Frenzy* the

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[93] Ibid. p. 53
[94] Pascal Bonitzer as cited in MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen. p. 45

film actually commences with a scene where a body washes up on the banks of the river Thames in London. The bodies are physical manifestations of the lack of spiritual presence. The manipulation by Hitchcock is both ingenious and very subtle as the bodies are a metaphor for the lack of community in the town evident when we hear the mayor giving a speech on the subject of needing to clean up London, this could be meant to be both literally and figuratively. The spiritual decay and rot that has set in, in the city is then encapsulated in the body floating down the river Thames an indicator to the audience of the tone that the film will take. Yet this is not only decay in the city it is by inference decay in the minds of men too. Hitchcock manipulates the audience into thinking about the state of the world in which they live, a world which is not a Utopian society but which contains moral decay similar to that depicted in the world of the film. This manipulation by Hitchcock serves to highlight synchronicity between fiction and reality, which allows for a heightened sense of familiarity with the fictional world for the audience. This in turn heightens fear when the audience is faced with a serial murderer without a conscience.

The power of dead people in Hitchcock's films is apparent even in small ways. In *The Birds,* Jessica Tandy in playing Mitch's mother cries out to him, "If only your father were here!" This is a direct reference to a character that is dead but in that one instance, the figure of the father seems to loom, towering over Mitch in his apparent inability to handle the situation as his father would the mother chastises the son for not being like the father. In this specific instance the use of the absent father figure is used by Hitchcock to cast doubt on the ability of Mitch to have the attitude and attributes to handle the situation and

be able to protect both his family and Melanie. This increases and heightens the emotions of anxiety and fear for the audience. The audience due to the convention of the classic Hollywood narrative expects the male protagonist i.e. the 'hero' to be able to save the day, rectify all that is wrong and walk triumphantly off into the Bodega Bay sunset smug in the knowledge that he prevailed. Hitchcock, by using this absent character to cast a shadow of doubt on the credibility of the present male protagonist – manipulates the audience into doubting that Mitch will be effective in saving everyone from the onslaught of the birds and thus confuses the audience as to what the outcome of the narrative will eventually be.

> Hitchcock's motif here is the power of the dead to affect the living. It is a major element in the director's work. On a deeper level, it is a profoundly theological (and particularly Catholic) theme, which recurs with increasing frequency in his major films – *Rebecca, Spellbound, Psycho, The Birds* and *Marnie* among others. Even in the earlier works the psychological complexities attendant to the plot are related to someone's death (*Murder, The 39 Steps, Young and Innocent*.)[95]

In *Suspicion* the heroine hears her father say that she is an excellent candidate for marriage, which acts as a catalyst for her to marry a seemingly iniquitous character. Later the father's presence dominates the household via his portrait, which is constantly shown in the home. A portrait portraying the deceased is also evident in *The Paradine Case, The Birds, Rebecca* and *Vertigo.* Annie in *The Birds* is framed in the scene in the schoolroom by the world map and a portrait of George Washington this portrait signifies dead authority, presence in appearance but not actual tangible presence. Marion, when she is preparing to leave for Sam's house in *Psycho,* gets all her things together in a

[95] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 166

bedroom with walls covered in pictures of her as a baby and of her deceased parents. The baby pictures Hitchcock deliberately uses to allude to lost innocence and the deceased parents are used to convey a sense of unspoken disapproval of her deeds. Hitchcock's use of family photographs manipulates the audience into feeling a certain amount of sympathy for Marion, as the audience sees her as a young woman without family support – all alone in a hostile world.

Whilst Marion's problems in poor judgment can be put down to dead characters – her lover, Sam's problems are caused by both absent dead characters and absent characters who are alive. In *Psycho* Sam, says:

> I'm tired of sweating for people who aren't there. I still have to pay off my father's debts and he's in his grave. I still have to pay my ex-wife's alimony and she's living on the other side of the world somewhere.

Sam is a character who is bound to work by his having to pay off his father's debt and pay his dues to his ex-wife. These two characters are catalysts that set in motion the motive for Marion feeling compelled to steal money and attempt to run away and live illicitly with Sam, which is why she ends up at the Bates motel. Both characters are absent yet are an almost tangible presence because they prove to be such an obstacle to the happiness of Marion and Sam which is what sets the sequence of events into motion that leads Marion to her final destiny at the Bates Motel. These characters are also used by Hitchcock to initially manipulate the audience into thinking that the story will be about stealing and a rocky romance – all the indicators point to that being the path that

the narrative will inevitably follow. This ploy of Hitchcock's thus makes firstly the murder of Marion so shocking and secondly the change of protagonist and narrative a totally unexpected turn of events for the audience.

A character present in absence, which is an example of Hitchcock's use of this character as a red herring, is George Kaplan in *North by Northwest.* This a character created by the CIA. Poor Cary Grant becomes the fall guy when Mason and his henchmen suspect him of being a fake secret agent. Hitchcock makes use of his MacGuffin here in a two-fold manner. Firstly the MacGuffin is a means of simply getting the narrative off to a start and secondly he knew the audience would be completely absorbed in trying to figure out the puzzle as to who the real George Kaplan actually is, when in actual fact he doesn't exist. The character present in absence is an enigma for the audience – they concentrate on solving the mystery of exactly who George Kaplan is. Hitchcock makes this character (who is both absent and fictional) a false focal point of the narrative. The audience is manipulated into attempting to discover who Kaplan is as is Roger O. Thornhill and the twist is that Thornhill has been mistaken for a 'spy' who was made up by the CIA. The audience has been manipulated into chasing after a figment of some CIA. agent.

In *Psycho* the figure of Mother is a larger than life figure, which dominates the entire film from the shower murder onwards.

> [We] are encouraged to resent the power of the dead to influence the living, and the power of the past to affect the present. Norman's present is entirely swallowed up by the past, and Mother has come back from the grave to possess him.[96]

[96] Ibid p. 361

Hitchcock makes Norman a likeable figure for whom we feel great sympathy, as he is apparently completely dominated by a Mother who is emotionally abusive. It is the portrayal by Hitchcock of Norman as a sweet 'all American' boy which makes our disgust for a character whom we do not see but hear and sense all the more intense. Hitchcock manipulates the audience into being concerned with a figure that we think we have heard and seen – albeit a nebulous figure behind a shower curtain.

In *Rope* Hitchcock kills a character in the initial scene and then has the body 'present' for the rest of the film in a trunk. *Rope* is a quintessential thriller in that we, the audience know that which the rest of the array of characters do not know - that a body is in their midst of which they are not aware. Here the absence and the presence serve two separate but equally important functions for Hitchcock. Initially the absence of the character, David is a means for the narrative to commence and cause consternation amongst the other characters, and then it acts as a means in which to make the apprehension of the audience heightened.

Obviously Hitchcock uses the absence/presence dichotomy to keep the audience on the edge of their seats in anticipation of what will occur next. He does this with economy and precision.

This precision in manipulation extends to Hitchcock's use of the corpses he readily distributed in *Frenzy,* which are those of women who have been sexually violated and

strangled. Although spiritually and in personality they are absent in actual physicality they are still present because as Modleski points out:

> But I do mean to insist on the importance of the fact that woman is never completely destroyed in these films – no matter how dead Hitchcock tries to make her appear, as when he inserts still shots in both *Psycho* and *Frenzy* of the female corpse.[97]

An example of this indefatigable presence exhibited by the use female corpses in *Frenzy* specifically is evident in the scene in the back of the potato van when Bob Rusk desperately tries to open the stiff hand of one of his victims to retrieve a tie pin, which would serve as evidence against him if found. He has to break open the fingers of the corpse, which grasp the pin tightly as though still alive and present. In attempting to manipulate the audience, he makes the audience sympathize with the murderer by constructing this section of the film in such a manner that the object of the narrative at this point is to retrieve the tie pin and consequently the audience automatically strive with the murderer to retrieve the pin and only think about whose pin it is and how it came to be in its final resting place to begin with, later.

Hitchcock's use of the corpse in *Frenzy* has much the same function as his use of the corpse in *The Trouble with Harry*. The agency given to these corpses is done in order to outline and exhibit the affect that the dead or problems with the dead can have on the living. The authority that those who are absent can wield represents the authority of the invisible presence of Hitchcock.

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[97] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 112

Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience lies in a game of cat and mouse where in *Frenzy* and *The Trouble with Harry* these bodies literally pop up and it becomes a game in which Hitchcock strains his audience's nerves by having them be in a continual state of anticipation over whether the bodies being discovered or not. In the case of *Frenzy* we want Bob Rusk to be caught, in *The Trouble with Harry*, we want the body not to be recovered.

> [W]hat goes around is not the suspect or the sleuth but the corpse; and he also goes up and down, or in and out, since he's buried and unburied rather like a bone.[98]

The above quotation from Raymond Durgnat refers to *The Trouble with Harry* where the corpse of Harry is buried and reburied. Hitchcock's message and ultimate manipulation of the audience surrounds the issue of buried fears and problems that we do not deal with in our everyday lives. As we fear the dead and what the dead reveal about ourselves, so too do we fear the unburying of our latent fears and monstrous desires. We are afraid of that part of ourselves that desires the forbidden and fears the conventional.

Carlotta Valdez is a much-maligned character from *Vertigo* and in the film she is supposedly manifesting in the body of her great granddaughter. The theme of the dead taking control of the living is an old superstition and to some an actual belief. The dead have always held a fascination for people because the experience of death is common to every person yet it is unknown and thus a fearful state to be in. Hitchcock is quite

[98] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 267

obviously ‘milking’ this fear that the majority of people have for all its worth. The manipulation of the audience lies in Hitchcock’s introduction of what Freud would call the uncanny fear of death.

Control was of the utmost importance to Hitchcock, as too were figures that controlled and manipulated others. The figure of the mother is a controlling character that makes an appearance in nearly every film he made.

6.6.2 The Mother Figure

Amongst Hitchcock’s favourite themes was that of the mother or mother figure. Characters of special interest for film theorists and ordinary audience members are those whom Durgnat describes as characters (especially female) that are attached to a harsh or sinister mother figure. Hitchcock was so involved in portraying the character of the mother because of the greater possibility of audience identification and because the mother is a ubiquitous character that is easily found in most narratives due to its universality in terms of culture. This chapter illustrates Hitchcock continual use of this character in a succession of films via which he could manipulate audiences.

The mother figure however is not simply a benevolent figure that keeps a subsidiary place in the background of Hitchcock’s narratives. She is usually a dominant figure, not always of family attachment that attempts to pervert the flow of ‘how things should be’

as Hitchcock does in his own manipulations of the audience. This figure is not merely used by Hitchcock to manipulate and thereby control the audience and one whom the audience sees as beyond reproach; very often the mother figure comes to a difficult and unfortunate end. In *Psycho* her son murders Mrs. Bates and her personality as embodied in her son is eventually 'institutionalized'. Even in *Rebecca*, the sinister mother figure of Mrs. Danvers is a character that Hitchcock uses to manipulate the audience into a feeling of unease and subtle fear. She is however not left unpunished by Hitchcock and "… receives the usual punishment inflicted on the bad mother/witch: she is burned alive when she sets fire to the Manderley Mansion."[99] A warning to those over-protective mothers in the audience – beware of the monsters that you may be creating.

The sweet and timid character of the mother Emma in *Shadow of a Doubt* is perhaps the best and most benevolent rendering of a mother in all of Alfred Hitchcock's works. However, the portrait that he paints of the mother figure becomes more darkly tinctured in later films, beginning with the possessive and tyrannical mother of *Notorious.* In *Notorious* the figure of the mother steps out of the shadows of mere dialogue and conversation and "…all at once – as later, through *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *Marnie* – Hitchcock began to make the mother figure a … repository of … anger, guilt, resentment, and a sad yearning."[100]

Other mother figures in whom Hitchcock seemed morbidly interested were those that possessed an unhealthy obsession-like control and interest over their children, (e.g. the

[99] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 53
[100] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 291

mothers found in *The Birds*, *Psycho* and *Notorious*). These women by implication seemed to function or serve as surrogates for Hitchcock's control over both the film and his audiences. The control that each mother wields over other characters in the film as analogous to Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience and the exact control that he had over each aspect of his filmmaking – as the mothers do not want to relinquish control over their charges so too does Hitchcock not want to relinquish the interpretation of his films.

> It is something of an understatement to say that, in Hitchcock's American films, mothers are generally not presented in a very favorable light. There are three mothers of psychopathic killers (Mrs. Anthony, Mrs. Bates, Mrs. Rusk); the neurotically clinging mother of *The Birds*; the love-withholding, guilt-ridden mother of *Marnie.* Other mothers are presented somewhat more sympathetically: the nervous, pathetic, well-meaning Emma of *Shadow of a Doubt*, the caustic and skeptical mother of Cary Grant in *North by Northwest.*[101]

Mothers and Hitchcock have always seemed to be oxymorons in terms of Hitchcock's seemingly troubled relationship with mother figures in his films. Relationships between characters and their mother figures in Hitchcock's films are always assailed with problems, hidden resentment and lack of love and or fear. Mother in *Psycho* drives her son to murder, Marnie's mother in *Marnie* withholds love and affection, and the mother in *The Birds* resents affection shown by her son to other females and in some ways projects his father's responsibilities onto him. These are only some examples of the bizarre and strange mothers to be found in the canon of Hitchcock's works. Generally mothers in Hitchcock's films tend to be malicious, cruel, twisted or completely naïve. Marnie and Norman have a lot in common and it is interesting in that they are both lead

[101] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 361

characters that have been their own mothers. Donald Spoto observes that both Norman's and Marnie's mothers who are both ill and confined have warped their children. Just as Norman says to Marion "A boy's best friend is his mother", so too does Lil say of Marnie, "A girl's best friend is her mother." In this way Hitchcock conveys to his audience the sense of all pervading control that mothers can and do wield over their children, everyone who has had experience of their own mothers knows this and in this way Hitchcock allows for more chilling identification with figures who have been detrimentally 'mothered' in his films.

Even characters that only represent mother figures are apparent and are equally naïve. Not that all mother figures are naïve but they are portrayed as such by Hitchcock.

In *Shadow of a Doubt*,

> His (Uncle Charlie's)[102]landlady maintains his invincible innocence in the face of every indication of his underworld vulgarity (he lies apathetically in his bed, banknotes scattered on the floor). She offers to open his window, falling into the role of indulgent mother figure.[103]

The landlady is a mother figure (in that she fusses over him as a mother would) who indulges a man who is a callous murderer and a sociopath too. She doesn't perceive him in the correct light and thus is morally complicit in his crimes, as she does nothing to alert the authorities to the fact that a man with suspiciously large sums of money is staying at her boarding house. So figuratively she also has the blood of the widows on her hands.

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[102] My own insertion.
[103] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 186

Hitchcock's motivation in using this character is that, we have all been 'conned' into thinking that somebody is what they are not be it by a mother figure or not. Perhaps we have also willingly, out of affection for an individual, refused to see the obvious in terms of nefarious behaviour. We know as Hitchcock knows how easy it is to fall into the trap of trusting charming people, but at what cost? Hitchcock points out the obvious that it could be we, the audience, who are complicit too - by our overlooking behaviour which in other circumstances we would find suspicious in order to pacify someone with whom we are besotted. We too have pampered and mollycoddled someone and not voiced our objection to an action or indeed series of actions. In this way he manipulates the audience into a position of realizing that inaction is as detrimental as action especially when an individual (particularly a mother figure) should know better.

Yet another character that is pampered by a mother figure (this time his actual mother) is Bruno from *Strangers on a Train.* Both Bruno and Guy are actually exhibited as being 'soft' as,

> … both men are mother's boys. For while Bruno is a mother's darling, has a sickly ambivalent love for and charms old ladies at Washington parties, before something inside him takes over and sets him strangling one, as he strangled Guy's wife, so Guy seems to 'belong' to two women, Miriam and Anne, by comparison with whom he seems rather boyish, a little weak.[104]

The equation with both men as 'mommies' boys' is significant, in that it implies that both men are weak of mind and moral fibre because of their devotion to and excessive

[104] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 218

affection for their mothers and or lovers and wives (who become controlling mother surrogates). Hitchcock must have known of men's attitudes towards 'sissies' and 'mother's boys' and he must have used this in *Strangers on a Train* in order to manipulate the men in the audience to completely disavow any logic in the two men's actions whilst making them so 'lovable' in a sense that women in their maternal instincts would have no choice but to sympathize with other characters in their vulnerability and seeming naivety. Hitchcock was both devious and exceedingly cunning in creating this dichotomy or rift in audience perception according to gender stereotypes. Bruno's (as a stereotypical mother) mother dotes on him and allows him to live the life of a playboy without any responsibility. It is his father (as a stereotypical father) that objects to his lavish and extravagant ways.

> And Marion Lorne's portrayal of Bruno's eccentric mother is a perfect cameo. She is a frightening figure, living in her own fantasy world, painting bizarre surrealistic pictures and doting on a son to whose sickness she is blind – but with that amusing touch of the flibbertijibbet for which Miss Lorne was loved and famous. The ambiguity of the role is a perfect foil and is so darkly paralleled by the thoughtless ramblings of Mrs. Cunningham at the party sequence.[105]

This mother is a mother whom most audience members can identify with either they have a mother figure that is so or they know of a friend's mother who is similar. In this way, Hitchcock implies and leads his audience into thinking that such a mother could influence any son to such lengths as murder, if your own mother is like that could you too possibly be so inclined. Or your friend, who has a mother of a similar personality type, is she a possible murderer? Hitchcock allows for seeds of doubt to enter people's minds. Where if they were to witness such an incident in reality they wouldn't give it a second thought -

[105] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 219

in the confines of a cinema and in the darkness of the cinema and one's own mind, such thoughts seem to have a stronger hold and their veracity holds true. Hitchcock manipulates the audience's mindset to increase the sense of foreboding and fear in the film.

> [A] doubling of the killing of Miriam and also a ritual murder of his mother, for whom his anger and resentment had earlier been established.'[106]

The mother again becomes synonymous with driving the son 'mad'. Whether done consciously or not, by having Bruno ritualistically murder his own mother Hitchcock points to the destructive possibilities of the mother-son relationship. In order to increase the dichotomy in audience sympathies mentioned earlier in this chapter, Hitchcock moves from the primarily destructive mother-daughter relationship to that between mother and son. Hitchcock moves the audience identification from women to men, as it is they who can most identify with Bruno at this point. Imagine if a man who was sitting in the audience saw this section of the film and recalled from his subconscious thoughts he had had of wanting to kill his mother. Of course I don't suppose these were serious thoughts at all but thoughts more along the lines of idle threats due to rage and great irritation. Yet nonetheless these thoughts had occurred. How does such a man feel when viewing this section of film? Due to greater identification he must feel cold and fearful. Just what Hitchcock ordered.

When one considers that in *Strangers on a Train*, it is the women who really have control, it is interesting to ponder on how the mothers whether it is in a positive or

[106] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W.H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 214

negative way yield such power in both the narratives of the films and the imagination of the audiences who watch them.

> Just as Barbara brings Miriam to the reception, so the two Washington old ladies bring Bruno's mother to the reception. Looking at the first, he strangles one of the latter…Bruno accidentally strangles a substitute for his own, apparently beloved, mother. Miriam is about to become a mother and Guy makes a point of respecting her pregnancy.[107]

Hitchcock uses two models of motherhood in this film – the role of the mother as filling a sacred role in society and the role of mother as a harridan, intrusive and smothering. He uses these models so that he can manipulate the audience's sympathies and loyalties for Guy and Bruno. On the one hand we understand the villain's (Bruno) irritation with his vague and fussy mother who doesn't give him any guidance but wants to be nosey. Although the audience does not condone her murder we can sympathize with irritation and frustration that were the catalysts for the attempted murder. Guy, on the other hand has a pregnant wife who makes his life unbearable and he will not grant him a divorce. The audience sympathies with Guy because Miriam is heartless and does not act in a manner befitting a soon to be mother – she does not believe in the sanctity of motherhood and goes out carousing with other men. In this case the audience is appalled by her behavior and is manipulated by Hitchcock by his less than flattering portrayal of this woman to actually feel justified when she is murdered. When we see her sightless eyes staring back at us there is a sense of satisfaction that she received a fitting punishment.

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[107] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 219

In *North by Northwest* we encounter Mrs. Thornhill, a woman who by all accounts loves her son but who snorts loudly and derisively in the courtroom when her son explains to the judge how he came to be drunk in charge of a vehicle. Hitchcock here gives the audience the chance to see a mother who is the polar opposite of other mothers in his films. Rather than dote on her son; she disbelieves him in the blink of an eye. The mother, rather than be biased in favour of her son, completely disbelieves anything he is willing to divulge. This is just as detrimental as the doting mother in the opposite way where the mother never believes the child to be capable of any good at all. Hitchcock illustrates here the dichotomy of relationships between mothers and children and how they vary between two points and seldom seem to exist on any sort of middle ground. In *Notorious*, Alex's mother dominates him. Hitchcock manipulates the audience because he shifts the potent power from Alex's character to that of his mother. Hitchcock knows that the audiences expect the spy, Alex, to be the strong and powerful character and do not in the least expect his mother to be a stronger personality – he manipulates the audience's expectation of character roles within the narrative. This is hardly a situation for an international spy to find himself in. As an international spy one would assume that he is suave, confident and not still tied to his mother's apron strings but nevertheless Alex,

> ...is one of Hitchcock's mother-dominated men, among whom the most obvious are Herb (Hume Cronyn) in *Shadow of a Doubt*, Bruno (Robert Walker) in *Strangers on a Train*, Roger Thornhill (Grant) in *North by Northwest*, and Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) in *Psycho*. Sometimes the mother figure is a girlfriend (Midge/Barbara Bel Geddes in *Vertigo*) or a housekeeper (Stella/Thelma Ritter) in *Rear Window*, or a wife (the inspector's wife/Vivien Merchant in *Frenzy*).[108]

[108] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 169

In the above examples, we notice how the heroes are not all powerful and are actually hampered in their heroism and bravado in being fussed over by women. Most men in the audience would see this as an odious part of the narrative as most men would rather have the heroes or villains as the case may be, as being solitary, stoic and without unnecessary female interference. Hitchcock in this way manipulates the men into completely identifying with the hero in at least one aspect by doing this Hitchcock ensures that part of his audience will definitely identify with the male heroes/villains. When it comes to interfering females none can be so insipid nor so grey as *Vertigo's* Midge. To take the example that Sterritt gives us of Midge in *Vertigo,* when we explore further we find that Midge's script contains speech that refers to her as a mother figure in Scottie's life.

> Scottie actually uses the word – "motherly". She reminds one a little of that other sympathetic young mother figure, the Doris Day of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*: she disapproves of Scottie's leaving the police, she supervises his attempt to "like" his vertigo (by climbing portable stairs) as a mother might help a child to master bicycle, alternately urging and restraining.[109]

When in the hospital, Midge bends over Stewart and says, "Please try. You're not lost. Mother's here…Want me to shut that off?…You don't even know I am here…But I'm here." These words alone point to her own realization of the role that she is to play in his life. It is almost as if she feels that if she cannot be his life partner and love interest, then to dote on him as a loving mother is the next best thing. Women always tend to be the carers, so the role of lover and mother can become conflated, as Midge would rather care for Scottie, i.e. love him at any cost regardless of the reciprocal feelings, rather than be

[109] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 111

abandoned and left alone. Hitchcock counts on most women having experienced this dilemma and identifying with Midge. She is a subsidiary character that Hitchcock uses as a lead into the narrative for the audience. By associating ourselves with her, we can then start to identify with aspects of all the characters, however remote they and their situation initially seem.

As Hitchcock progresses in his career his films show increasing concern for the role of motherhood. In *Notorious* Mrs. Sebastian was a demonic and tyrannical figure; in *Strangers on a Train*, Mrs. Anthony is a pathologically confused harridan; and in *Rear Window* the mother figure, Stella is a busybody who nurses Jeffries and pries into details of his love life. Only Mrs. Stevens in *To Catch a Thief* is a humorous character whose understanding of her daughter finally wins through. In later films the mother figure changes and becomes more forlorn and desolate. Midge in *Vertigo*, in *North by Northwest* Mrs. Thornhill watches her son cynically like a hawk, in *Psycho* Mrs. Bates possesses her son after her own death, in *The Birds*, Mrs. Brenner is a terrified, pathetic woman who is afraid of being abandoned as her children grow up and in *Marnie*, Mrs. Edgar is the cause of her daughter's guilt and sexual pathology. These women are linked by their status as mothers and by nothing else. Hitchcock gives the audience a wide array of mother figures who are all different in temperament and character from one another – thus appealing to a wider audience base. Hitchcock's manipulation is evident here, linking his films with the figure of the less than perfect mother, in order to procure the anxiety of his audience in terms of their own relationship with their mothers and also making the women fear doing the same to existing or future children. He uses a common

denominator. The mother is a figure that most people have in their lives whatever their situation in life and all women have the possibility of being mothers themselves. In a way Hitchcock uses the mother as a levelling measure to say to his audience that people are not as different from each other as perhaps we are all inclined to think.

Another controlling mother is Lydia in *The Birds,* who resents any other woman playing any role in her son's life. She is a mother who comes the nearest to being portrayed as part of an Oedipal relationship by Hitchcock. Hitchcock's cloying mother in this film is a sad woman who wants control at any cost and almost loses the love of her son in the process. Hitchcock highlights in this film the effect which emotionally suffocating those we love can have. We all do it, not necessarily in the same relationship dynamic but we have the ability to smother in any relationship, in this way he emotionally manipulates the audience into 'siding' with Mitch because we all have a fear of the mawkish, smothering and over-bearing mother figure.

Another young woman in *The Birds* also yearns for a mother figure. Cathy, Mitch's sister, needs an effective mother figure rather than her own biological mother's interference and this is key to her relationship with Melanie. "…and a clue to the dynamics of the film, which pivots around feelings of lack and emptiness as well as the aggressive jealousy that swirls among the women of the story."[110] The women are jealous of each other as they compete for the attention of the man, Mitch. Manipulation by Hitchcock is evident in his once again pandering to the male audience member's ego in having the male protagonist be the interest of two or even three (if you count Annie)

[110] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 128

women and so too their empathy with Mitch as character is due to his interfering mother. Most men at one time have had to deal with an overly interfering mother who meddles and fusses for (to the child) no apparent reason.

The relationship between Mitch and his mother is one where the controlling mother models the son on the father and which is almost incestuous. In the kitchen, Mitch calls his mother "dear" and "darling" which only gives strength to the almost conjugal nature of their relationship. When the birds attack, Lydia yells at Mitch and exclaims, "If only your father were here!" In this statement alone she implicitly equates Mitch and his father, as she makes the inference that his father would have handled the situation better, ergo she doesn't think that Mitch has taken to his father's shoes very well. He shouldn't have to as he is her son and not her husband. There is evident emotional manipulation in this example; we see the character of Mitch never living up to his father's example in the eyes of his mother. Men feel that they are expected to be like their fathers, to emulate them in every way. Hitchcock again invokes the attention of the male audience member who has probably experienced a similar situation or has at least an understanding of the position Mitch is placed in by his mother – to identify with a character there has to be a 'hook; that the audience member can relate with or to – a facet that Hitchcock uses in this instance.

The schoolteacher Annie tells Melanie that his mother always interferes in Mitch's relationships with women. Annie presumes that it is because Lydia resents any woman who can give Mitch what she gives him, love. Annie even goes on to refer to the Oedipal

trajectory in that she thinks that Lydia is not possessive and jealous in the traditional sense, but that she is more afraid of being abandoned by her children, especially Mitch.

David Sterrit says that this revelation by Annie:

> [s]erves to distinguish this film from *Psycho,* in which Norman's mother is most definitely possessive and controlling, '…albeit in a bizarre and second-hand manner.'[111]

The great difference between Mitch and Melanie is their mothers. Mitch in talking to Melanie mentions "a mother's care" and Melanie reacts with awkwardness and perhaps distaste. Mitch's mother has always been there for him; Melanie's mother left her family for a love affair and hasn't been seen since. Melanie's non-existent relationship with her mother links to Hitchcock's next film, *Marnie* in which the relationship between mother and daughter is less distant but has more traumatic and severe emotional consequences for the daughter. Hitchcock manipulates the audience into making the mistake here that because Melanie has been lacking the role figure of a mother she must be wayward and thus must be in some way responsible for the tumultuous catastrophe that has befell Bodega Bay, when Melanie is the one who ends up caring for Mitch's mother and his sister while he (the one with the constant albeit over –protective mother) is being sensible and securing the house against further attack. He sets the audience up to accept that Melanie is somewhat of a frivolous natured woman because of her lack of a mother

[111] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 129

figure, when she is actually becomes the strong mother figure to Cathy when the birds attack whilst Mrs. Brenner becomes a fearful wreck.

In *The Birds* there is a scene in which Jessica Tandy runs from a farmhouse after having seen the farmer with gouged out eyes and rushes back home to maintain the security of her son and daughter.

> A.H.: The point I was trying to make is that this woman, though she was so terribly distressed about having seen the farmer with his eyes gouged out, was still a possessive mother. Her love for her son still dominated all of her other emotions.[112]

Hitchcock admits to deliberately adding this scene to convey the strength of her maternal feelings. He manipulates the audience into suddenly sympathizing with this mother whom before he had manipulated the audience into despising. Hitchcock is constantly turning the tables on the audience, inexorable in his proclivity for surprising and controlling audience reaction.

Hitchcock incorporates the theme of the mother in this film (*The Birds*), as the film deals with chaos and disorder in a seemingly tranquil part of the world. It is the place where you would least expect something like this to happen and it does. Everyone thinks that their neighbors or people they know are stable and living a grand and luxurious life except we do not know what goes on in the houses of people. People's relationships with their mothers is one such area which people assume is an area of order and contentment, but very often the reality does not match the illusion. Everyone has a mother figure, even

[112] WOOD, R. 1960. Hitchcock's Films Revisited. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 450.

if they do not have a spouse or children and so Hitchcock brings in the mother theme to alert the audience to their relationships with their own mothers and the current state of that relationship. By doing this he allows for greater sympathy towards his leading lady by the audience. In terms of the narrative she is the interloper, the outsider, so Hitchcock has to find a way for the audience to identify and sympathize with her, to make her more 'palatable' for the audience's visual and narrative consumption.

Towards the end of *Marnie* when Marnie goes and puts her head on her mother's lap like a child yearning for some kind of sign of approval from her mother, Mrs. Edgar responds by saying, "Marnie, honey, you're achin' my leg." The future of their newly discovered relationship is ambiguous. Like Marnie's relationship with Mark, the mother-daughter relationship will have to be worked out in time and it is time that Marnie has both denied and abused up to this point. We all yearn for that which is not always attainable, especially when it comes to relationships. It is this yearning for something which we know is the impossible that Hitchcock plays on in order to manipulate the audience into identification and feeling empathy for the characters. Hitchcock's initial portrayal was of a harsh woman who didn't have time for her own daughter - a woman who refused Marnie the physical contact that she yearned for, but lavished it on the neighbour's child, Jessie.

7. SCATOLOGY

Mother: No! I tell you no! I won't have you bringing strange young girls in for supper. By candlelight, I suppose, in the cheap erotic fashion of young men with cheap, erotic minds.

Norman: Mother, please!

Mother: And then what, after supper? Music? Whispers?

Norman: Mother, she's just a stranger. She's hungry and it's raining out.

Mother: "Mother, she's just a stranger." As if men don't desire strangers! I refuse to speak of disgusting things because they disgust me! Do you understand, boy? Go on! Tell her she'll not be appeasing her ugly appetites with my food, or my son! Or do I have to tell her 'cause you don't have the guts? Huh, boy?

Norman: Shut up! Shut up![113]

This excerpt from Hitchcock's best known and arguably his most famous film, *Psycho,* introduces the following chapter in which I will deal with the preoccupation of Hitchcock with scatology, the related issues of food and sex and his ever present trademark, murder. Although I must admit that I first and foremost attribute these mainly to *Psycho* and *Frenzy* it must be allowed that these themes were probably always present in Hitchcock's films to a lesser degree and only appeared in such stark and contrasting terms in latter films due to the relaxation of the moral codes and ethics used to censor films. In this

[113] *Psycho*. By Robert Bloch. Adapt. Joseph Stefano. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles. Paramount, 1960

chapter I will concentrate on *Psycho* and *Frenzy* as case studies of this bizarre fascination of Hitchcock's, interspersed with incidents from other films as and if they are applicable.

Donald Spoto describes food in *Frenzy* as "…a basic visual metaphor for the devouring abuses of man-against-man."[114] In this light it is easier to perceive Hitchcock's use of food and all things related in his films. Hitchcock, if indeed using food to be a metaphor for the 'devouring abuses of man-against-man' uses this visual metaphor in order to make his audience feel uncomfortable. He constantly highlights the audience's proclivity towards dark and sinister deeds, deeds that would be seemingly unnatural and an abomination in society's ordered way. In Hitchcock's films there is always the suggestion in his manipulation of the audience, that we ourselves could actually enact what we see on the screen – that we in extenuating circumstances could take part in the disturbing acts of violence and treachery that we witness enacted by the characters in the narrative. It is in this suggestion in which a lot of the fear that the audience experiences is formed. The nascent uncomfortable feeling that we might have wished to kill a person becomes a fully-fledged confirmation from Hitchcock's narrative. that this was not simply an idle desire. From what we have witnessed in Hitchcock's films, violence could be brought to bear against an individual by us if a situation in which we were enraged or fearful for our lives and safety arose. It is in making us doubt our own humanity and our capability for violence and inhumane actions in which Hitchcock performs his brilliant yet insidious manipulations which unsettle his audiences.

[114] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 101

It is again noticeable that via visual metaphor or direct visual picture, Hitchcock is still incessantly attempting to gain absolute control of the audience who sit and watch his films. He never leaves the audience to piece the shots of the film together as they wish; he is always present in the film thrusting his personal comprehension of the film's narrative and plot onto the audience. However, Hitchcock's precision in making a film with the audience in mind in every shot and sequence is what has made him one of the most admired directors of his time.

According to Jean-Paul Satre in *Being and Nothingness*[115] an animal's (man's) curiosity is always either sexual or alimentary. Here is a direct link between viewing man as animalistic in his baseness, a baseness that according to laws of evolution we are to have supposedly surpassed and left in our evolutionary wake. Yet it is just this baseness, that is the basis for most of Hitchcock's plots. His plots involve men and women who delve into the darker sides of their psyches in order to attempt what most of us only consider in the abstract if we consider these actions at all. In knowing that these characters threaten the individual audience members Hitchcock's manipulation is subtle yet clear. Even if the characters do not actively seek to delve into the darker side of human nature they are almost always forced into it, or are passive participants because of circumstance, seen in the many films involving the wrongly accused man or woman as the case may be. Just as these characters may be passive participants that are drawn into circumstances unknowingly or even against their own volition, so too are the audience subject to the will of Alfred Hitchcock. The curiosity which is either alimentary or sexual is to be found in all or most of Hitchcock's films. Food and sex feature greatly and are almost always

[115] SATRE, J-P. 1974. Being and Nothingness. New Jersey: Citadel Press.

linked to murder of some sort. Emotions in Hitchcock's films are always mutable and susceptible to change, as are the emotive responses of the audience watching Hitchcock's films. The unpleasant truth however, that which is not always pleasant to acknowledge is the 'indigestible' part of a Hitchcock narrative – that which hints to the audience of their own propensity for dark and immoral deeds.

According to the above quotation by Satre, that which is known remains the same, i.e. Hitchcock knows that the audience is always there, whether he acknowledges it en masse or not. The audience for Hitchcock is who he is 'speaking' to and he preys on the sexual and alimentary aspects of life, thinking that this will have resonance for his audience both as a whole and as individual members. If there is one thing that we all share in common as people it is our ability to perform basic bodily functions, Hitchcock was aware of this and was almost certainly aware of people's reticence to discuss or even acknowledge the fact that we all urinate, defecate, and engage in sexual intercourse. There is even today a certain wariness amongst people in discussing matters such as nudity, sex and matters of bodily waste excretion - it is a cause of great embarrassment for people, causing them distinct discomfort, obviously this is why Hitchcock delved and dwelled on matters of this nature, not simply because he was in some ways himself a voyeur, but because it is a common denominator, that forces us to be equal in our own humanity. Hitchcock didn't want his audience members to feel that they were excluded from human baseness because of class or education level, he wanted his audiences to know that what one man is capable of, is that which general humanity is equally capable of.

Hitchcock loved to regale his guests with anecdotes on the subject of food and sex, and reveled equally in their discomfort and their amusement, whichever it may be. Was this puerile and childish fascination with 'taboo' subjects such as defecating and sex introduced into his films as a means of ridiculing his own audience whilst 'leading them by the nose' so as to make the inferiority of the audience's situation an indication of his superiority and dominance? I do think, however, that the fascination of what makes people feel embarrassed and uncomfortable when assailed with certain images and words, was a driving force behind this. This was indeed a part of the afore-mentioned penchant of Hitchcock to make his audience members equal in status regardless of class and other social distinctions.

Hitchcock loved to throw dinner parties where he would play practical jokes on the guests – he once threw a dinner party where the food was dyed blue. This sense of humour extended to his films too. In one of his earlier films, *Suspicion*, Hitchcock's sense of twisted humour is very much evident, at the novelist's dinner party. In this section of the film, the guests discuss the subject of murder in an affable manner as the novelist's brother attempts to carve a Cornish hen. While he is doing this, he talks about the exhumation of a body. This also seems like one of the practical jokes he would launch at one of his own dinner parties, as this is so emblematic of a practical joke he would play on people he knew. It is also very likely that this was indeed a practical joke played on his audience too. His sense of enjoyment in making people subject to what he wanted is what drove him to be so dictatorial in his film direction. He wanted to laugh at

his audience and not with them, he wanted to make them feel ill at ease and be the one who controlled the strength of this feeling.

So many of Hitchcock's supporting character's gossip about other people in the story, and we all know the saying about sins of the tongue, and how words can kill in terms of reputation. Hitchcock is reminding us that there is a psychological link between slander and murder.

In *Frenzy* the novelist's brother is aiding and abetting 'murder' because he is slicing up a Cornish hen to eat for dinner, thus consuming flesh of a dead creature. We consume the dead, another point that in light of the circumstances in which murder is being discussed, would make most audiences feel decidedly uncomfortable. We eat flesh of animals but never really stop to consider that the animal's life was taken against its will, in theory constituting murder. So in actual fact, we are all consumers of murdered flesh, if this point is taken to its extreme connotations. *The Birds* is yet another example of how murder and food is highlighted in a Hitchcock film. Added to this is the reversal of humans in the food chain – rather than being the ones in search of prey humans have become the prey. In this film it is uncertain whether the birds start to attack the humans, in order to surfeit their appetite for human blood or merely just to get their own back for the way in which birds and nature has been treated in general by humankind. Another option is that Hitchcock intended that the audience surmise that the birds wanted to feast on the humans, as the humans had feasted on birds and animals alike for eons. Is Hitchcock implying in a manner of speaking that by feasting on birds and animals that

may eat us we inevitably eat ourselves and become bloated with our own baseness? In so doing, if that is indeed his intent, his manipulation of his audience in this respect lies in the ability of his audience to read between the lines and interpret subtext. In so doing he gives his audience credit for being able to read so penetratingly into his work, hoping thereby to manipulate them into his way of thinking. For this is never spelt out for the audience, it is only implied.

In his fascination with waste, Hitchcock perhaps insisted on our brutal slaying of animals as waste products of our lustful appetites and thus made this film in order to order to posit the theory of what would happen should the animals take their revenge.

Fear generally is born out of the unknown. Thus we fear animals, especially because they are more adept at attacking than we are. Physiologically they have claws and talons. Should birds attack we would be defenceless. This theory has an eerie and unsettling feeling to it – exactly what Hitchcock desired. *The Birds* has been cited in many polls as being one of the scariest of all the films in Hitchcock's canon. So it would seem that because birds seem so aloof and are never really the common domestic pet in most houses, it seems that they hold a peculiar mystique for most people. Alfred Hitchcock and implicitly Daphne du Maurier upon whose short story of the same title the film was based, obviously had the insight and foresight to sense this and realize the possibilities this had for a narrative of great threat and ambiguous menace.

By obsessing over scatology Hitchcock seemed to want to influence his audience into delving into their own psychological and emotional excrement, that which we discard and slough off because we view it as inconsequential and unimportant, or those parts of our inner psyche that we fear because the thoughts that originate from our inner psyche may be dark and ominous. Waste comes in many forms - abstract and actual waste matter. Waste of the mind which becomes manifest in unproductive, trivial concerns or even perverse and dark thoughts is, if Hitchcock's films are any indication of his thought processes behind trying to manipulate and scare his audiences, more toxic than any other kind of waste, because it contaminates the entire mind set. The mind is what ultimately controls the actions and the purposes of people thus if the mind produces more 'waste' than not this could lead to crime and nefarious objectives. As the twentieth century taught us, one person's actions can affect an entire population of people, and so we the audience are to fear, what waste our own minds produce. We fear that which we cannot control and our mind and thoughts are subject to external influences and are not always strictly within our absolute control. Hitchcock imposes his own mindset on his audience - one of fear and anxiety. Fear of the unknown and anxiety concerning our own fallibility, for in humankind the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Flesh brings us back to appetites for sex and the method in which men lust after the flesh of women, apparent in both *Psycho* and *Frenzy*. So Hitchcock's use of appetites, links through many different aspects and many films to rest in the grand link between food, scatology, sex and murder, all of which are concerned with a bodily function.

Psycho has been considered possibly the greatest film Hitchcock ever made, not in the least because it was novel in its day for its depiction of murder and the subject of psychotic individuals. This subject had previously only been touched upon in films but never examined in all its gory detail. *Psycho* was perhaps Hitchcock's crowning glory, his best attempt at the control and manipulation of an audience, even preventing audience members from walking in late to the movie, because this would spoil the entire movie for someone who had not been there from the beginning. Hitchcock's appetite for complete domination and control of the audience is concurrent to the appetite for food and sex featured prominently in *Psycho*.

> ("Appetite" is a concept given great prominence in *Psycho*. The next shot in the film shows Marion's uneaten lunch. Almost the first thing we learn about her is that she has lost her appetite.) At one level, *Psycho* is an allegory about the camera's natural appetite. [116]

Does Rothman refer to the camera's appetite for to obtain the visuals exclusively without any regard for the audience, or its appetite to show the audience? I think that in the shots that set up the first scenes in *Psycho* it is safe to say that the camera in its manipulation does seem to have a life of its own and seems to be a force alien to the filmmaker and the audience. In this way the audience becomes acutely aware of the power of the camera as a voyeuristic tool, a tool through which they watch. Vicariously Alfred Hitchcock continually places his audience in odd and almost unreal situations in which they would not normally find themselves. Hitchcock manipulates incessantly so that the audience is always moments away from realizing their own voyeuristic pleasures and desires, and at

[116] ROTHMAN, W. 1982. Hitchcock – The Murderous Gaze. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 252

that moment Hitchcock hopes the audience will be surprised and shocked at themselves. Hitchcock's desire for the illicit image is concurrently the camera's desire and thus by coercion the audience's desire.

Scatology and analogous incidents referring to excrement of most kinds is abundant in this film, more so than in any other of Hitchcock's films. Right at the beginning of the film Norman greets Marion at the motel with the words, "Dirty Night." He prattles on in this vain until he shows her cabin number one, where his inane conversation dries up completely, although he floods the bathroom with light he cannot bring himself to say the word 'bathroom' and so Marion must finish the sentence for him. All Norman manages to say is "…and the, uh...over there." "Is the irony only Hitchcock's, or does Norman already know what dirtiness lies ahead this night?"[117] The term 'dirty' to describe the weather, is both quaint and an odd choice of words, with an infinite combination of words that he could have used in order to describe the storm Norman's deliberate choice of 'dirty' refers again to scatology, human excrement, blood, and any other bodily fluids that are excreted from the time of his meeting Marion to the time in which he finally murders her and deposits her body in the cesspit of the swamp. The swamp is the toilet of his fears and of the audience's fears too. Hitchcock assumes control once again, because it is at this point where the famous cessation of the car's sinking occurs, making an entire generation of film audiences catch their breath and hope against hope that Norman will not be caught in the act and the car and Marion will sink out of view forever. This is a desire that is not thought of in the moment but upon reflection is a

[117] Ibid. p. 269

startling gauge of our own ability to avert moral responsibility in siding in the matter with Norman, by hoping that a murder will be covered up and not avenged in any way.

In the exchange mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, between Norman and 'Mother', we see that 'Mother' continually draws the analogy between the act of eating and the act of copulation, making both seem sordid and unclean almost as if they were one and the same act. "Raindrops fall past the glass as Mrs. Bates pointedly mentions food, appetite, and Norman's 'guts', or courage – words that equate the sexual, the gustatory, and the digestive/excremental."[118] It is interesting to note the act of the rain in this sequence, almost as if Hitchcock deliberately decided to make the night a stormy night to hint at the act of 'cleansing' that 'Mother'/Norman would enact upon Marion later in the film. In this way we see how Hitchcock continually leaves 'clues' for the audience but they are often so subtle and seemingly inconsequential, that we do not deign to take notice of them. One of those clues would be Norman's passionate cry of "Mother! Oh, God! Mother! Blood! Blood!" This specific moment in *Psycho* can be indicative of reference to menstrual as well as excremental anxieties. Menstrual anxieties were of course problematic to Hitchcock, who by his early twenties in a shoot overseas, had to be told by crew why an actress couldn't be part of a shot in the sea and consequently what menstruation was. Norman, who had problems with women, and did not trust them, because he felt his mother had betrayed him, would of course, have anxieties about any bodily function in which women participated: sexual intercourse; defecation and menstruation. Menstrual blood is also suggestive of child bearing and the substitute of the phallus in the form of the foetus. Subconsciously it is apparent that both Hitchcock

[118] STERRITT, D. 1963. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 107

and Norman feared the substitute for the phallus, which might take away from their own worth, and self-appraisal. The act of menstruation in psychology is often taken to be perceived by little boys as the 'wound' of castration, from the father's enacted revenge for desire of the mother. The desire, which is in itself, is deemed to be scandalous and 'dirty', the desire for incest.

> The swamp is itself a toilet, of course, and one that suits Norman's bigger-than-life psychosis: overflowing with dark, thick gunk that intrudes into the world and is capable of embracing the most enormous, outrageous shit that even Hitchcock's mind could imagine. Horrifyingly, it almost doesn't complete its flush – the car pauses in its descent, threatening not to disappear. Norman waits, nibbles, glances around with a distinctly birdlike gesture, and smiles as it sinks finally back into the muck. Sound effects underline the scatology of the sign. Fade to black on the muck. With this visit to Norman's private cesspool, the motivating money/excrement of the film vanishes for good.[119]

This is probably one of the finest shots in the film, simply because (as mentioned earlier) without us being aware of it, Hitchcock, places the audience in a position to feel empathy for Norman and feel anxious on his behalf that the body does indeed disappear beneath the dark and murky water of the swamp. When minutes earlier the audience had been cheering on Marion, hoping that she too would 'get away with murder', the audience is now championing the hiding of a body by what we presume to be an innocent party. We (the audience) catch our breath as the car halts in subsiding, fearing for Norman. Hitchcock cleverly manipulates his audience into feeling empathy for two characters that have both done wrong, but because the line between right and wrong is so vague in some cases, Hitchcock has used this in order to make his audience sympathetic towards the two main characters that are less than perfect. In this manner Hitchcock constantly pushes the

[119] Ibid. p. 109

envelope and makes his audience reevaluate again and again what is right and what is wrong. Is the evaluation of right and wrong more subjective and relative to the individual, than a mass enforced system of right and wrong, good and bad? Hitchcock leaves the answering of that question to the audiences.

The money, which disappears with the body of Marion into the swamp, is also seen as corruptive and 'sin' inducing. After all it was the desire for money that got Marion into this predicament in the first place. Money being seen as excrement is a malicious direct jab at the audience by Hitchcock, who points an accusatory finger at them, sitting in cinema seats which they paid for, indulging in voyeuristic, vicarious pleasure. The corruptive power is in their own hands, not in those of another. We the audience, sit in judgment of the characters we watch, but how are we any different?

Norman's condition is made universal in the final shot of the film in which Marion's car is extracted with difficulty out of the swamp.

> [T]he toilet-swamp becomes a birth site, delivering up Marion's corpse (wrapped in the car's rear end, its taillight an ultimate blind eye) umbilically connected to Hitchcock's camera and the world beyond.[120]

Marion's body is situated in the rear of the car, almost as if she were more waste matter, to be expelled from the car at a later time, than a once living human being.

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[120] Ibid p. 117

The birth site that is spoken of in the above quotation is indicative of the menstrual anxieties, of which Norman is susceptible and which go back to fear of the woman as 'other'. His fear of woman as 'the other' led him to kill Marion and his unnatural attachment to his mother, made him adopt her very personality and clothes. By highlighting this in the final scene of a thoroughly disturbing film narrative, we see that Hitchcock's intention is always until the final scene, to disturb and manipulate his audience into submission and comprehension of the film as he wishes the audience to interpret it. Male audience members are targeted in this final scene, evoking childhood Oedipal anxieties over the castrated female, who bears the wound of the missing phallus and who embodies, illicit and forbidden desires on the part of the male child who also identifies with the traumatic severing of the mother's umbilical, cord, which results in the baby experiencing want and need for the first time. Thus Hitchcock 'punishes' the male audience members for the pleasure they derived from their secretive enjoyment of sitting in a darkened cinema and watching others who are unaware of their gaze. Others, whom they attempt to control and dominate in life and reality (i.e. The Other as woman, homosexual and the black man) as much as Hitchcock dominates them in the cinema. The cesspit of Norman's desires and sins belongs to the audience too.

If, as I am suggesting eating is linked to excrement it is interesting to note that Marion's assignation with Sam is clearly (after the time and date is shown in print in the opening shot) taken during her lunch hour. Instead of eating she was having sexual congress, which for Hitchcock is similar (the sating of bodily appetites). Hitchcock immediately draws his audience into this film from the very beginning by stating time and place as

though this were a documentary of sorts and also by having some of the initial shots be of two people lying on a bed in the middle of the day. Knowing his audience would be scandalized by such a provocative situation Hitchcock milks the situation for all its worth. His manipulation is implicit in his ability to draw the audience into the world of the film exactly as if it were reality depicted from the initial shots and title sequences. To situate the scene as if in reality, allows for the audience to be more quickly absorbed into a fictional reality.

The motif of scatology is taken further in *Psycho*, when Marion is driving towards her final destination, which should be Sam, but instead becomes the Bates motel, she has vivid daydreams of what people will say when they realize she has absconded with the money, one of which includes Mr. Cassidy: "She sat there while I dumped it out!" "I won't kiss off $40, 000. I'll get it back, and if any of it's missing I'll replace it with her fine soft flesh." She thinks of the threats that people, more importantly men would make, threats that revolve around payment in kind - sexual kind. Hitchcock uses this to allow the women in the audience to feel great unease on her behalf and, in some ways probably hopes that the men in the audience will, on the other hand, be hoping that Marion does get caught, in their own voyeuristic hopes that Cassidy will indeed take payment in kind.

> If Cassidy tried to make good on his threat, he would fail. Then he would really feel her power. That is, underlying the scenes conjured in Marion's imagination is a fantasy of vengeance against the likes of Cassidy, men who regard her as a piece of flesh to be bought and consumed.[121]

[121] ROTHMAN, W. 1982. Hitchcock-The Murderous Gaze. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. p. 264

If Hitchcock's use of Cassidy's threat to take payment in kind from Marion was to allow for the female audience members to feel threatened, then here, Marion's potential power over Mr. Cassidy is inserted deliberately by Hitchcock, in order to turn the tables as it were, and make it the turn of the male audience members to squirm in their seats. In Hitchcock's world nobody was exempt from his influence, in his mind everybody eventually had their turn in having the spotlight turned on them.

Food also plays a great role in *Psycho* where shots of bathrooms are followed or preceded by shots of people partaking of some kind of a meal.

> The first thing we see in *Psycho*, once the camera has passed through the hotel window…is a bathroom. Its white sink gleams faintly in the background as the camera searches for Marion Crane/Janet Leigh and Sam Loomis/John Gavin…(A little later, Marion's own bathroom will be visible a she prepares to leave Phoenix with the stolen money.) One of the next things we see is food: the lunch that Marion has been too occupied to eat and about which Sam speaks the first line of dialogue.[122]

The bathroom also proves to be the final resting place for Marion. In the bathroom before she dies, Hitchcock invokes imagery of baptism or ritual cleansing and rebirth. Bathrooms hence have two functions in Hitchcock's world, functions that are uncannily liked: they can either be used for cleansing or evacuation. There is no middle ground concerning bathrooms for Hitchcock. Bathrooms seem implicitly linked to moral iniquity and human frailty. When we see the bathroom only slightly in the shot when Marion is readying herself to leave, it is only a hint as though to show the bathroom in full view,

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[122] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 102

would be breaking some moral or ethical code, which is strange for Hitchcock as he didn't normally seem to be preoccupied with what his audience felt comfortable with – he went against this and bathrooms signify a frail or weak state for the audience as we are naked in bathrooms, stripped of clothes and on a metaphorical level stripped also of our societal mask that we wear for the world outside our homes. We perform intimate and personal functions in bathrooms – urinate, defecate, bathe and so on. Making use of the ablution facilities in a bathroom is a private and secret part of most people's daily routine. This links in with scatology because scatology is akin to the waste product of defecation – the receptacle of which is one of the main fixtures in a bathroom – the toilet. Hitchcock draws the audience into the narrative so that they become sutured into the narrative and substitute themselves and their own weakness for that of the characters.

Receptacles (like toilets) are used by Hitchcock in this film to be the bearers of negative things rather than positive. Toilets are receptacles of excrement. The safe deposit box, was the receptacle of the money, the lust for which was the cause of the narrative commencing in the first place. The swamp becomes the receptacle for her mutilated body and the money combined. The shower cubicle was the receptacle for her metaphorically washed off sin and dirt and then was the receptacle for her blood, for which Fate sacrificed Marion for her wrong doings and made her clean, in the eyes of Hitchcock and implicitly his audience. As the audience we do sympathize and mourn for Marion's death but at the same time we do feel as though somehow she has now repented enough of her sins by being murdered. She has sacrificed herself so that her sister and Sam do not have to live with the shame of having a sister and lover who is a thief.

Hitchcock's manipulation here, allows for the audience to transfer their sympathy from Marion to Norman. If we still felt sorry for Marion we would blame Norman for as we perceive it, his mother's actions and would watch the rest of the film hoping for Norman and his mother being discovered. As it stands though, we are 'allowed' by Hitchcock to transfer our feelings of sympathy from Marion to Norman by making us see her murder as some kind of vengeance exacted by a cruel and strict Fate. This act of killing the so-called 'heroine' in the first part of the film was a great coup for Hitchcock, by doing this he saw to it that from that point on, the audience was so disoriented as to where there 'allegiance' was to lie, or in other words, which character they were supposed to be supporting. From that point on, the audience was entirely in his directorial power and he could then lead them wherever he chose.

> The symbolic nature of this object (a packet of bills totaling $40,000)[123] becomes apparent as we watch Cassidy's behaviour. He is childish in his boasting about wealth, happiness, and success. He is domineering in his insistence that the business transaction be done according to his whims, and in his treatment not only of the women but also of Lowery the boss, whom he humiliates (with his "bottle in the desk" remark) and then bullies into a drinking session. He is demanding of attention from everyone in the office. In all, he is an overgrown child who has not mastered – or cared to master – the rules of middle-class social intercourse. Just as clear is the particular stage of childhood development in which he's stuck: the anal-sadistic phase. His packet of cash is a packet of excrement – which he has "made", of which he is proud, and with which he has no desire to part, at least before a proper and admiring fuss has been made over it by the women (Marion and Caroline) and the rather lone authority figure (Lowery) who are his audience.[124]

The preoccupation with money, as depicted above, as a secretive almost dirty entity, is peculiar to *Psycho*. Money is obviously indicative not only to the characters but to

[123] My own insertion.
[124] Ibid. p. 103

Hitchcock too as a form of moral by product, something that is digested in the alimentary canal of business and transactions thereof and is neither pure nor necessarily good either. Money like excrement is simply a result of a greater process. But in and of itself is virtually worthless. That said it is something that we obsess over and crave. This is perhaps the reason for the money being made the MacGuffin in *Psycho*, because it would immediately grab most audience members' attention. Especially since it was such a great amount for the time, Hitchcock manipulated the audience's interest in this film by making the MacGuffin something that would have immediate resonance for most if not all members of any one particular audience gathering. After all, most people always want or could actually benefit from or via accruing greater amounts of money. In terms of *Psycho,* money is akin to a morally corruptible product that has the insidious power to disrupt and even destroy people's lives. Money or lack thereof, has driven Mr. Lowery to drink, Mr. Cassidy has become a bombastic twisted man, who thinks people and their affections are mere objects that he can buy, and Marion in her need for money is murdered. Hitchcock gives his audience no other option in their interpretation via his film of what money does to people. Hitchcock in essence foists his interpretation of the narrative onto his audience, he does not allow for open interpretation or even debate as to how to interpret this. He simply, via his filming, allows the audience to see what he implicitly suggests in his filming.

> The next person to exhibit a compulsion retention syndrome is, of course, Marion herself. She does not deposit the money/excrement as instructed, but carries it home and puts it on her bed, the very place where she told Lowery she planned to spend the weekend.[125]

[125] Ibid. p. 104

In this instance I feel that the placement of the money on the bed is very specific and not simply put there for effect. Hitchcock was nothing if not meticulous in the placing of actors and objects. I feel that Hitchcock wants the audience to infer that the bundle of money is a substitute phallus. It sits on the bed, beds are indicative of one of the more conventional places where sexual intercourse can take place, and the money is a substitute phallus, because it can do for Marion what Sam can't or is not willing to do, solve a problem and make her life better. Hence the position of strength and power, which she so urgently needs to fill with Sam's presence in her life, has been filled with the money. The money has become the power in Marion's life as it enables her to do as she pleases, even though it is stolen. Ultimately Hitchcock suggests to his audience that she is corrupted, because he orchestrates the 'cleansing' shower/murder scene, in which Marion is seen to 'atone' for her misdeeds. Misdeeds committed primarily against Mr. Cassidy as it is his money that she steals.

> Cassidy figures prominently in her interior monologue – as biologically vulgar as ever, saying, "kiss off" and "I'll replace it with her fine soft flesh." He also says, "She sat there while I dumped it out", a sentence that makes the money=shit equation almost explicit.[126]

The correlation here between human excrement and money is more or less explicit, in Cassidy's words. Hitchcock uses this particularly vulgar man and his especially vulgar speech, to heighten the sense of danger for Marion, by making the audience susceptible to fear about her safety when she has vulgar men like Cassidy after her. Hitchcock, heightens the sense of identification with Marion by the audience. He makes Cassidy

[126] Ibid. p. 105

appear to be a grotesque chauvinist after only one thing if he can't get the money back. The threat of rape will immediately make the women in the audience especially afraid for Marion's sake. Hitchcock's childlike obsession with the money is as of a child in the anal phase who is particularly proud of the excrement it has produced and I think he suggests that it is also our childlike obsession too. This is why the equation of shit to money is so apt.

> At the used-car dealership, she exchanges her dark-toned car for a model with a lighter color. (It's less resonant of excrement; the transaction is a mirror image of her earlier change from white to black underwear.) Before paying, she enters the lavatory to handle, examine and break apart her forbidden horde.[127]

So Marion does not actually rid herself of the excrement, she simply exchanges it for another form. Hitchcock's strict upbringing in the Catholic faith is resonant here, as sin is never excusable and never mitigated. There are many forms, just as she cannot cleanse herself by trading her stolen money for a car. Sin begets sin. Her dirtiness, implicit in her crime, seems to follow her everywhere. Because she can't get rid of the money in one go and she seems to be pursued all the time, (the policeman stops her on the side of the road, in a menacing and interrogative fashion). It is still a tainted colour thus the car itself seems to be like the scarlet letter that bears testimony to her less than pure existence. She herself knows that her existence will only be purified when she gets to be with Sam, as mentioned in the previous chapter, redemption can be achieved through the love of a 'good' man.

> If there is any doubt regarding Hitchcock's scatological turn of mind throughout Marion's ordeal, a closeup of her first car's license plate lays it to rest: It is ANL-

[127] Ibid.

> 709, the letters spelling a revealing word while the numbers cushion an anus like zero between two more substantial digits.[128]

Being the great joker Hitchcock was, it is obvious that this was a practical and mischievous joke on his part; I don't think he thought that the audience members would actually take notice of the car registration number. In fact in the time that *Psycho* was first screened I doubt whether the audience would have put two and two together. They were not as sophisticated in reading film and looking for signifiers as we are today.

> Marion disposes of her ANL-709 at the used-car dealership, and the rainstorm that comes down on her near the Bates Motel has a flushing and cleaning function. But her sin is already too great for such abstraction. Tormentingly, her vision is obscured (as it will be later by the shower curtain and shower water), and windshield wipers slash across the frame.[129]

Again we have the visual image of baptism. Hitchcock continually evokes imagery of water and flushing in the next sequence. When Marion flushes away the piece of paper on which she has made calculations as to how much money she has to pay back to Mr. Lowery, he shows us a close up of the flushing of the water in the toilet bowl, indicative of the flushing away of tainted money and sin and wrong doing. Hitchcock extrapolates on this theme of flushing away sin and complicated matters in the scene in which Norman sinks Marion's car.

> Norman chews candy as he watches the white car sink beneath the very black surface of the swamp behind the house. As the film was about psychoanalytical ideas it's appropriate to use them in the film – the bathroom scene, very glossy and white, and

[128] Ibid. p. 106
[129] Ibid.

> devoted to the theme of cleanliness, is followed by a scene in which everything disappears into a black sticky cesspool. Norman has pulled the chain. [130]

Just as Marion flushed away the evidence of her calculations and hoped for a new beginning so too does her body become evidence that necessitates being eliminated and flushed away. Hitchcock continually makes the audience aware of the parallel between Marion's life and her death.

> He described to Truffaut his vision of a film about food and what happens to it – as waste, it's poured by the ton into the sea. The vision hardly needs psychoanalysis, particularly if one thinks of all the things that happen to food. 'Your theme', says Truffaut, 'might almost be the rottenness of humanity,' and Hitchcock does not demur. Of a certain kind of pessimism, about which film critics, especially if they are young and Anglo-Saxon, incline to be hypochondriac, but which unfortunately perhaps can't be dismissed as subhuman or unintelligent, Aldous Huxley I think coined the phrase, 'the excremental vision' and its reflection is evident enough in the work of Sade and Swift, of Huxley himself, of Leline, of the swamp-and-bathroom syndrome in *Psycho*. Its full integration with preoccupations not unlike Hitchcock's appears in the novels of Gerald Kersh, some of which are so savage as to be, by traditional Anglo-Saxon standards unfilmable. [131]

> A.H: Yes, that's the general idea. You may recall that in *Murder* I showed the defence attorney and the district attorney having lunch together during the trial recess. In *The Paradine Case* the judge, who has just sentenced Alida Valli to death by hanging, is having a quiet meal at home with his wife. You feel like saying to him, 'Tell me, your Honour, what do you think about when you go home after having sentenced a woman to death?' [132]

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[130] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 326
[131] Ibid p. 50
[132] TRUFFAUT, F. 1984. Hitchcock by Truffaut. London: Harper Collins Publications. p. 303

Hitchcock even in this statement exhibits his control of the audience in that he always has to in a rather offhand, almost off the cuff manner leave his audience with something to ponder, he doesn't want audiences to passively watch, he wants to evoke something, a thought or an emotion, he wants to be the puppet master that makes an audience see his films as he perceives they should. Other directors allow for individual interpretation, Hitchcock did not want that - he wanted millions of people to interpret the story as he the auteur wanted the narrative interpreted. Hitchcock wanted to coerce an audience but you cannot compel an audience who sits and does not engage. Hitchcock did not want a totally unthinking audience because then the manipulation would be too easy. *Psycho* is an apt example of this, Norman's character is spelled out for us by Hitchcock. In a way Norman can be seen to be Hitchcock's substitute in the film. Norman's voyeurism and murderous intentions are clarified by Freud's statement that in obsessional neurosis,

> …regression of the libido to the antecedent stage of the sadistic-anal organization is the most conspicuous factor and determines the form taken by the symptoms. The impulse to love must then mask itself under the sadistic impulse. The obsessive thought, "I should like to murder you," means…nothing else but "I should like to enjoy love of you."[133]

> Norman's confusions about sexual difference and appropriate sexual behavior are similarly clarified by Freud's assertion that during the "pre-genital" phase (to which Norman has regressed) the contrast between masculine and feminine plays no part as yet; instead of it there is the contrast between active and passive…That which in this period seems masculine to us, regarded from the stand-point of the genital phase, proves to be the expression of an impulse to mastery, which easily passes over into cruelty. Impulses with a passive aim are connected with the erotogenic zone of the rectal orifice, at this period very important; the impulses of skoptophilia (gazing) and curiosity are powerfully active.[134]

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[133] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 101
[134] Ibid. p. 101

As a result we see that Hitchcock's continual preoccupation with all things relevant to scopophilia has rested at the feet of a character chosen for his own peculiarities and obsessive preoccupations. Hitchcock's own seemingly bizarre preoccupation with scopophilia is understood in light of the fact that during the anal phase, the impulses of looking and curiosity are the most powerfully active. Accordingly we see the need for scopophilia in his films and if an individual himself, takes that much pleasure in looking and actively participating in the gaze, it is only natural that he constructs his films in such a way that the gaze and the meaning thereof is never obscured by individual audience interpretation. The interpretation has to be controlled to be only his interpretation thereof. It is patently obvious that "…the film's preoccupation with anal-compulsive behavior, which recurs throughout the narrative in thinly disguised form…" [135] is Hitchcock's attempt to convey meaning to the audience. Alfred Hitchcock does not attempt greatly to hide the images but it is the meaning of these signifiers, which he controls and manipulates in such a way that the audience is not initially aware of the extent to which Hitchcock moulded their own understanding in his use of one of many motifs.

To take as a further example of Hitchcock's manipulation from another film, "…*Rope* is built on the juxtaposition of a crime whose motive is an aesthetic attempt at a moral emancipation with a Pateresque sense of meal as ritual." [136]

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[135] Ibid. p. 100
[136] DURGNAT, D. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 51

> When the meal (cold chicken) is served from atop the man's coffin, the crime is seen as one of "devouring". (This idea is even more forcefully treated in *Frenzy*.) The candles, lit for the meal and placed atop the chest, are also for a funeral. Once again, then, Hitchcock interrelates the themes of play, sex, food, murder and ritual.[137]

Hitchcock's macabre sense of humour is clearly evoked in this particular scene. Firstly, the meal is cold chicken, which is what human flesh has been likened to tasting similar to, secondly it is a white meat and human flesh, jokingly has been referred to as 'the other white meat'. Hitchcock, contrives scenes such as this in order to suggest to his audience the horrors of what is actually taking place and how we can metaphorically 'devour' people in the way in which we murder and slander reputations with our mouths, the very receptacles of the food in question, thus we can be said to be cannibalistic in that we devour the other, that which poses a threat to our environment and our own sense of stability and sense of worth, perceived or otherwise. Again we see how the meaning attributed to this scene is clearly denoted and delineated by Hitchcock, allowing for no mistake in interpretation by the audience.

I will now move on to one of the last films in Hitchcock's canon of work, *Frenzy*. This film is seen as one of the more violent and disturbing of all his works, including *Psycho*. Not in the least considered so for the graphic and highly sadistic rape scene that occurs towards the middle of the narrative. A scene of brutality and sadism not yet seen in one of Alfred Hitchcock's films.

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[137] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 188

This is a film where Hitchcock's obsession with food and elimination is brought even more to the fore than in its scatological predecessor, *Psycho*. Precisely because Hitchcock knew that food and sex are two of the more interesting pastimes which people from all walks of life indulge in. Yet another starting point from which Hitchcock knew he would implicitly be able to engage his audience's attention from quite early on the narrative. The theme of food is even carried over to scenes concerning the police Chief Inspector thus the theme of food serves for Hitchcock to link the criminal with his pursuer (good and bad) this draws a parallel for his audience signifying that there are more things the good have in common with the bad than perhaps the bad have in common with the good.

> Eventually the culprit is cornered by Inspector Oxford…who's given some moral support by his scatter-brained wife…while she prattles over her gruesome attempts at Cordon Bleu cuisine.[138]

The character of the wife is one whom Hitchcock places in order to act as a commentator on the rest of the action in the film, to contrast and highlight sections of the action. She is a substitute for Hitchcock, the individual who pulls the strings and ensures that everybody comprehends the same storyline in the same exact manner. Her efforts at Cordon Bleu cuisine are attempts by Hitchcock, to add light relief and sometimes-cynical comments to the action of the main characters including her own husband the police Chief Inspector. This character could actually be seen as Hitchcock's insertion of

[138] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber p. 395.

himself into the film, his embodiment in kind in the film, as a part and not just a vague constructive force behind the film.

> But perhaps the most admirable achievement of *Frenzy*, and one which appears to have escaped the attention of major critics in the US and abroad, is its brilliantly sustained metaphor of food, the act of eating – and its antithesis, hunger.[139]

When we initially meet one of the main protagonists Bob Rusk, he is eating grapes and offers some to his old friend the ex-RAF pilot Blaney, who politely declines. Rusk is in fact in the fruit and vegetable trade. He makes a living out of selling goods to eat, to satisfy appetites, even his own literally and metaphorically. Hitchcock is straight off the mark, to associate the figure of Rusk with the abstract notion of 'appetite'. This time it is the appetite of a gustatory nature, but Hitchcock does not split hairs as all desires and appetites to him are linked and interdependent anyway. Hitchcock in his Catholic way, links sins of the flesh, to sins of the palate and desire of any inordinate nature is seen in Catholicism to be sin in any case – gluttony being one of the seven deadly sins. Hitchcock's notion here, was to probably implicitly suggest to his audience that they are not so different to Bob Rusk because we all find ways to sate our appetites, regardless of the nature of those appetites. So Hitchcock's question essentially is: what makes you, the audience so different from this apparent aberration to the norm, Mr. Rusk? Hitchcock is again, controlling the audience, by actually accusing them of being the same as the protagonist and in this case, the notorious villain. He does not allow his audience to watch complacently and smug in their comfort and their secure seats.

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[139] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 435

"Food in *Frenzy* is a basic visual metaphor for the devouring…" [140] the devouring of flesh, (human and food) and the possession of what people want - the possession of things but more importantly, people. To take this analogy one step further, this film is finally about Hitchcock's appetite for control and manipulation. His appetite is for second hand voyeurism and his apparent need to feel superior to his audience and people in general.

> Rusk leads up to his attack by speaking of 'eating together', and then remarks about his liking for fruit: "We have a saying in my line of work: Don't squeeze the goods until they're yours." He identifies Brenda with his lunch, and their staccato dialogue includes references to his "appetites", or his "hunger", and the "Frugality of your meal." He takes a bite of her fruit ("English" he asks), and the quietly sinister tone in his voice as he says to Brenda, "I want you-you see, you're my type of woman."[141]

Never in Hitchcock's film is his strange, twisted and macabre sense of humour, regarding sex and food, so vividly and blatantly portrayed than in this specific scene. He slowly leads the audience towards the realization of the rape, which is soon to occur but heightens the intensity of the scene and the suspense for the audience by inserting this seemingly prosaic scene as a prelude to the rape scene and in this way he lulls the audience into a false sense of security and yet simultaneously tinges it with a sense of hesitant expectation. Hitchcock's delight in keeping his audience in a heightened sense of anticipation is obvious in the drawn out exposition of this scene. It leaves the audience wondering if Rusk will rape the woman or not. The way in which Hitchcock makes the character of Rusk savour every moment of the scene, talking about food and fruit, seems

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[140] Ibid p. 436
[141] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 440

almost sadistic and perverse. This is two fold, firstly for the character of Blaney's ex-wife and secondly for the audience who are powerless, to stop what is to occur, which is what I believe was Hitchcock's intent. Hitchcock wanted the audience to witness this scene and feel the fear of Blaney's ex-wife, the feeling of supreme power in Rusk, mingled with their own disgust and grave unease.

> In *Frenzy* ambivalence can be related to the polarity woman as food vs. woman as poison (source of "pollution," "waste-product" of society, to use the politician's words). To understand how woman functions throughout the film as both edible commodity and inedible pollutant (the stench of femininity alluded to in the myths and studied by Lévi-Strauss) helps us to achieve a deeper insight not only into this particular film, but of some of Hitchcock's major concerns throughout his career. That eating and copulating have frequently been posited as analogous activities in Hitchcock films has certainly not gone unremarked in the criticism. However, the tendency – most pronounced in the Spoto biography – has been to put his parallelism down to the imagination of an overweight pervert. Such a view has unfortunately obscured the extent to which Hitchcock films into bold (and rather comic) relief an equation that seems to exist at the heart of patriarchal culture itself. As Lévi-Strauss observes in *The Savage Mind,* there is a "very profound analogy which people throughout the world seem to find between copulation and eating. In a very large number of languages they are even called by the same term. In Yoruba 'to eat' and 'to marry' are expressed by a single verb the general sense of which is 'to win, to acquire,' a usage which has its parallel in French [and also in English], where the verb 'consumer' [to consummate] applies both to marriage and to meals."[142]

Hence the equivocation between consuming, food, and sex, according to Hitchcock's work and interpretation is in fact, true insofar as certain facts verify semantics and ideologies, ideology that he used within his films to strengthen his own interpretations and views that he imposed upon his viewers.

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[142] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 106

> In *Frenzy,* the association of women with pollution is made explicitly in the film's opening sequence, and the film is "littered" with shots of grotesque-looking female corpses (Hitchcock had been dissuaded from showing spittle dripping from the tongue of Brenda Blaney in the shocking close-up of her after the murder). Babs' body, dusted with potato flour spills out of the truck and onto the road…[143]

It is obvious even to a viewer not in possession of film theory knowledge that associating the female corpse with that of the grotesque and seemingly abnormal, is specifically put there in order for the audience to infer that the female 'other' is indeed 'other' and strange in all aspects even in death. The female body dead or alive is a receptacle of men's fears and desires and that's why the other has to be removed from life and from this film in particular. It is also why woman is seen as pollutant. Women sully the idyll that man longs for by complicating the status quo by mere virtue of their existence.

The idea of woman as object, 'food' or otherwise, some kind of gain, is interesting when taken into consideration that in the films of Alfred Hitchcock, the main aim by the director in my estimation was to manipulate and influence the feelings of his audience in any which way he chose. In *Frenzy* especially, women and food seem interchangeable as they both serve to satisfy an appetite in general but to satisfy the hunger of men more specifically. Hitchcock knew that women in his audience would be offended by this analogy and that the men would on some level even if it were not conscious, identify with the lust for both food and women. As a result he manages to get a reaction out of all members of his audience even if the reasons therefore are diametrically opposed in understanding and identification. The reaction of the audience is what Alfred Hitchcock

[143] Ibid. p. 108

was primarily concerned with and he knew what effects he was in search for even in diametrically opposed reactions that were dependant on the gender of the audience member.

The issue of woman as pollutant or waste product is highlighted by the corpses that are liberally strewn throughout *Frenzy* and by the body that rides along on the tide of the river Thames as the mayor/political figure pontificates about pollutants in the river, which of course would be a female body and not a male one. Hitchcock interprets the female body as the other and unclean, as he knew that his male audience would identify with that fear of the female other and the unclean aspect associated with the menstrual cycle of women. This ideology of the menstrual cycle being less than perfect is supported and put into practice in religious circles too. In both Islam and Judaism, it is the menstrual cycle that makes the woman unclean. The other is a threat and Hitchcock incorporates this into both *Frenzy* and *Psycho* in the murdering of women and thus exterminating the threat of the other. In this case, more for himself, than perhaps for his audience.

> When he has finished raping and strangling her, he spies the apple, resumes eating it, puts it down, picks his teeth with his tie pin, and again takes up the half-eaten apple (shown in close-up) as he leaves. Now, given the numerous references to gardens in the film (Forsythe sarcastically says to Babs and Blaney when they are talking outside the pub, "This is Covent Garden, not the Garden of Love"; Rusk tells Blaney that his "Old Mum" lives in Kent, "The Garden of England"; etc.), it seems plausible to argue that the Adam and Eve myth is being invoked, but that a deliberate reversal is effected: here the man eats the apple, "knows" the woman, and is responsible for her destruction.[144]

[144] Ibid. (pp.) 105-106

Alfred Hitchcock wanted reactions (be they positive, negative, horrified or indifferent) from his films. As already stated the deaths of the women in both *Frenzy* and *Psycho* seemed to be a form of extermination of the woman as other. In consequence Tanya Modleski's assertion that a reversal of the Adam and Eve myth is highly plausible and I would say substantiated if taken into account when investigating the whole of Hitchcock's cannon. In terms of manipulating the audience by appealing to age old ingrained assumptions and fears, he knows that he will gain the support of some men for the villain, whilst the women will recoil and feel the same disgust and hatred towards Bob Rusk as the women in the film do. Hitchcock manipulates the audience's (in particular the men in the audience) cultural assumptions about women

> In *The Savage Mind* Lévi-Strauss suggest that the common cultural "equation of male with devourer and female with devoured" may be intended to reverse the situation man most fears. Lévi-Strauss refers to the sexual philosophy of the Far East where "for a man the art of love-making consists essentially in avoiding having his vital force absorbed by the women [possessors of the vagina dentatal and in turning his risk to his advantage. (We recall the analysis of *Murder!* In which the hero takes the risk of hystericization and feminization in order to achieve masculine control over the narrative.) Thus it is possible to see in the film's brutality toward women still one more indication of the need expressed throughout Hitchcock's works to deny resemblance to – absorption by – the female, a need that for Lévi-Strauss lies at the inaugural moment of culture and of myth…Yet, as we shall see, the identification of male with devourer and female with devoured may not always have the psychic effect of negating the imagined ability of the female to absorb the male, since food is frequently endowed with the power to transform the eater into its likeness. You are, after all, what you eat.[145]

For the most part woman is seen as a body needing to be separated from man in all aspects particularly in filial relationships.

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[145] Ibid. p. 106

> According to Kristeva, dietary prohibitions are based upon the prohibition of incest (an analysis confirmed by Levi-Strauss) and thus are part of the "project of separation" from the female body engaged in not only the Biblical text, which Kristeva analyzes at some length, but by patriarchal symbolic systems in general. [146]

The fact that dietary, prohibition existed to prevent incest and as part of the "project of separation" indicates the fear that exists in the collective unconscious of men, which speaks of the unnatural desires elicited by all women – thus tempting men into complicated situations. This fear would of course necessitate having to get rid of women who have already tempted men into committing indiscreet actions. This fear is what Hitchcock plays on in *Frenzy* to cause anxiety for male audience members. He does this so that the eradication of the female characters in the film does not seem so irrational and abhorrent.

> Finally, the body of Babs is paralleled with the repellent, virtually inedible food the inspector's wife gives him to eat, food like pig's feet, which the inspector nearly gags on while reconstructing the potato truck episode with his wife. He relates how the corpse's fingers had been snapped open to retrieve an incriminating object, and as he speaks of this his wife snaps breadsticks in two and crunches on them.[147]

In this shot we see what malicious delight Hitchcock takes in ensuring that had the image of Rusk breaking open the fingers not been gut wrenching enough, he will make sure the audience gets their dose of nausea for the evening by using an analogous image with more severe sound effects, reminiscent of the act itself but more stark in its visual and aural effects.

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[146] Ibid. p. 109
[147] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p.108

> If the film and the capital [city][148] are both interdeterminately adrift between epochs, the plot thematic is firmly structured around the linking corruption lurking within sex, food and money. Rusk rapes Mrs. Blaney, her legs forced conspicuously apart, and a few shots later Mrs. Oxford takes the lid off her latest dish, to reveal a soggy quail with its legs lifted up and apart. Rusk's grapplings with the barmaid's body in the potato sack, and it's conspicuously protruding foot, are reiterated as the Inspector's utensils prod at a slithery little bundle of pig's trotter. The snapping of the dead girl's fingers is echoed in Mrs. Oxford's brisk breaking of a breadstick. Meat is corpses. We are all eaters of the dead, violently slain for us. Decency is a matter, not of kind, but of degree. Covent Garden is a herbivorous rather than a carnivorous foodmarket, but the equation corruption=corpses=food is carried through to food=money. Blaney storms out of a pub and a job over his supposed theft of a drink. Later a customer complains over the stench of an outdated Scotch egg.[149]

Corruption as is made obviously clear in *Psycho* is perceived by Hitchcock and thus is portrayed to his audience as basically the end result of greed and lust for money. The stench of decay which runs throughout the film from the polluted rivers through to the outdated Scotch egg, is Hitchcock's signal to the audience, that what he portrays is the world we live in, a world in which the people are 'pigs' as Uncle Charlie put it in *Shadow of a Doubt.* A world devoid of the truly innocent and sublime.

> Hunger plays a central role in *Frenzy.* The hero is hungry because he is penniless and has to be fed by his wife. The Inspector is hungry but his wife does not satisfy his appetite. Rusk cannot find women to "satisfy his unusual appetites," as Brenda and her secretary said. "The killer must be found," says Oxford, "before his appetite is whetted again," and the killer himself is always hungry, always talking about food or chewing fruit, especially before and after killing. All these men are interrelated – by their clothing, their eating habits, their names or the psychological affinities they have, and their sexual relationships with women which are in each case pathological, frustrated or unsatisfying and leave them "hungry." It is, in fact, a hungry world Hitchcock shows us…There are evidently different ways of satisfying that hunger.[150]

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[148] My own insertion.
[149] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber & Faber. p. 396
[150] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 442

The issue of 'hunger' would also have resonance for Hitchcock's audience he constructs the narrative in such a way that the audience have to follow his lead but they do this complacently, such is their 'hunger' for the visual images shown to them, their voyeuristic pleasure is so in need of being fulfilled that they follow blindly wherever Hitchcock takes them, ergo, Donald Spoto's above assertion that there are different ways of satisfying hunger is true, because there are a myriad of ways to feel 'hunger'.

> Properly examined, it emerges as a complex work charged with oral anxieties and a revealing tendency to couple food imagery with those favorite Hitchcock concerns: sex, violence, and death. (The same linkage can be traced through films of very different periods, finding special strength in *Blackmail, Suspicion, Notorious, Rope,* and *Psycho,* among others.)[151]

The oral anxiety is simply an extension of the obsessive preoccupation with scatology as the process of scatology starts with ingestion of food via the mouth. It is interesting to note that a majority of characters in Hitchcock's films are murdered by strangulation and that strangulation involves cutting off access from the oral cavity. Hitchcock held a certain fascination with the oral cavity, as Donald Spoto notes,

> Hitchcock spoke of food and various recipes and restaurants of the world constantly. As one of his earlier actresses noted "Food was very important to him. He got as emotional about food as he did about anything, and his relationship to food was almost sexual."[152]

[151] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 16
[152] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 512

If food was almost sexual to Hitchcock it is no wonder that he directed *Frenzy* so that the murderer eats while raping and strangling a woman.

> At the same time, although by the end of the film we might be inclined to agree with the porter who says, "Sometimes just thinking about the lusts of men makes me want to heave," and although, as Robin Wood has contended, the main female characters are more sympathetic than anyone else in the film, there is little doubt that part of what makes the crime Hitchcock depicts so repellent has to do with a underlying fear and loathing of femininity.[153]

This 'underlying fear and loathing of femininity' is again the reiteration of the previously discussed topic of fear of woman as 'the other'. Women in this film, *Frenzy* are to be murdered because in terms of the narrative, they are the temptation for a man who is frustrated by his own impotence but as signifiers they tell women in the audience that they live only due to the goodness and tolerance of the men in their lives and as signifiers, the women who are murdered in *Frenzy* tell the men in the audience, that women pose an unnatural and corruptive threat to masculinity, they are also the bodies that lure the gaze of the male and lead him to fantasies and thoughts not wholly ideal or pure.

> The association of women with defilement, with filth, is as strong in Hitchcock as it is in the "savage mind" analyzed by Lévi-Strauss. In *Psycho* Marion Crane is identified with money ("filthy lucre"), bathrooms, toilets, blood, and, of course, the swamp. In an earlier film, *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), Uncle Charlie (Joseph Cotton), who murders wealthy widows, sees the world as a "foul sty" a "filthy, rotting place," and he delivers a speech (significantly, at the dinner table) in which he speaks of men who work hard until they die, leaving their wives to throw their money away: "Eating the money, drinking the money…smelling of money…Faded, fat, greedy women."[154]

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[153] MODLESKI, T. 1988. The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York: Methuen, Inc. p. 105.
[154] Ibid p. 108

So it would seem that the overall message that Alfred Hitchcock wants to impart to his audience is one of a world where men are the pious hard workers and where women occupy the position of sybaritic leeches. A rather harsh and unflattering picture to paint, but one nevertheless, that seemed to increase in its frequency in its appearances in the later quarter of Hitchcock's film career.

> Potatoes, fruit (particularly grapes), and gourmet delicacies appear on the screen and in dialogue with increasing frequency as the film progresses. At the outset, the murderer gives his friend, the wrongly accused hero (or more accurately, in this case, "nonhero") a bunch of grapes from his market. The Chief Inspector is starving while his wife prepares inedible specialty foods. Potato sacks are constantly carried across the screen, passing before us, interrupting our view, crowding out the characters; indeed, food is almost the "main character" in the film! The killer talks of eating lunch just before he kills his friend's wife. He remarks on her frugal lunch (which consists mainly of fruit, to which he helps himself)…Thus food and eating become the associative links with abuse, possessiveness, dishonesty and, ironically, psychic and emotional starvation. As one character says: "I understand there are people starving in this world."[155]

The thought of people 'starving' becomes associated with the earlier mentioned assertion of there being various ways to experience hunger. We, the individuals in the audience starve for food, physical companionship, success, admiration, validation and most importantly love, as do the characters in the film. In consequence Hitchcock draws his audience into the understanding of the cycle of hunger and the sating of that hunger by any means necessary, even killing as Bob Rusk does in *Frenzy*.

> The sour fruits of human exploitation are traded, people become one another's food, and no decent meals are served at home; one person buys someone a meal, another longs for a meal, another becomes a meal. There is nothing appetizing about food or

[155] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 436

> friendship, and all the relationships are sterile or aborted by murder: *Frenzy* is, to the last frame, a closed and coldly negative vision of human possibility.[156]

The 'closed and coldly negative vision of humanity possibility' that is evident in *Frenzy* is also what the audience finds most disturbing. Our ability to be capable of murder, treachery and lying – all negative attributes of our personalities has always been a problematic area for society. This concern with the 'dark' side of our human nature became manifest in literature as the appearances of the double or doppelganger a figure that is usually the evil antithesis of a person. This probably was one of the more fanciful ways in which people in the last three centuries managed to rationalize the dark side of human nature and as such became a strong theme in Western literature and even found a place in the films of Alfred Hitchcock as a means of manipulating the audience into a greater understanding of the human condition.

[156] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 517

8. THE DOUBLE

> Wheresoe'er toward sleep I turned,
> Wheresoe'er for death I yearned,
> Wheresoe'er I trod the ground,
> On my way sat down by me
> A wretched sight, black-vestured he,
> In whom a brother's guise I found.[157]

The use of the double in literature has been well documented and has been much studied over the years. It holds a strange and uncanny fascination for readers, authors and now via the written word we have moved into the realm of the visual arts, film and film directors alike.

Hitchcock said: "I am primarily interested in the Jekyll-Hyde mentality of the squire." [158] And this is evident that this informed his filmmaking especially concerning *Shadow of a Doubt, Strangers on a Train, Psycho* and to a lesser degree *Frenzy* in which the literal use of doubling (of images etc) and the split self is obvious as a motif. I think that this was used by Hitchcock as a tool of manipulation because of the audience's inherent understanding of a sense of the divided self – the propensity for evil and good in all of us. This chapter will explore how Hitchcock exploited this in his manipulation of the audience.

Otto Rank in his book *The Double – A Psychoanalytic Study* mentions that it is fascinating to note how people were greatly fascinated in the reading (and listening, and

[157] RANK, O. 1989. The Double – A Psychoanalytic Study. London: H. Karnac (Books) Ltd. p. 5
[158] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 184

watching) of stories about the subject of the double, noted especially after times of major upheavals of society. One of the reasons he posits for this is:

> Psychology, as we know it today, had its beginnings at the end of the eighteenth century and in the nineteenth. The quest into the mind is simultaneously the quest into the individuality and integrity of the self, which can exhibit puzzling contradictions and obscurely understood drives and impulses…Major wars and other extensive disturbances of society are among those occasions which cause man to ask himself fundamental questions about his identity – an identity which he had existing on various levels or even in fragmentation.[159]

This fragmentation of the self, the splitting up of the individual self, is the origin of the figure of the double. Although the fragmenting of the self is usually a sign of mental illness, we can all be said to fragment ourselves in our daily lives, having to be different personalities, or adopt different personality traits according to which facet of our lives we are addressing. We are the co-worker, the employer, the mother/father, son/daughter, sibling and lover. Hitchcock understood this and sought this fragmenting of the self to spill over into his audiences, he wanted them to obey him and be taken along on his fantasy trip. In order to do this Hitchcock had to manipulate the ordinary, everyday sensibilities of his audiences, in order to make them feel sympathy for a murderer and a thief and hope that crimes are not revealed so as to keep the integrity of an evil character intact. This would naturally, be contrary to what they thought they should feel. He also included the figure of the double as a motif in his films, to address the areas of psychosis and murder. To audiences especially in the era in which Hitchcock practiced his art, it would have been more palatable to imagine someone perpetrating heinous acts of

[159] RANK, O. 1989. The Double – A Psychoanalytical Study. London: H. Karnac (Books) Ltd. p. xxi of the introduction.

violence against another person if the cause therefore was a disturbed state of mind because the heinous acts could be explained in terms of an unbalanced or sick mind. The mentally ill can be confined and contained enabling society to feel safe but if mentally healthy persons can take to violence and murder then there can be no certainty of others in society being safe from these acts. There is also a sense that terrible acts perpetrated by sane people are worse because there is no excuse of mental ill health only an evil nature. If we take Rank's assertion that the investigation of the mind is primarily concerned with the search for individuality, then we assume that this is what Hitchcock intended when including the motif of 'the double' and 'the mirror' in his films. He wanted to impart this to his audience and make them search for their own individuality in the midst of watching other characters search for theirs on screen. Of course this would be done unobtrusively, as Hitchcock was the master of manipulation and, as is implied by the use of manipulation, it is done without the other person being overtly aware of the process.

Nietzsche said, "Man's shadow, I thought, is his vanity."[160] Hitchcock knew all about vanity, his own ego, by all accounts of colleagues was quite large, but he knew further that vanity among people is a common downfall, a downfall that he could exploit in his films both in the narrative and in the manipulation of his audience. The audience always likes to think they are one step ahead of the narrative, the thought process behind this being that they are so advanced in 'reading' the narrative that they can already predict the outcome. This idea in itself is a form of vanity, superfluous and not in any way serious, but vanity nonetheless. It was this vanity that Hitchcock managed to subvert and use

[160] Ibid. p. 49

against his audience, to confuse them and manipulate them into thinking his way and thus interpreting his films in the manner in which he wished them to be interpreted.

> Richard M. Meyer was writing in this tradition (of seeing the double for the unreal and uncanny, to his desire to depict distant and separate traits of himself, or to his desire for another existence) in 1916 when he described E.T.A Hoffmann's use of the double-theme as arising from his 'longing for a more exalted existence.' Meyer stated too that the doubles themselves, 'unsure of their identity, are sometimes inhabitants of this earth and sometimes belong to some unearthly region.'[161]

The 'unearthly region' of which Meyer speaks is so readily interpreted in this instance with the region of film. The characters in Hitchcock's films occupied a realm, another sphere almost, where (for the audience, while seated, isolated and cocooned in a dark cinema) the lines between what is, and what is perceived, becomes blurred and indistinct. Thus the audience members are themselves drawn into a world of 'the double' by a masterful cinema director, who evokes such powerful subconscious and conscious emotions and provocative thoughts, that the audience are always in two minds, the mind of the audience member watching, and the mind of the audience member who is compelled, to identify even though they do not wish to with the dark and often disturbing undertones of the Hitchcock oeuvre.

Shadow of a Doubt was a film in which the double and the mirror phase is evoked most clearly by Hitchcock. The clearest indication of his substantiation for using this motif is found in a section from the Patricia Highsmith novel of the same name from which this was adapted.

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[161] Ibid (Rank) p. 630

> But love and hate, he thought now, good and evil, lived side by side in the human heart, and not merely in differing proportions in one man and the next, but all good and all evil. One had merely to look for a little of either to find it all, and one had merely to scratch the surface. All things had opposites close by. Nothing could be without its opposite that was bound up with it…Each was what the other had not chosen to be, the cast-off self, what he thought he hated but perhaps in reality loved…there was that duality permeating nature…Two people in each person. There's also a person exactly the opposite of you, like the unseen part of you, somewhere in the world, and he waits in ambush.[162]

Consequently the idea was already present in Alfred Hitchcock's mind to use the motif of the double in order to evoke the unease and fear that he wished to elicit in audience members watching his film. As the section concerning 'the other' illustrates, nothing makes one feel so uneasy as 'the other', the one who is not like you but who apart from certain distinct differences, could be you. However where the double is concerned, 'the other' is not so much that which is totally alien to you, but essentially the reverse mirror image of you, what you could be under less satisfactory circumstances. The 'you', that you perhaps suppress, the you capable of evil misdeeds and great cruelty, which is only glossed over because of society's restrictions, which are enforced upon you. Hitchcock's manipulation here lies, again, in not so much the obvious and didactic, but the subtle and inferred. He allows the audience to think they are in control of what they think whilst viewing his films, but who in actual fact are very much under Hitchcock's influence. Another facet of Hitchcock's manipulation lay in the ability to lead the audience along in thinking, moralistically, that they know the difference between right and wrong and for this reason will 'support' the truly virtuous character, only to find as the story progresses

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[162] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 321

that the character they had assumed was a truly naïve and innocent character, was one capable of evil acts, Charlie kills her Uncle in *Shadow of a Doubt*, Norman is the real killer in *Psycho* i.e. the double is the 'double' faceted characters found in the narrative who seem to be what they are not.

Hitchcock wanted to manipulate his audience by ensuring that this motif of the double was used not only in *Shadow of a Doubt* but also in many of his box office successes, *North by Northwest, Psycho* and *Strangers on a Train* and to a lesser extent *Rope.* All of these films have in common the double motif or the figure of the double. The double, if it is a character, is usually a nefarious and insidious character that is capable of great evil. Donald Spoto in his biography of the life of Alfred Hitchcock, regarding *Strangers on a Train,* noted:

> All this doubling – which has no precedent in the novel- was quite deliberately added by Hitchcock, and is the key element in the film's structure. (In this regard, he also gave the homosexual angle a wider reference, making it serve the theme of two aspects of a single personality.) Walker is Granger's 'shadow', activating what Granger wants, bringing out the dark underside of Granger's potentially murderous desires.[163]

In both *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train,* we find that the double is a murderous double, a receptacle for the hideous and distorted desires of the individual. In terms of this, Hitchcock managed to get his audience thinking about their own secret and perhaps even latent desires, and what they would do, if they ever took the decision to unleash these terrible desires on society or get someone else to do it. In this way it is

[163] Ibid. p. 328

simple to see how Hitchcock may have intended these films, with their doubles, to 'speak' to his audiences on an unconscious level, so that they too might consider what would happen if the same or a similar event happened to them without consciously being aware that it was Hitchcock's manipulation that set them on that train of thought. Would they swap murders with someone as a means to a quick and efficient way to deal with a bothersome business associate or an irritating relative?

> The theme of the double was available to Hitchcock from the literary traditions that were familiar to him. From E.T.A. Hoffman's first novel, *The Devil's Elixir*, and his tale, '*The Doubles*' he took the device of the doppelgänger. 'I imagine my ego,' Hoffman wrote, 'as being viewed through a lens: all the forms which move around me are egos; and whatever they do, or leave undone, vexes me.' The statement is virtually an epigraph for *Strangers on a Train.*[164]

If we were to all assume that Hoffmann's view was the moral and correct view, we would inhabit a world where no one single person was safe because if you annoyed any individual they could exact revenge not merely by slander as happens in society today but by means of actual murder, as is the case in *Strangers on a Train*. These are statements with concomitant questions, which Hitchcock poses in the film. He does this by his delicate manipulation of the audience, in making them support the character and not support the character of his wife, because she stands in the way of his marrying somebody else, seemingly corrupting his life and happiness. So when she is murdered we are to a greater or lesser extent satisfied with the outcome. A hideous thought but it is true, without us realizing it, or even voicing it as a conscious wish we want Guy's wife dead. We are just as complicit in the murder as Guy is because like him we secretly

[164] Ibid. p. 329

wanted her dead although we never actually stated it bluntly. The lens through which Hoffman saw his vision, could also be likened to Hitchcock's camera lens, through which he filmed his critiques of human nature.

With influences such as Hoffmann's in his early and formative years, it is no surprise that intertextuality was to arise in Hitchcock's work which made the manipulation of his audience via the motif of the double even more intriguing because part of his audience who would have been old enough to also make reference to the literature of a previous time, would immediately understand and be susceptible to the image and connotations of the double because of their own literary history, but so too, would audience members who had not had the opportunity of reading Hoffmann and his colleague's works or those young enough not to remember they would be led by Hitchcock's manipulation's. Thus Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience was in some respects a two-fold object because he worked from two suppositions; there were audience members who already knew and those who did not. The question left was one of interweaving the motif in such a way that it was neither obvious to the audience members who knew about the motif nor to those who were new to the idea. Consequently as in all his films he walked a thin line, between leading the audience along, but not making it apparent where the next turn or bend in the narrative road would occur.

Sterrit brings our attention to the fact that the use of this particular motif in audience manipulation has its roots in the precedent set in the Romantic and Victorian eras where,

> [T]he double always reflected strong inner conflict, conflict between the fear of involvement with life and the concomitant fear of non-involvement, stagnation, and death, a conflict between the reach toward wholeness and the danger of disintegration. Intimate with these sources, Hitchcock would make the double – in *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Strangers on a Train,* as later in *Psycho* and *Frenzy* – the messenger of death. He required no training in psychology to be aware of this common creative currency and its attendant imagery: it was one of the few recurring motifs in the art and literature of his time, and inevitably the cinema, his cinema, capitalized on the forms and patters of this device.[165]

Sterrit points out that in *Shadow of a Doubt* and in particularly *Psycho* and Frenzy, that the films are essentially concerned with the complementing of different personalities. In *Shadow of a Doubt* we see how Charlie's naïveté is tarnished when her Uncle displays his own dark nature. In all the films mentioned above – the 'innocent' characters concerned learn of their own dark sides and potential for evil that are brought about by doubles, what Sterrit calls 'psychic Doppelgangers'.

Charlie starts off believing that her uncle is her fateful twin, even voicing her belief that they are like twins, to him. Hitchcock lets the audience believe in Charlie's trust and devotion after all, how can Charlie as well as her mother be wrong? He delights in twisting the narrative, to give the audience a great shock, thus allowing both Charlie and the audience to be let down and shattered in their belief of this man. Thus both the character and the audience are exposed as gullible people – the kind of people upon whom Uncle Charlie preyed. We the audience sit in our theatres watching the film, eating popcorn and sitting in our padded seats are we too also the 'pigs' referred to by Uncle Charlie? We, the audience may as well be the widows, whom Uncle Charlie

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[165] STERRITT, D. 1993. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 31

murdered. We lavish money on ourselves by treating ourselves to a superfluous outing to the cinema. We do not use the money for more practical endeavours, as the widows also do not. Hitchcock draws a very clear analogy. Hitchcock is not 'punishing' us for going to the cinema, but he does draw an analogy between the audience and the widows who are frivolous and pleasure seeking and perhaps abstractly in just as great a risk from Uncle Charlie.

The figure of the doppelgänger is analogous to the idea of someone's 'shadow' and overall, 'mysterious other half', or in other words an individual's diabolical twin. The idea of the vampire as the double will also be described later in this chapter, as it has distinct and obvious references to the mirror phase and Hitchcock's apparently strange relationship to mirrors. The image of oneself reflected in the mirror is of course the reflection of both oneself and one's own propensity for evil and corruption. This 'other' is 'Mother' to Norman Bates in *Psycho*, Bruno to Guy, the two killers in *Rope* to James Stewart, Uncle Charlie to Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt.*

In *Shadow of a Doubt*, the film contains a double opening (Charlie's introduction is to be repeated, almost shot for shot, in the introduction of Uncle Charlie). Within the film itself there are a number of references to the number two. There are two men who are pursing Uncle Charlie, Charlie is taken by her Uncle to the ''Till Two Bar', two children in the family etc. Hitchcock used this relatively simple device of having couples or two's situated randomly in the film to bring back to the audience on an unconscious level, the duality of human nature, indeed their very own natures, how we can want, need and

desire things that we intellectually realize we should not, thus creating a polarized conflict within ourselves as Uncle Charlie does.

> *Shadow of a Doubt* has doubles in terms of the pairs that appear. There is an almost infinite accumulation of pairs that reappear in the film. Hitchcock of course does this to reinforce the idea of the double to the audience; he doesn't want them to miss the point. There are two Charlies; two detectives chasing Uncle Charlie, two criminals are being chased, two women with eyeglasses; two dinner sequences; two amateur sleuths; two young children; two older siblings; two sequences in a railway station; two scenes outside a church; two doctors; and two double brandies served in the "Till Two" bar by a waitress he has only worked there for two weeks; two attempts to kill young Charlie; two scenes in a garage etc. The double was fascinating to Hitchcock and thus he thought it would hold the same effect on his audiences. "Isn't it a fascinating design? You could study it forever."[166]

In *Strangers on a Train,* we find a character that is the sp(l)itting image of another character. Miriam, Guy's wife is the almost identical copy of Ann's younger sister Barbara. She is so similar that even Bruno in turn starts to choke an old woman at a party when he looks at Barbara and thinks of his murder of Miriam. However, an astute audience member would have noticed this doubling of characters much earlier on,

> …whenever we saw the sister we thought of Miriam, and she thus performs the functions of a ghost. Her role as 'marker' is emphasized by her morbid fascination with the murder, so that her questions persecute Guy, paradoxically, since she also seems staunchly loyal by nature…she is played by the director's daughter, Patricia Hitchcock, so that the Hitchcock family appears in the film twice.[167]

In this respect Miriam also works as a character present in absence. Hitchcock's use of the double here, is due to his wanting the audience to be made uncomfortable by the

[166] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 327
[167] DURGNAT, R. 1974. The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock. London: Faber and Faber. p. 219

uncanny likeness of Miriam to Barbara. Barbara is a character utilized by Hitchcock to never allow Guy, Bruno or indeed the audience to relax. Barbara acts as a constant reminder of what has occurred.

As regards the use of the director's own daughter, the double here is the use of two Hitchcocks in the same film. I would say that this was mere coincidence and not worthy of mention were it not for the obvious dictate of Hitchcock's that nothing occurs in his films by accident or coincidence. I feel that Hitchcock always wanted to manipulate his audiences, and always managed to make a cameo appearance as if to remind or constantly make the audience aware that he was present in every one of his films as both himself in the cameos and as director. He was the one in complete control. By having his daughter play the character that is the reminder to everyone in the film and in the audience of the terrible crime that has been committed, he is saying that by proxy he is the one who reminds everyone that murder cannot happen and be covered up forever (he is the one who ultimately manipulates.) He is the one who constantly points the finger of blame and direction. Alfred Hitchcock only used his daughter as a double of sorts to 'cement' the already tight control he mastered over his productions and audiences.

The character or rather the actual physical figure of Barbara, manages to merge Guy's two wives – the double of Miriam, the sibling of Ann. This is rather like an algebraic equation to find a missing quantity:

If Barbara=Miriam
and Miriam=Ann
then Barbara=Ann

The explanation of this seemingly paradoxical equation is as follows. Barbara for a split second is seen in the eyes of Bruno as Miriam whom he has already killed thus he equates the two. However, Ann and Miriam share the same status as being or having at one time been Guy's lover, hence if Bruno equates Miriam and Barbara and killed the one and simulates killing the other, then he could have been just as capable of killing Ann and the killing of Barbara is actually the simulation of the killing of Ann. This is a very ingenious moment in the film, devised by Hitchcock, in terms of the doubling that he uses. It is suffice to say that Hitchcock links Ann and Miriam as being doubles of each other. They both held the love of Guy, but are totally different in their personalities. In the equation that I outlined above, Hitchcock manipulates the audience into linking the two and realizing that Ann has the proclivity to become just like Miriam. Hitchcock leads the audience into feeling doubt about whether or not Guy's relationship with Ann might eventually turn into the end result of his relationship with Miriam. Thus Hitchcock robs his audience of the confident feeling that this will be a completely contented union. In this case we see that Guy has actually found himself what he thinks is the antithesis of Miriam, but who is actually by the fact of being sister to Barbara who is the double of Miriam is very much like Miriam, although she appears to be her double, but the in her case instead of being the evil double, is the good double, the redeeming twin.

In *Murder!* there is a scene in which the character of Sir John shaves and muses in a stream-of-consciousness voiceover. This works as a means of externalising inner thoughts of the character for the audience. However, the character may as well be talking to his own double and splitting himself in two. His double in this case would work as a device to inform of the happenings, hence the stream-of-consciousness voiceover that serves the audience in its capacity as equally as the character would. Hitchcock was ever inventive and this is an example of using a device, the voice over and the doubled image to feed information to his audience without being didactic or overbearing, allowing his audience to think as usual that they are the ones who are piecing the clues together when it is Hitchcock who is doing it for them.

9. CONCLUSION

Ernest Lehman one of Hitchcock's collaborators, remembers a conversation he had with Hitchcock in one of the filmmaker's favourite places, a restaurant.

> During location shooting in New York, he took me to dinner at Christ Cella. He'd had a few martinis, and in a rare moment of emotional intimacy, he put his hand on mine and whispered, "Ernie, do you realize what we're doing in this picture? The audience is like a giant organ that you and I are playing. At one moment we play *this* note on them and get *this* reaction, and then we play *that* chord and they react *that* way. And someday we won't even have to make a movie – there'll be electrodes implanted in their brains, and we'll just press different buttons and they'll go 'ooooh' and 'aaaah' and we'll frighten them, and make them laugh. Won't that be wonderful?[168]

Little did Hitchcock know of the virtual worlds that would later be constructed, allowing audiences to experience the most amazing sensations as if they were in a situation but without the danger. This is what audiences wanted and still do, thrills without danger or repercussions. Hitchcock gave them exactly what they wanted. Alfred Hitchcock began his career when the art of the moving picture was only in its nascent forms. Both he and his art form grew together. The culmination of his career left the world a little bit more wary of the things that lurk in our subconscious as well as things that go bump in the night.

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[168] SPOTO, D. 1983. The Life of Alfred Hitchcock. London: William Collins & Co. Ltd. p. 406

His career spanned sixty years and the result was fifty-three feature films, which are still as popular as they were in the era in which they were produced. Academics and students of film, like myself still decide to write dissertations and books on this man and his work.

He was an influential man whose methods influenced an entire generation of filmmakers. We only have to look at Brian de Palma's *Sisters* to see how this film in fact pays homage to the master of suspense, Alfred Hitchcock. The remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* by Gus van Sant in itself was a very significant tribute to a man whom many filmmakers admire for his ingenuity and intelligence in reading audiences.

During the time I have been busy researching and writing this paper, many people have asked me why I even bothered to research up on such an 'old' and 'out of date' director. I always smiled when I heard these comments before trying to condense into five minutes, three years worth of research and knowledge that I have acquired about Alfred Hitchcock and his audience manipulation techniques, that has firmly placed him among people whose artistry and ingenuity I admire. Upon telling people that many of the thriller conventions used by modern directors in contemporary films, to scare and thrill and ultimately manipulate audiences, were actually originated by Hitchcock, I usually receive baffled and I think mostly incredulous stares after all most young people really think that the great film directors include directors such as Martin Scorcese, Brian de Palma, and Steven Spielberg.

Hitchcock was a man of great insight, ingenuity and foresight. Although he was never awarded an Oscar by The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, he was awarded a Lifetime achievement award by the American Film Institute, where a superb banquet was held for him, including all the people he had worked with through his career. These people who included Bernard Herrmann, Cary Grant, Grace Kelly and Ingrid Bergman, congregated to honour a man who added greatly to the history and cannon of film work at large.

Hitchcock's films have been translated into many different languages and are still shown in cinemas in countries all over the world thus making it obvious that Hitchcock's manipulation of the audience and the audience's enjoyment thereof, was not confined to any specific language.

One only needs to search for 'Hitchcock' on the Internet to find a myriad of web sites formed by ardent and dedicated fans of Hitchcock, his films and his genre. A testament to the enduring fascination that audiences share for his work.

It was my aim to construct the argument that Hitchcock, more than most directors, manipulated his audiences and always had every part of his films in his strict control. Hopefully this has been achieved.

In conclusion I shall use the eloquent and articulate words of Alfred Hitchcock's biographer, Donald Spoto, who in his final thoughts in his critical novel *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock* wrote,

> Obviously, the passion which a critic brings to the study of specific works of art reveals much about the critic himself…The act of interpretation, after all, interprets the interpreter to himself. In any case this writer has discovered as much about himself as about one artist's work, and that is no small dividend.
>
> *Finis coronat opus* – the end crowns the work, according to a curious old adage. But in a work of criticism, the end should only bring us back to the beginning, to the works of art themselves. If the reader is impelled to see again the films of Alfred Hitchcock I shall have considered my work successful.[169]

[169] SPOTO, D. 1977. The Art of Alfred Hitchcock. London: W. H. Allen & Co. Ltd. p. 525

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Appendix A

FILM REFERENCE LIST

1) ***Blackmail***. By Charles Bennett. Adapt. Alfred Hitchcock and Charles Bennett. Screen. Alfred Hitchcock, Ben W. Levy and Charles Bennett. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. John Maxwell. Perf. Anny Ondra, Sara Allgood, John Longden, Charles Patton, Cyril Ritchard, Donald Calthrop. Joan Barry recorded the dialogue for Miss Ondra. Elstree, 1929.

2) ***Dial M for Murder***. By Frederick Knott. Adapt and Screen. Alfred Hitchcock. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Ray Milland, Grace Kelly, Robert Cummings, Anthony Dawson, John Williams. Warner Bros. 1953.

3) ***Downhill***. By Ivor Novello and Constance Collier. Screen. Eliot Stannard, written under the pseudonym of David LeStrange. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Michael Balcon. Perf. Ivor Novello, Ben Webster, Robin Irvine, Sybil Rhoda, William Braithwaite. Islington, 1927. (The film was released in America as *When Boys Leave Home*.)

4) ***Family Plot***. By Victor Canning from his novel *The Rainbird Pattern*. Adapt and Screen. Ernest Lehman. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Karen Black, Bruce Dern, Barbara Harris, William Devane, Ed Lauterer, Cathleen Nesbitt, Katherine Helmond, William Prince. Universal Title, 1976.

5) ***Frenzy***. By Arthur LaBern from his novel *Goodbye Piccadilly Farewell Leicester Square*. Adapt. Anthony Shaffer. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Jon Finch, Barry Forster, Barbara Leigh-Hunt, Anna Massey, Alec McGowan, Vivien Merchant, Billie Whitelaw, Clive Swift, Felix Forsythe. Pinewood, 1972

6) ***I Confess***. By Paul Anthelme. Adapt and Screen. George Tabori and William Archibald. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Montgomery Clift, Ann Baxter, Karl Malden, Brian Anherne, O. E. Hasse, Dolly Haas, Roger Dann. Warner Bros. 1952

7) ***Lifeboat***. By John Steinbeck. Adapt and Screen. Jo Swerling. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Kenneth MacGowan. Perf. Tallulah Bankhead, William Bendix, Walter Slezak, Mary Anderson, John Hodiak, Henry Hull, Heather Angel, Hume Cronyn, Canada Lee. Twentieth Century-Fox, 1943

8) ***Marnie***. By Winston Graham. Adapt and Screen. Jay Dresson Allen. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Tippi Hedren, Sean Connery, Diane Baker, Louise Latham, Martin Gabel, Alan Napier, Mariette Hartley, Bruce Dern, Edith Evanson, S. John Launer. Universal, 1964.

9) ***Mr. and Mrs. Smith***. Story and Screen. Norman Krasna. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Harry E. Edington. Perf. Carole Lombard, Robert Montgomery, Gene Raymond, Philip Merrivale, Lucile Watson, Jack Carson. R. K. O. 1941.

10) ***Murder***. By Clemence Dane. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. John Maxwell. Perf. Herbert Marshall, Nora Barry, Phyllis Konstam, Edward Chapman, Esme Percy. (Hitchcock directed a German version of *Murder*, called *Mary*, immediately after completing the English version. It starred Alfred Abel and Olga Tchekowa in the roles originally played by Herbert Marshall and Nora Barry. The film is not available.) Elstree, 1936.

11) ***North by Northwest***. Screenplay. Ernest Lehman. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Jessie Royce Landis, Leo G. Carroll, Philip Ober, Josephine Hutchinson, Martin Landau, Adam Williams, Doreen Lang. M. G. M. 1959.

12) ***Notorious***. Adapt and Screen. Ben Hecht from a theme by Alfred Hitchcock. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant, Claude Rains, Leopoldine Konstantin, Louis Calhern. R. K. O. 1946.

13) ***Psycho***. By Robert Bloch. Adapt and Screen. Joseph Stefano. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles, John Gavin, Martin Balsam, John MacIntire, Lurene Tuttle, Simon Oakland, Frank Albertson, Vaughn Taylor, Mort Mills, Patricia Hitchcock. Paramount, 1960.

14) ***Rear Window***. By Cornell Woolrich. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Grace Kelly, Wendell Corey, Thelma Ritter, Raymond Burr, Judith Evelyn, Ross Bagdasarion, Georgine Darcy, Jesslyn Fox, Irene Winston. Paramount, 1954.

15) ***Rebecca***. By Daphne du Maurier. Adapt and Screen. Philip MacDonald and Michael Hogan. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. David O. Selznick. Perf. Joan Fontaine, Laurence Olivier, Judith Anderson, George Sanders, Nigel Bruce, Gladys Cooper, C. Aubrey Smith, Florence Bates, Leo G. Carroll. Selznick International, 1940.

16) ***Rope***. By Patricia Highsmith. Adapt and Screen. Hume Cronyn. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, John Dall, Farley Granger, Cedric Hardwicke, Joan Chandler, Constance Collier, Edith Evanson, Douglas Dick, Dick Hogan. Warner Bros. 1948.

17) ***Saboteur***. Screenplay by Peter Viertel, Joan Harrison and Dorothy Parker from an idea by Alfred Hitchcock. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock, Frank Lloyd and Jack H. Skirball. Perf. Robert Cummings, Priscilla Lane, Otto Kruger, Alma Kruger, Norman Lloyd. Universal, 1942.

18) ***Shadow of a Doubt***. By Gordon McDonnell. Adapt and Screen. Thornton Wilder, Alma Reville, Sally Benson. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Jack H. Skirball. Perf. Joseph Cotton, Teresa Wright, Patricia Collinge, MacDonald Carey, Henry Travers, Hume Cronyn, Wallace Ford, Edna May Wonacott. Universal, 1943.

19) ***Stage Fright***. By Selwyn Jepson. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville from two of Jepson's stories, *Man Running* and *Outrun the Constable*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Marlene Dietrich, Jane Wyman, Michael Wilding, Richard Todd, Alistair Sim, Dame Sybil Thorndike. Elstree, 1950.

20) ***Strangers on a Train***. From a novel by Patricia Highsmith. Adapt and Screen. Whitfield Cook. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Robert Walker, Farley Granger, Ruth Roman, Leo G. Carroll, Patricia Hitchcock, Laura Elliot, Marion Lorne, Jonathon Hale, Norman Varden. Warner Bros. 1951.

21) ***Student of Prague***. Screen. Hanns Heinz. Dir. Henrick Galeen. Perf. Conrad Veidt, Werner Krauss, Agnes Esterhazy. 1926.

22) ***Suspicion***. By Francis Iles from the novel *Before The Fact*. Adapt and Screen. Samson Raphaelson, Joan Harrison and Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Harry E. Edington. Perf. Joan Fontaine, Cary Grant, Cedric Hardwicke, Nigel Bruce, Dame May Witty, Isabel Jeans. R.K.O. 1941.

23) ***The Birds***. By Daphne du Maurier. Adapt and Screen. Evan Hunter. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Tippi Hedren, Rod Taylor, Jessica Tandy, Suzanne Pleshette, Veronica Cartwright, Ethel Griffies, Charles McGraw, Ruth McDevitt, Elizabeth Wilson. Universal, 1963.

24) ***The Lady Vanishes***. By Ethel Lina White. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Edward Black. Perf. Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave, Dame May Witty, Paul Lukas, Georgie Whithers, Cecil Parker, Linden Travers, Mary Clare, Naunton Wayne, Basil Radford, Catherine Lacey. Lime Grove, 1938.

25) ***The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog***. By Mrs. Belloc-Loundes. Adapt and Screen. Alfred Hitchcock and Eliot Stannard. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Michael Balcon. Perf. Ivor Novello, Daisy Jackson, Marie Ault, Arthur Chesney, Malcolm Keen. Islington, 1926.

26) ***The Man Who Knew Too Much***. By Charles Bennett and D.B. Wyndham-Louis. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes and Angus McPhail. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Doris Day, Daniel Gélin, Brenda de Benzie, Bernard Miles, Christopher Oben, Reggie Malder. Paramount, 1953.

27) ***The Paradine Case***. By Robert Hichens. Adapt and Screen. Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. David O. Selznick. Perf. Gregory Peck, Ann Todd, Charles Laughton, Alida Valli, Ethel Barrymore, Charles Coburn, Louis Jourdan. Selznick International, 1947

28) ***The Thirty-Nine Steps***. By John Buchan. Adapt and Screen. Charles Bennett and Alma Reville. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Michael Balcon, Ivor Montague. Perf. Madeleine Carroll, Robert Donat, Louise Mannheim, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, John Laurie, Helen Haye, Wylie Watson. Lime Grove, 1935.

29) ***The Trouble with Harry***. By John Story. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Edmund Gwenn, John Forsyth, Shirley MacLaine, Mildred Natwick, Mildred Dunnock, Royal Dano, Philip Truex. Paramount, 1956.

30) ***To Catch a Thief***. By David Dodge. Adapt and Screen. John Michael Hayes. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Brigette Auber, John Williams. Paramount, 1955.

31) ***Under Capricorn***. By Helen Simpson. Adapt and screen. Hume Cronyn. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Sidney Bernstein and Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Ingrid Bergman, Joseph Cotton, Michael Wilding, Margaret Leighton, Dennis O' Dea. M. G. M. Studios at Elstree, 1949.

32) ***Vertigo***. By Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Adapt and Screen. Alec Coppel replaced by Samuel Taylor. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Prod. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. James Stewart, Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes, Tom Helmore, Henry Jones, Raymond Bailey, Ellen Corby, Konstantin Shayne, Lee Patrick. Paramount, 1958

Appendix B

HITCHCOCK'S CAMEO REFERENCE LIST[170]

1) **The Lodger (1926)** Hitchcock made two cameo appearances. He first appeared at a desk in a newsroom and later in the film as part of a crowd watching an arrest.

2) **Easy Virtue (1927)** Passing by a tennis court, carrying a walking stick.

3) **Blackmail (1929)** While reading a book on the subway, a young boy is pestering him.

4) **Murder (1930)** Walking by the house where the murder was committed.

5) **The Thirty-Nine Steps (1935)** Hitchcock is seen briefly in the beginning of the film, tossing some litter as Robert Donat and Lucie Mannheim run from the theatre.

6) **Young and Innocent (1937)** Holding a camera, standing outside a courthouse.

7) **The Lady Vanishes (1938)** Dressed in a black coat, smoking a cigarette in Victoria Station.

8) **Rebecca (1940)** Towards the end of the film, walking past a phone booth after George Sanders makes a call.

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[170] Hitchcock Cameo Appearances [Online Article] Retrieved September 27 2005 from the World Wide Web: http://hitchcock.tv/cam/cameos2.html

9) **Foreign Correspondent (1940)** After Joel McCrea leaves the hotel, decked out in a coat and hat, reading a newspaper.

10) **Mr. and Mrs. Smith (1941)** Passing Robert Montgomery outside his building.

11) **Suspicion (1941)** Mailing a letter at the town mailbox.

12) **Saboteur (1942)** Standing in front of a drugstore as the saboteur's car stops.

13) **Shadow of a Doubt (1943)** Playing cards on a train travelling to Santa Rosa.

14) **Lifeboat (1943)** This was a tricky cameo to pull off (the entire film was set on a lifeboat). Hitchcock appeared on a newspaper advertisement for "Reduce Obesity Slayer." Hitchcock was the "before" and "after" shots.

15) **Spellbound (1945)** Exiting the elevator in the Empire Hotel. He is smoking a cigarette and carrying a violin case.

16) **Notorious (1946)** Drinking champagne at a party in Claude Rains's mansion.

17) **The Paradine Case (1947)** At Cumberland Station, leaving a train, carrying a cello.

18) **Rope (1948)** One of the most clever cameos…Hitchcock's "logo" can be seen on a neon sign from the apartment window.

19) **Under Capricorn (1949)** Within the first five minutes, wearing a blue coat and a brown hat during a parade in the town square. Ten minutes later, he is one of three men on the steps outside the Government House.

20) **Stage Fright (1950)** Looking at Jane Wymann in her disguise as Dietrich's maid.

21) **Strangers on a Train (1951)** As Farley Granger gets off the train in his hometown, Hitchcock is boarding carrying a bass fiddle.

22) **I Confess (1952)** After the opening credits, crossing the top of a staircase.

23) **Dial M for Murder (1953)** In a class reunion photo in Grace Kelly's apartment.

24) **Rear Window (1954)** Winding a clock in the apartment of the songwriter.

25) **To Catch a Thief (1955)** Sitting next to Cary Grant on a bus.

26) **The Trouble with Harry (1956)** Walking by a parked limousine.

27) **The Man Who Knew Too Much (1956)** Just before the murder, he is watching acrobats in the Moroccan marketplace.

28) **The Wrong Man (1957)** Narrating the movie's prologue.

29) **Vertigo (1958)** Walking in the street, wearing a grey suit.

30) **North by Northwest (1959)** During the opening credits, we see, Hitchcock missing the bus.

31) **Psycho (1960)** Through Janet Leigh and Patricia Hitchcock's office window as she (Janet Leigh) returns to work. He is wearing a cowboy hat.

32) **The Birds (1963)** Early in the film, as Tippi Hedren enters the pet shop, he is exiting with two white terriers.

33) **Marnie (1964)** Entering from the left of a hotel corridor, just after Tippi Hedren passes through.

34) **Torn Curtain (1966)** Sitting in the Hotel D'Algleterre lobby with a baby.

35) **Topaz (1969)** In an airport, being pushed in a wheelchair. Hitchcock gets up from the wheelchair, shakes hands with a man and walks off.

36) **Frenzy (1972)** Centre of attention once again…the centre of a crowd; the only one not applauding the speaker.

37) **Family Plot (1976)** Alfred Hitchcock's last cameo as well as his last film. Seen as a silhouette behind a plate of glass in a door in the registry of births and deaths.