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The MacGuffin

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EDITORIAL

In Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps** (1935), memories of the exotic foreign agent who calls herself 'Annabella Smith' (Lucie Mannheim) haunt hero Richard Hannay (Robert Donat) for the entire film, even after he meets the feisty Pamela (Madeleine Carroll). I was reminded of this by some notes on the film sent to me recently by Timothy Walters. Here's what Timothy says about the Lucie Mannheim character:

The beautiful Annabella Smith is the quintessence of the mysterious espionage figure. She is exotic, sensuous, and haunting. Hannay's abrupt meeting and brief interlude with her are surreal, almost dream-like. His initial disbelief of her fantastic story sets the precedent for Pamela's later skepticism towards him. Annabella's bizarre story, recited in a beguiling accent, draws Hannay into the eye of a deadly spy-storm. Her cryptic reference to the 39 Steps is highly intriguing and the viewer is left to ponder its meaning for the film's duration.

Speaking of 'pondering', you may like to consider - as I've just been doing - how far the above situation (so well described by Timothy) influenced the plot of Hitchcock's great **Vertigo** (1958). It seems to me that the two co-writers of the French novel on which **Vertigo** was based may well have had the earlier film in mind.

If so, that still leaves a surprising number of other influences on **Vertigo** - and it's these that are the subject of the main article in this 'MacGuffin'. They include some nineteenth-century literary works like 'The Lady of the Camellias', and several Hollywood films of the 1940s, especially films directed by German emigrés.

(Not mentioned in the article is an intriguing allusion to be found in the titles-sequence of **Vertigo**. There, the camera moves towards a woman's eye, at which point the screen turns red. Then the camera appears to enter the eye and we see a succession of nine revolving spirals. Finally, the camera exits the eye and again the screen turns red. It seems that we have been taken on a voyage recalling the nine circles of Dante's 'Inferno'. I leave it to the reader to decide the precise significance of this.)

Also featured in this 'MacGuffin' is an article on the recent film **The Piano**, directed by Jane Campion. Academic Freda Freiberg is well qualified to discuss Campion's work, having written about earlier Campion films in the important book she co-authored, 'Don't Shoot Darling!: Women's Independent Filmmaking in Australia' (1987).

Last but not least, I congratulate Adrian Martin (who wrote on **Notorious** in our last issue) for recently being declared joint-winner of the prestigious Byron Kennedy Award, made by the Australian Film Institute. Adrian was cited for his 15-year contribution to the Australian film industry as a critic and reviewer.

To everyone, good viewing.

LETTERS

Brian Magee, King's College, London University, England

It may interest you to know that for nearly 10 years I was the Member of Parliament for Leyton (which includes Leytonstone). Whenever I was asked who was the best-known person who'd ever come from my constituency my answer was always Alfred Hitchcock. (In his day it was in Essex, but now it's well and truly London.) I've seen most of his films, I think, and always enjoyed them.

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Jay Giswein, Highland Park, CA 90042, USA

I am a new subscriber to 'The MacGuffin' and have just received my first issue, no. 10. I am ~~extremely~~ satisfied and am interested in purchasing past issues (1-9), if available.

P.S. If you have any information on early (silent) Hitchcock videos, please let me know.

(Editor's note. The 1993 'Hitchcock Annual' mentions that **Easy Virtue**, made in 1927, is available from both Valencia Entertainment Corporation and Video Yesteryear, no addresses given. Presumably these are sources of outright-sale videos, as a separate item gives a rental-only source.)

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NEWS

(Readers are urged to send in reports and cuttings for this feature. Both general-interest and Hitchcock-specific items are sought.)

Losing the plot?

The dinosaurs in **Jurassic Park** were created using computer technology that didn't exist a year ago. Extras in **In the Line of Fire** were digitally multiplied by five in order to boost crowd scenes.

Filmmaking may thus be said to have advanced beyond the table-top and model work of the gifted Ray Harryhausen and George Pal of yesteryear, not to mention the ingenuity made necessary in Visconti's **Senso** (1953) where a scene in an opera house consisted of a painted crowd overlaid by bits of fluttering material to give the illusion of live-action.

Also, when director Michael Winner needed 'extras' to fill the grandstands in his Olympic Games movie, **The Games** (1969), he was forced to use cardboard cut-outs. And when Alfred Hitchcock wanted to show the stars of **Topaz** (1969) attending a Castro rally in Cuba, he had to resort to intercutting 16mm newsreel footage with studio close-ups. These days sophisticated digital-mattes could have done the job for him.

Still, there lurks a danger. Professor Mark Crispin Miller (author of a classic essay on Hitchcock's **Suspicion**) stands out as someone who has begun to worry that a quest for pure sensation is replacing the requirement to tell a good story. 'They're moving away from storytelling toward a kind of theme-park experience', he said recently.

'New' Hitchcocks

A new score for the silent version of Hitchcock's **Blackmail** (1929) premiered in both Paris and London earlier this year. Composer of the new score, Jonathan Lloyd, commented: 'Not the least of the charms of **Blackmail** is that it has no ending - nothing is resolved. Alice White's future exists in one's imagination, as does the music which accompanies it.'

'MacGuffin' readers in Australia can look forward to seeing - and hearing - **Blackmail** in a new 35mm print early in 1994, as part of a Hitchcock season to be mounted by the Australian Film Institute in conjunction with the British Film Institute. Hitchcock's English films of the 1930s will make up the bulk of the season, together with the first Australian screenings of the two short films he made in England in 1944 in support of the Free French movement: **Bon Voyage** and **Aventure Malgache**.

Another 'first' for Australian filmgoers will be the opportunity to see a screening of the 3-D print of Hitchcock's **Dial M for Murder** (1954). In Melbourne, a season of the film starts on December 31, at the Valhalla Cinema.

Publications

The 1993 'Hitchcock Annual' is out, and contains articles on **Rear Window**, **Shadow of a Doubt**, and **Vertigo**, as well as book reviews. Also, a highlight of this issue is a shot-by-shot transcription of **Easy Virtue**, the first in a series of such transcriptions. Cost in US dollars is \$7 for individuals (\$12 for two years), \$10 for institutions (\$17 for two years). Send to: 'Hitchcock Annual'. P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022, USA.

The list of new or recent books on Hitchcock is headed by the superb 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (Scarecrow Press) by Theodore Price, which will be reviewed at length in the next 'MacGuffin'. Another hardback book now available is 'Alfred Hitchcock: A Guide to References and Resources' (G.K. Hall & Co.) by Jane E. Sloan. Its 600 pages include entries on every Hitchcock film, together with an annotated bibliography of writings by and about Hitchcock - the latter section alone runs to nearly 200 pages.

The British Film Institute continues to publish monographs in the BFI Classics series. 'Blackmail' by Tom Ryall is reviewed in this 'MacGuffin'. The publication of 'Vertigo' has been delayed: in a letter, Tim Hunter tells us that he's had to relinquish authorship because of family and business pressures. (Which is a pity as Tim mentions that he's seen **Vertigo** 'around 50 times and many of Hitchcock's films almost that many'.) Another monograph in the series is 'L'Atalante' by novelist Marina Warner, whose study of Jean Vigo's 1934 masterpiece is said to be 'brilliant ... a major contribution to the literature of film'.

Scott Murray, editor of 'Cinema Papers', has edited two new books on the Australian film industry. One is called 'Australian Cinema', and consists of programme notes for an Australian film retrospective shown in Paris in 1992. The other is 'Australian Film, 1978-1992: A Survey of Theatrical Features', whose contributors include Dr Brian McFarlane and Adrian Martin.

And the Australian Film Institute has launched a regular series of 'Moving Image' publications, starting with 'Sites of Difference: Cinematic Representation of Aboriginality and Gender' by Karen Jennings. Most of these books are available from the Electric Shadows Bookshop, Canberra City, ACT 2601. Ph. 06-248 8352. Fax 06-247 8924.

No duel in this jewel

The ending Hitchcock wanted for **Topaz** (1969) was a pistol-duel at dawn between hero and villain in a Paris soccer stadium. He conducted extensive research and established that clandestine duels still took place; moreover, he went to great trouble to find the exact protocol used (no mere 'take ten paces, turn, and fire') before he eventually shot and re-shot parts of the scene up to three times. Its ironic point consisted of the fact that an unknown third party, no doubt politically motivated, suddenly pre-empted matters by shooting one of the duellists from the grandstand. There were clear thematic parallels with some of Hitchcock's earlier work, notably the portrayal of the CIA in **North by Northwest** (1959). Yet when the film came out, the duel-scene was missing.

Australian director Richard Franklin (**Psycho II**, **Road Games**) knows why. As he recently wrote in an article for 'Cinema Papers' (October 1993), a single preview in San Francisco went badly and the producers forced Hitchcock to remove the scene. Years afterwards, Franklin helped locate the missing footage - officially destroyed - in Hitchcock's garage. It has now been included on the laser-disk of the film.

Making 'AI'

Stanley Kubrick seems to have changed his mind about his next project. He is now working on a science-fiction movie about robots in New Jersey.

It concerns artificial intelligence, and will therefore be called **AI**. The setting is a future where intelligent robots have a range of capacities, and the greenhouse effect has melted the ice caps leaving many major cities under water.

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BOOKS REVIEW

Ryall, Tom: 'Blackmail' (British Film Institute, London, 1993; pb, 64 pp.);

Sterritt, David: 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, Oakleigh, 1993; pb, 165 pp.).

If both these books are somewhat disappointing, there's this compensation: at times, each serves as a corrective to the other. For instance, when David Sterritt makes one of his typically ambitious claims, to the effect that Tracy, the eponymous blackmailer of Hitchcock's 1929 film, personifies 'the lurking chaos of the city and of spontaneous adult life in general' (p. 35), the more earthbound Tom Ryall can quote you documentarist John Grierson (writing in the '30s) on how Hitchcock is 'the only English director who can put the English poor on the screen with any verisimilitude' (p. 40).

Blackmail was made for British International Pictures in both a sound- and a silent-version. In its sound-version, it received its first UK trade-show screening on 21 June, 1929. Mark that date. Hitchcock's film is often said to be the first British talkie, yet Ryall twice refers (pp. 9, 17) to a sound-feature, **The Clue of the New Pin**, made for British Lion and released in March, 1929. Moreover, the latter film's distributor claimed that **it** was the first British 'All-Talkie' (p. 17). Ryall, though, simply leaves the matter hanging.

That's bad enough, but Ryall doesn't seem to have even tried to find out about the other film. For the record, I can tell him that it was based on an Edgar Wallace novel and featured Donald Calthrop, the very actor who plays Tracy in **Blackmail**. It also had a 25-year-old John Gielgud in a bit-part.

Nor does Ryall clear up a related matter for me. Another film from British Lion, and again one based on Edgar Wallace, was made at about the same time as **Clue**. This was **The Flying Squad** (with a young Carol Reed in a bit-part). In view of Hitchcock's emphasis in the first reel of **Blackmail** on the work of the flying squad (London's motorised police), as well as a dialogue-reference to Edgar Wallace, was he even then showing his masterful bent and trying to out-shine the rival studio in more ways than simply being first with an all-talking picture?

Again, Ryall notes that Hitchcock's film was based on a stage play by Charles Bennett which had opened in the West End in 1928 (p. 21). Entries in the Bibliography show that a novelisation of the play was published in 1929, and that the play itself ('in Three Acts') was published in 1934. Yet Ryall makes no attempt to compare play (or novelisation) and film in order to demonstrate what use Hitchcock made of his source.

Frankly, this little book is unimaginative in many ways. To the rich and intriguing text - and texture - of the film (which 'The MacGuffin' hopes to feature one day soon), it is generally unresponsive. Typical here is its failure to say anything new about the portrait of an accusing jester, which keeps returning. By the end of the film, that ambiguous image has become virtually the forerunner of the nun in the bell-tower at the end of **Vertigo** (1958): a sardonic commentary on the film's events, employing an official 'outsider' (jester in uniform, nun in black garb), yet also a virtual instigator of those events, being itself an image of the mortal (and less than pretty) human condition. One of the few 'pluses' about this book is its

inclusion of several large and sharp frame-stills, and one of those (p. 45) is of the portrait. Studying it, you notice that the figure in jester's costume is that of an aging man whose derisive mouth has most of its teeth missing ...

Such an 'expressionist' figure would seem to be in keeping with David Sterritt's broad view of Tracy the blackmailer as epitomising 'the lurking chaos of the city'. Certainly he is 'lurking'. I think it is Sterritt's other view of him, as representing 'spontaneous adult life in general' that I find inaccurate. Not only is Tracy **not** spontaneous (what blackmailer is?), but he is too much a figure of the working-class, or lower middle-class, to stand for 'adult life in general'. Presumably Sterritt was thinking of the scene where Tracy visits Alice (Anny Ondra) and her detective boyfriend (John Longden), and puts on a show of power (with a symbolic cigar) in order to drive home his extortion. But that 'show' is only improvised within strict limits, and seems not to be particularly representative. Unfortunately, I find much else in Sterritt's book that is likewise not thought through by him.

On the other hand, his description of the British Museum climax of **Blackmail** is superior to Ryall's. I particularly liked a passage (p. 46) which concludes:

Hitchcock films the museum as if it were a surrogate church, with a sense of awe and timelessness; the fountain scene suggests holy water and Tracy's desperate need for salvation. It is very like Hitchcock to find a sense of larger-than-life, almost superhuman power in an architecturally impressive setting that is nonetheless wholly secular in nature.

Sterritt's book deals with six Hitchcock films: **Blackmail**, **Shadow of a Doubt**, **The Wrong Man**, **Vertigo**, **Psycho**, and **The Birds**. His chapter on **Psycho** (1960) is probably the best, and it concentrates on the film's running-gag concerning money and 'anal-compulsive' behaviour. In particular, Sterritt notes the characters' attachment to what they've 'made', beginning with Cassidy's pleasure in 'dumping out' \$40,000 for the women in Lowery's office to admire, and how even after the car with the wad of money in its boot has bottomed in a faecal swamp, Norman retains his own 'illicit bundle' - his mother's corpse. 'The movie's symbolic order', we're told, 'remains entirely intact, its first energizing object impressively exchanged for one far larger, smellier, and more forbidden.' (p. 110)

My sole criticism of this is that it doesn't see the pertinence of Hitchcock's joke. Sterritt should have read Norman O. Brown's 'Life Against Death' (1959) - incidentally, very Hitchcockian names in themselves - and especially Chapter XV called 'Filthy Lucre', which spells out beautifully our society's unconscious equation of faeces with child, gift, property, and even weapon; and why any 'puritanical' desire to transcend the body (such as I think Marion Crane shows in Hitchcock's film) ironically posits that body's continued status as excrement.

K.M.

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Keynotes: Jane Campion's 'The Piano'

Jane Campion, writer and director of **The Piano**, was born and raised in New Zealand but, after completing courses in anthropology and art, studied film direction at the Australian Film Television and Radio School in Sydney, where she has lived ever since. Local film critics, as well as judges of international film festivals, quickly recognised the arrival of a distinctive new talent in her early short films, **Peel** (1982) and **A Girl's Own Story** (1983), which were acclaimed for their quirky wit and their strikingly surreal visual style, as was her first feature, **Sweetie** (1989). Feminist critics celebrated her contribution to the volume and variety of independent women's filmmaking in Australia; they also welcomed her acute analysis of the destructive dynamics of the nuclear family and what it means to grow up female within it.

The Piano is a more palatable and polished film than **Sweetie**, which was rough and grating and unnerving. Its wide panoramic landscapes, romantic musical score, lavish period costumes and star performances locate it in the genre of glossy romantic melodramas with exotic period settings, alongside films like **Ryan's Daughter** and **Out of Africa**. The story is a familiar one: prim, proud Victorian lady defies convention, and

deserts her legal husband when she experiences sexual passion in the arms of a man who has 'gone native'. In synopsis, it sounds like a Lawrentian hymn to sexual liberation. If this were the case, it would not have such a strong appeal to contemporary women, nor frustrate male viewers, as critical and audience reactions have indicated. This is definitely a woman's film, one that celebrates feminine culture, life without men, as much as sexual passion shared between a man and a woman. If you are in any doubt about this point, you need only look at the film's troubling epilogue, where the union of the romantic couple is shown to be accompanied by a deep sense of loss, on the part of the woman, as well as impairment of her creative faculties.

Swept up in sexual passion, she has abandoned her mute isolation, her dyadic relationship with her daughter, and her symbiotic relationship with her piano. But is it a victory, or a tragedy? She can now enter the social realm of language, but she utters only croaky sounds. No longer can she create beautiful music, nor conjure up fairytales with her fingertips.

Hands and fingers are central motifs of this film, which gives as much emphasis to the sense of touch as it does to sight and hearing. Ada caresses the keys of the piano with her fingers; she and her daughter speak to each other with their fingers; she is aroused by the touch of the man's hand; she reprimands him with a slap of her hand; she comforts her husband with gentle hands. Traditionally, women's work and women's culture (needlework, kitchenwork, childcare, letter-writing, playing musical instruments) have been associated with the skill of their hands and the dexterity of their fingers. It is also common belief that women are sexually aroused by touch, in contrast to men, who (like Stewart in the film) are turned on by voyeurism.

The key visual symbols of the film are the piano and the axe. The piano is the mute Ada's chief means of expression, expressing her longings, her unease and her fears. It is her voice, her therapy, her addiction, her self. The axe hovers over the film: it cuts down the forest, fences the land stolen from the Maoris, features in the Bluebeard shadow-play in the church hall, and is ultimately wielded on the woman's body, when the husband's patience is exhausted. It is the masculine weapon, as against the feminine instrument. The key of the piano is a love letter, which is answered by a blow from the axe. But, feminine mettle finally melts masculine metal.

The visual style of the film is more classical, closer to **An Angel at My Table** (1990) than **Sweetie**, but there are surrealist touches and striking stylistic flourishes that recall Campion's early works, as well as the work of other film artists. Like Polanski's wardrobe (in his short, **Two Men and a Wardrobe**), the piano emerges from the sea and returns to the sea, surreally if not absurdly. The graphic matches of mother and daughter in identical bonnets and frocks have the fearful symmetry of an Ozu frame. The track-ins to Ada's hoop and bun have an hallucinatory effect not unlike that produced by Saul Bass's credits for **Vertigo** and **The Age of Innocence**; like Bass's eyes and flowers, the object is both pure pattern, the perfect spiral, and a vortex of emotions - charged with eroticism and danger.

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BLOOPERS

First, apologies to Adrian Martin. A misplaced quotation-mark near the foot of p. 17 last issue made it seem that Raymond Durnat had described **Vertigo** as a 'melodrama of an unknown woman woven into a mystery plot', when it was Adrian! The second quotation-mark should have followed 'woman'. (The correctly-quoted phrase, 'melodrama of an unknown woman', itself comes from Stanley Cavell, of course.)

Even the 'Bloopers' section last time (pp. 13-14) had its own gremlins. It seems that Slavoj Zizek's 'Enjoy Your Symptom!: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out' (Routledge, 1992) really is distinct from his 'Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture' (MIT Press, 1992). Our information-source this time is the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', p. 145.

And of course Raffles in the popular stories by E.W. Hornung (1866-1921) is a gentleman-thief, certainly not a detective as we indicated.

Likewise, the Editorial last time was wrong to say that John Buchan wrote travel books as well as novels. The phrase 'travel books' should read 'historical biographies' (of which the best-known is probably the one on Oliver Cromwell).

When is a kiss really a necking-scene? Depending on your definition, it seems that we may have been wrong in claiming (p. 3) that Hitchcock's **Notorious** holds the record for the longest screen-kiss. Leonard Maltin ('Movie and Video Guide 1993') prefers to award that accolade to Lewis Seiler's **You're in the Army Now** (1941) for its 3 minute, 5 second kiss between Regis Toomey and Jane Wyman.

Finally, back in 'MacGuffin' 5, on p. 17, we called actor Edmund Gwenn a Cockney. David Thomson's 'A Biographical Dictionary of Film' says that Gwenn was born in Glamorgan, Wales, but this is contradicted by the biographical note on the actor in 'The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers'. There, it says he was born in London, England, on 26 September 1875, and notes that he was the brother of the actor Arthur Chesney. (Yet the actual text of the entry still calls Gwenn 'Welsh-born'!)

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The Fragments of the Mirror: 'Vertigo' (1958) and its Sources

(a) Prologue

In Hitchcock's **To Catch a Thief** (1955), ex-cat-burglar John Robie (Cary Grant) has returned to his hotel room from a tryst with Francie Stevens (Grace Kelly) in which the two of them had dined in her mother's suite and watched, through the window, a display of fireworks above the bay. Suddenly Francie invades John's room with an anguished demand that he 'give them back - Mother's jewels!' This incident isn't to be found in David Dodge's novel (1953) on which the film is based. Rather, it may recall a much earlier, and famous, episode in literature: the central incident of William Wilkie Collins's great mystery-story about a jewel, 'The Moonstone' (1868). Of the latter, scholar Anthea Trodd writes: 'the novel owes its career in the psychoanalytic journals to the fact that its central episode takes place at midnight in the heroine's bedroom when her tacit acquiescence in the theft of her valuable becomes hysterical reaction by morning'.¹

As we'll see, there are other cases of Collins's (direct or indirect) influence on Hitchcock. But here's a rather different kind of 'borrowing' by the director. Stephen Rebello has shown that when Hitchcock was planning **Psycho** (1960) he looked again at Henri-Georges Clouzot's **Les Diaboliques/The Fiends** (1954), which was based on the novel by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Hitchcock particularly noted aspects of the French film's publicity campaign, as well as its use of 'moody, dirty-dishes-in-the-sink black and white'.² In addition, he probably enjoyed seeing again on screen the actor Charles Vanel who in **Les Diaboliques** plays the snooping Inspector Fichet and in **To Catch a Thief** the edgy restaurateur Bertani. We'll see that Vanel (1892-1979) seems to have been something of a specialist at appearing in plots based on a 'big lie'. **Les Diaboliques** is certainly that, as it involves characters conspiring to stage an elaborate hoax version of the truth in order to try and frighten their victim to death.

Such plots found their way into some Hollywood movies, and Humphrey Bogart appeared in at least two of them. In Curtis Bernhardt's **Conflict** (1945) he plays a wife-murderer whom psychiatrist Sydney Greenstreet tries to scare into a confession by making it seem that the wife is still alive. At one point, Bogart visits a pawnshop and sees what looks like his wife's recent handwriting in the ledger. He leaves to fetch a police detective. When the two men return, a different pawnbroker awaits them. This man denies all knowledge of a colleague or an assistant. Moreover, the line in the ledger now bears someone else's signature. Here of course there are echoes of Hitchcock's **The Lady Vanishes** (1938) yet also an anticipation of - perhaps a direct influence on - the scene in **North by Northwest** (1959) in which Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) returns with the police to his abductor's house where all evidence of what happened the night before has been erased or altered. We'll see that **Conflict** certainly influenced a key moment in **Vertigo**.

But another influence on the scene in **North by Northwest** (and the one in **Conflict**) is possible, and indeed likely. Vincent Sherman's **All Through the Night** (1942) depicts Bogart as a good-at-heart racketeer who helps to smash a gang of Nazi fifth-columnists who use a New York antique-auction business as their cover. After Bogart is kidnapped by the gang, he manages to escape and return with the police - only to find a

surly, know-nothing attendant minding the tidied-up premises. The attendant denies everything, naturally. Now, the influence of **All Through the Night on North by Northwest** is made especially likely by the fact that another of the scenes in Sherman's film looks like the forerunner of Hitchcock's famous auction-gallery episode. Needing an excuse to enter the gang's storeroom next to the auction room, Bogart hits on the ruse of making an unusually high (and therefore unbeatable) bid for an old desk - to the consternation of the auctioneer (Conrad Veidt) and his sinister offsidiers (Judith Anderson, Peter Lorre) who see what he is up to.

Of course, Thornhill in **North by Northwest** makes crazier bids, for in his case his intention is to force the gallery staff to call the police. Another 1942 film may have inspired this aspect of Hitchcock's auction-gallery scene. Sidney Lanfield's **My Favourite Blonde** is actually something of a spoof of Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps** (1935), and it casts Madeleine Carroll alongside Bob Hope to help make its point. In an amusing escapade, Hope and Carroll find themselves holed-up in a hotel room by foreign agents who have staked out the building. Desperate, the pair pretend to be a feuding husband and wife (as in Hitchcock's recently-released **Mr and Mrs Smith**) and start to wreck everything in sight. Soon the hotel management arrives with the law ...

So it looks as though Hitchcock, somewhere along the line, saw how he might amalgamate these two scenes from different films in order to get a maximum comic effect. That he kept a file of just such ideas was revealed in a press-release for **Tom Curtain** in 1966. Most of Hitchcock's films, said the release, 'begin in pigeonholes where he stores sudden thoughts and ideas'. The release quoted Hitchcock as saying that his file contained 'several score' ideas for films. But Hitchcock then added: 'The volume is the least important aspect of all. Only quality counts in that file.'

I've cited Curtis Bernhardt as a director who may have influenced Hitchcock, i.e. whose film **Conflict** contains at least one scene which arguably turns up later in Hitch's work. Bernhardt (1899-1981) was a German who came to Hollywood after working in Great Britain and France; what's also to our purpose is that **Conflict** was based on a story by two authors at least one of whom had his own roots in Germany - the American-born Robert Siodmak (1900-1973). Siodmak's career has definite involvement with Hitchcock's: for a time in the 1940s both men even shared the same producer, Joan Harrison. Moreover, like Bernhardt, Siodmak had worked in both Germany and France, before he returned to America in 1937. Siodmak's **The File on Thelma Jordan** (1949) stars Barbara Stanwyck and Wendell Corey. Not only does its noirish plot combine elements of Billy Wilder's **Double Indemnity** (1944) with aspects of Hitchcock's **The Paradine Case** (1947), but it contains a key moment in which the two principals, hitherto separated in the frame, back together behind a barred gate - thereby providing an image of complicity which Hitchcock almost certainly noted and then used with telling effect in **Strangers on a Train** (1951).³

And there's one more German expatriate who belongs in this article. I'm thinking of William Dieterle (1893-1972) whose career, initially as an actor, had already begun when Hitchcock worked for a year in Germany in 1925. Coming to Hollywood at the start of the sound era, Dieterle soon confirmed his already high reputation as a director. By the time he made **The Life of Emile Zola** (1937), he had shown himself to be 'at his best, an incomparable master of crowd scenes and pictorial composition'.⁴ In that film, an 'umbrella' motif is artfully used. It culminates in the spectacle of a vast sea of umbrellas belonging to an angry mob waiting in the rain outside the Palais de Justice where Zola (Paul Muni) is on trial. Most of the shouts heard are against Zola and for the Army; when a pro-Zola voice is raised, its owner is promptly set upon by the other 'umbrellas' nearby.⁵ This intriguing scene would be echoed three years later by the episode in Hitchcock's **Foreign Correspondent** involving the assassination of a diplomat on the rain-swept steps of the Amsterdam town hall and the gunman's escape across a square full of bobbing brollies.

(b) What Freud can tell us about 'Vertigo'

Without question, much of what Freud wrote is illuminating of Hitchcock's films. For instance, there's Freud's ambivalent attitude towards the Nirvana principle and its relation to the broader death instinct - in effect, towards pleasure versus annihilation. See, in particular, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924). That essay may be the best place to start if you want to grasp why in **Vertigo** even nuns are figures of both life and death.

But I want to concentrate here mainly on how psychoanalysis may explain the actual narrative, or plot, of *Vertigo*, and therefore I'll focus on just two of Freud's works.

(i) Art lecturer Victor Burgin⁶ sees similarities between the kind of male desire described in Freud's essay 'A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men' (1910) and the pattern of behaviour shown by 'Scottie' (James Stewart) in Hitchcock's film. The particular love-object desired by the man in Freud's syndrome is invariably a woman already attached to some other man - husband, fiancé, or friend: in Scottie's case, he falls in love with 'Madeleine' (Kim Novak), the wife of his old college chum, Gavin Elster (Tom Helmore). Next, the woman in Freud's syndrome is understood by the man to be of bad repute sexually: Madeleine seems fixated on her forebear, Carlotta, whose illicit love affair and illegitimate child brought her to a tragic end. Further, the type of man described by Freud is invariably moved to 'rescue' the woman, and prominent among such rescue fantasies is rescue from water: Scottie rescues Madeleine from San Francisco Bay. Lastly, Freud notes how the life of such a man may show a repetition of these attachments, each woman being 'an exact replica of the other': so, just as Madeleine models herself on Carlotta's portrait, Judy (Kim Novak), with whom Scottie next falls in love, appears to be a literal reincarnation of Madeleine whom he sets about 'remaking' into a replica of her predecessors.

Behind this pattern of repetition Freud discerns (in Burgin's words) 'a primary scenario of male Oedipal desire for the mother ... already attached to the father, her sexual relations with whom bring her into ill repute in the eyes of the little rival for her love'. Applied to *Vertigo*, this interpretation supports Robin Wood's description of the film as a search for 'the lost breast': see his 1983 article 'Fear of Spying'.⁷ There, Wood even seeks to explain why the film's avowed 'motherly' character called 'Midge' (Barbara Bel Geddes) **can't** represent Scottie's ideal. But clearly there's now an extra reason, i.e. Midge's **lack** of attachment to another man, of any suggestion of ill repute, of any need for being rescued ...

Freud has more to say on that last matter. The man's fantasy of rescue from water conflates 'rescue' with 'birth'. Just as he was, at birth, 'fished from the waters' and given life, so would he now return that gift to his 'mother'. Tragically, though, the adult man's succession of attachments to mother-figures is bound to be endless because such surrogates can never match the unique original. (Here you may think of Hitchcock's 1926 film, *The Lodger*, where the Ivor Novello character is attracted to a succession of look-alikes of his dead sister - whose murder at her coming-out ball significantly had coincided with the incipient death of the mother. See 'MacGuffin' 3.)

(ii) Of even greater pertinence to *Vertigo* (and Hitchcock criticism, as Peter Wollen once suggested)⁸ is another of Freud's essays, the brilliant 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' (1907). In it, Freud analyses the 1903 novella by North German playwright and novelist Wilhelm Jensen (1837-1911), a work described by Jensen himself as a 'Pompeian phantasy'. Here's a synopsis of the novella taken from an article written for the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual' by Donald O. Chankin:⁹

[It] deals with the fantasies created by a young archaeologist, Norbert Hanold, around an ancient bas relief of a young woman with an exotic gait. Hanold names the sculpture, of which he (like Freud) owns a model, the 'Gradiva, the girl splendid in walking.' Hanold elaborates the fantasy, which finds its way into a dream, that the original model for the Gradiva dies in Pompeii when Vesuvius erupts in 79 A.D. He travels to Pompeii where, to escape from the honeymoon couples expressing their love among the ruins, he visits the excavations in the midday heat only to see the Gradiva walking in her unique way. Hanold addresses her in Greek and Latin but fails to get a response until he tries German. He persists in the idea that she is the ghost of a woman who died eighteen hundred years previously even after conversing with her. The flesh and blood woman, Zoë, realizing well before he does that they were in fact childhood sweethearts, plays along with Hanold's fantasies as a means both of curing him of his delusion and of gaining - or regaining - his love. She earns her name (Zoë means life in Greek) by gently leading him to understand his 'psychic condition which is called a dream that transported [her] into the time of the destruction of Pompeii.' After succeeding in lifting his repression of their earlier love she ruefully comments: 'To think that a person must first die to become alive; but for the archaeologist that is necessary, I suppose.'

Commenting, Professor Chankin says that Jensen furnishes 'some of Freud's favourite motifs' - e.g. 'psychotherapy as the process of lifting repression' - and notes that in **Vertigo** Scottie 'destroys his re-creation rather than acknowledging her as does Hanold'. Chankin doesn't suggest reasons for Scottie's perversity. But of course we've already noted one such reason - that Scottie is pursuing an unrealisable mother-ideal - and we'll encounter a more philosophical explanation shortly. Meanwhile, let's see what else Freud has to say about a male fantasy of finding and rescuing the beloved object.

Actually, it's important to note that Hanold in 'Gradiva' for a time prefers his fantasy to the reality. The real Gradiva/Zoe is a neighbour whose existence he has long ago 'forgotten'. As Freud shows, Hanold actually goes to Italy in order to escape that reality. Moreover, after he discovers the bas-relief in a museum in Rome, he's happy to elaborate his fantasy so long as it seems to fit his professional interest as an archaeologist - but he's more than a little disconcerted when the real Gradiva/Zoe materialises. And not just because a dream isn't supposed to turn real. There's an Oedipal conflict going on in Hanold, although ironically Freud never refers to it as such. The real Gradiva/Zoe lives with her father, an eminent Professor of Zoology, over the way from Hanold in a university town in Germany. Hanold seems to have been covered by the proximity of such an eminent man and his daughter. As children, he and Zoe had played together, but the time soon came when he had felt the need to put aside childish things, and he had abandoned his playmate. At the same time, Zoe's work-preoccupied father had tended to ignore her as well - a man's prerogative, no doubt.

Much of this reminded me of **Notorious** (1946) as well as **Vertigo**. (But in terms of fantasies about rescuing the woman, the earlier film differs significantly from the later one: during much of **Notorious**, the Cary Grant character must look on while his rival, Claude Rains, does the rescuing; whereas in **Vertigo** Scottie is allowed to rescue Madeleine quite early - before watching helplessly when he loses her again.) I shan't pursue the parallels, though, and I'll merely note how in both 'Gradiva' and in the Hitchcock films a trip to an exotic locale, or a re-discovery of it (as with Scottie and Madeleine), seems needed to set the revivification process going. Freud comments that Pompeii provides an apt symbol for both repression and for the excavation of buried memories. Similarly, San Francisco with its colourful history part-destroyed by earthquake and fire and by the fog of memory provides the perfect locale for **Vertigo**. Note that when Scottie and Madeleine/Judy visit San Juan Bautista and Muir Woods, these places are in a sense just extensions of the 'mystery' associated with the city.

Freud's essay on 'Gradiva' throws light into many of **Vertigo**'s corners - and not just its literal ones. For instance, concerning an Oedipal syndrome, we may sense how Gavin Elster's relation to Madeleine/Judy appears to Scottie to be that of a (fairly amenable) father/guardian as well as that of a husband/lover. Further to the point, these relations are conflatable in Scottie's eyes, offering like instances of the man asserting ownership of the woman - with the inference for Scottie that he, too, should 'possess' a woman if he is to be anything more than a 'big boy' (as Midge calls him).

Next, notice from the synopsis of the novella how Gradiva/Zoe is first associated in Hanold's fantasies with classical objects (e.g. the bas-relief itself) and a likely knowledge of Greek and Latin. In the first of two dreams, Hanold sees her in the portico of the temple of Apollo; later, in the real Pompeii, strolling 'aimlessly through the town' at 'the hour of ghosts', he sees her crossing the street with her distinctive gait, stepping from one stone to another - but then she seems to disappear, until, after some anxious searching, he finds her again, 'between two yellow columns'. Clearly, much of this anticipates Scottie's idealisation of Madeleine in the first half of **Vertigo**. (You may even be reminded of Madeleine's saying that she had once fallen into a river, 'trying to leap from one stone to the next'.) Freud explains the situation as signalling how Hanold has repressed his sexual feelings. Zoe/Gradiva is kept at a distance, put on a pedestal. But now a turning-point is reached. Hanold rests his hand on the woman's, ostensibly to test her corporeal reality yet clearly with an underlying erotic motive. You think of how in **Vertigo**, sitting before the fire in his apartment, Scottie puts his hand on Madeleine's, seemingly by accident as he reaches for her coffee-cup ...

Importantly, Freud speaks of how Gradiva/Zoe shows a 'peculiar oscillation between death and life'. I think something similar occurs in **Vertigo**, where **everything** reflects such a dualism. For instance, is Muir Woods with its Sequoias ('always green, ever-living') a place of life or is it (being dark and overwhelming) a place of death? Is even the busy city of San Francisco truly living, or is it just a place

of death-in-life? (Its people seem to move as if underwater.) In characterising Gradiva/Zoe as oscillating between death and life, Freud implies that this is how Hanold, who himself oscillates between repression and its opposite, sees her. In turn, such a situation raises a host of further questions.

Now, as I understand it, even if we could all be as unrepressed as Nietzsche's Superman (and Nietzsche was a major influence on Freud), we would remain bound in subjectivity, a condition which Nietzsche's predecessor Schopenhauer called the **principium individuationis**. Moreover, given that the forever 'joyful' Superman 'does not want heirs, or children' but 'wants everything eternally the same',¹⁰ even he would seem to be, in a sense, both anti-life and anti-art. Discussing this matter in 'MacGuffin' 7, I said that 'Schopenhauer, Freud and Hitchcock, pessimists all, are united in doubting the **feasibility** of the Superman solution'. I think that's a fairly accurate statement.

So why, exactly, do both 'Gradiva' and **Vertigo** show ambivalence? Why, for example, does the author of 'Gradiva' give Zoe her classical (Greek) name which means 'life'? Isn't that a contradiction? Here, for all the brilliance of Freud's essay, he isn't particularly helpful. Frankly, the essay is too simply 'Freudian'. In stressing the 'therapeutic' and 'dream-analysis' aspects of Hanold's case, Freud on this occasion¹¹ forgets the lesson of Schopenhauer that life itself is a mixed blessing (although it's all we've got) and that the life-force ('Will') is 'blind', being destructive or harshly indifferent as well as vitalising and procreative. (As we're about to see, Edgar Allan Poe expressed 'a wish to get out of the world'. Was this **just** a neurotic impulse?) Moreover, when faced with a remark like Zoe's to Hanold near the end of the novella, 'I feel as though we had shared a meal like this before, two thousand years ago', Freud explains it as merely Zoe's convenient way of urging Hanold to remember his childhood. Any more 'archetypal' resonance is allowed to go unremarked.

Yet if I had to say briefly why Hitchcock's **Vertigo** is a better work than his earlier **Spellbound** (1945), I think my point would be that **Vertigo** does **not** limit itself to the merely Freudian, and **does** take account of more suggestive patterns and resonances.

(c) Some literary sources for 'Vertigo'

Here I want to treat, quite briefly, works by five authors of differing nationalities and reputations. Those authors are: Edgar Allan Poe, Alexandre Dumas **films**, William Wilkie Collins, Thomas Mann, and Robert Nathan.

(i) Of all authors, Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49) fascinated the young Hitchcock 'most of all', as Donald Spoto says.¹² Hitchcock later wrote that he had felt 'an enormous pity' for Poe's life which 'had never been happy'. Further, Hitchcock suggested that it was because he had been so taken with Poe's stories that he afterwards felt the challenge of making suspense pictures. Now, literary scholar Karl Miller ('Doubles')¹³ has some illuminating things to say on Poe which, I suggest, are relevant to Hitchcock's films, especially **Vertigo**. For instance, Miller notes that several of Poe's stories express 'a wish to get out of the world', citing as examples 'William Wilson' and 'The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall'. It's an observation which applies equally to Scottie, a part of whom clearly wishes to be, in a sense, upwardly mobile. If he could, he would even escape the spiral of history itself. (In this connection, I also think of how Schopenhauer praised Immanuel Kant for showing that we can't get out of the world 'by horizontal movement, but that by perpendicular movement it is perhaps not impossible to do so'.¹⁴ I'll come back to this.)

However, Miller adds that there was a more cautious, stay-at-home side to Poe:

But romance is variance, as well as velocity and vertigo, and the soaring self vies with a self that stays, knowing that flights may fail.

What Poe wanted, says Miller, was to escape life's 'enigmas' but not to go too far away, 'to depart, yet live' (the quoted words are Hans Pfaall's). Accordingly, Poe once told a woman friend that he'd like to live in a cottage 'not **too** far secluded from the world'. In turn, Poe's own journeys are said to

embody the search for a mother, and an effort to regain the mother he had lost, and his 'depart, yet live' may be matched with the tension in his writings between an impulse to guard against the horrors of premature burial and an impulse to be interred with the maternal remains. No one has given such point to the traditional joke about the romantic rhyme of 'womb' and 'tomb'.

The single tale of Poe's most relevant to **Vertigo** is of course 'Ligeia' - where, though, contra Hitchcock's film, the lost love, Ligeia, is the dark-haired one, and the woman who comes to embody her is a blonde, Lady Rowena. Nevertheless, it's clear that Ligeia is one of Poe's 'tyrant mothers', as Camille Paglia calls her: 'The [male] narrator of **Ligeia** is a "child" beneath the tutelage and "infinite supremacy" of the heroine'.¹⁵ The narrator describes her as having 'the beauty of beings either above or apart from the earth', and as a woman of 'immense' learning. Here you may think of how Scottie's worshipful pursuit of Madeleine in **Vertigo** accrues ever-richer associations of religion, art, and Romantic (almost Platonic) ideals. As for Madeleine's blonde, i.e. non-dark, hair, it's one more of the ambiguous or conflicting details which the Catholic Hitchcock brought to the character: as noted in 'MacGuffin' 3, Madeleine's very name can connote both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene.

Some of the above is noted in Professor Chankin's article on **Vertigo**, which I've mentioned already in connection with Freud's essay on 'Gradiva'. But once again the professor seems to me to make too little of issues brought into focus by the parallel(ed) texts. For instance, here's Chankin: 'Ligeia's notion that man yields to death only through an infirmity of the will, however appealing, is still the scaffolding for a ghost story.' Indeed it is. But the 'notion' mentioned here is actually that of the English theologian Joseph Glanvill (1636-80), author of 'Lux Orientalis' ('The Light of the East'), who, a century and a half before Schopenhauer, wrote the following passage quoted three times in Poe's tale:

And the will ... dieth not. Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? For God is but a great will pervading all things by nature of its intentness. Man doeth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will.

Ligeia dies with that last sentence on her lips. But now notice (which Chankin doesn't mention) that the sentence before it says that God and 'will' are one and the same. (Schopenhauer wouldn't use the word 'God', yet Will is certainly the key to his universe.) In turn, notice how the following crucial passage from Poe's tale gives us the narrator's train of association even as it eerily anticipates Scottie's view of Madeleine:

An **intensity** in thought, action, or speech was possibly, in her, a result, or at least an index, of that gigantic volition which, during our long intercourse, failed to give other and more immediate evidence of its existence. Of all the women whom I have ever known, she, the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion I could form no estimate, save by the miraculous expansion of those eyes ...

The links to **Vertigo** are several: for example, you think immediately of the film's credits-sequence and the woman's darting eyes. Most crucially, though, what connects the heroines of the two works is how they are seen by the respective men (Poe's narrator, Scottie) to embody the long-sought key to escaping, or explaining, life's cruel enigmas - though still themselves subject to that cruelty. Mother-figures they may be, but also, by that very fact, possessed by a harsh male God, or force. Some commentators see the end of Poe's tale as signifying the woman's actually being, or becoming, God: Ligeia reappears in the flesh and lineaments of the second wife's corpse. But is the intensity of 'will' manifested here really that of Ligeia herself? Or of the narrator? Or of some other agency? As for the ending of Hitchcock's film, I find it even more compatible, if anything, with the understanding shared by Glanvill and by Schopenhauer, that 'God' or 'Will' is impersonal, and ultimately not a matter of deliberate human volition at all. What Glanvill's Orient, and Schopenhauer, call Nirvana represents a **yielding**, even unto death, of the individual will to the world's Will; and it's apt that Scottie's inability to abandon his self-interest finally leaves him more desolate than ever. (I'm speaking in terms of allegory here, obviously. Madeleine/Judy's death conforms to that allegory, but is otherwise very sad.) Thus Scottie's ascent of the mission bell-tower merely **parodies** the 'perpendicular movement', i.e. transcendence, of which Schopenhauer spoke, as it parodies Nietzsche's notion of the un-cautious Superman. We'll shortly see a quite similar theme operating in Thomas Mann's novella 'Death in Venice'.

(ii) First, though, a word about Hitchcock's 'quoting' of the novel and play 'La Dame aux Camélias' by Alexandre Dumas fils (1824-95). That work, of course, contains another of fiction's 'archetypal' fascinating women (like Ligeia), justifying academic David Coward's recent claim that courtesan Marguerite Gautier exists 'at the centre of the collective unconscious' - even though, by the same token, she doesn't 'properly belong with Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina on the high slopes of literature'.¹⁶ When making **Vertigo**, Hitchcock surely had Marguerite in mind, and specifically this passage from the novel (spoken by Armand Duval):

'A few minutes later, as I loitered on the boulevard, I saw Marguerite at the window of one of the restaurant's large rooms: leaning on the balcony, she was pulling the petals one by one off the camellias in her bouquet.'

Armand has just been introduced to Marguerite in a box at the Opera, and now he is more than ever infatuated with this woman whom he had hitherto watched only from a distance. The moment he describes here has at least three distinct correspondences in **Vertigo**. For a start, Scottie first sees Madeleine at Ernie's Restaurant dining with Gavin, after husband and wife have been to the Opera. (Perhaps it had been Verdi's 'La Traviata', with its re-telling of the Marguerite Gautier story.) For some days after that, though, he watches Madeleine only from a distance as he trails her around San Francisco at Gavin's request (Gavin professes to be troubled by his wife's recent behaviour).

Later, shortly before Madeleine's first suicide attempt, Scottie sees her pulling apart a nosegay of flowers and throwing them one by one into the bay. The flowers appear to be largely rosebuds, i.e. not camellias, but in any case what we mainly sense from Madeleine's gesture is her feeling that her past life (with its various affairs?) hasn't amounted to much. The **surrendering** of the nosegay to the sea is thus virtually an image of the death instinct and of 'Nirvana' which, significantly, appals Scottie in the **Vertigo** novel, discussed below, where such an attitude is likened to the alleged unthinking passivity of animals.

And again, Scottie twice sees the woman he has been following appear at an upstairs window, once as Madeleine and once as Judy. The 'theatrical' connotations of these two moments suitably suggest Scottie's riveted attention - but the echo of Dumas's tale of Marguerite lends an extra touch of the timeless and of the 'archetypal'. I was reminded that Hitchcock had previously found occasion to refer to Dumas's tale when I recently re-read Adrian Martin's 1984 article on **Notorious**, where he notes how the self-disgusted Alicia in that film 'corresponds to a certain feminine stereotype leading back precisely one hundred years to Marguerite Gautier in Dumas' **Lady of the Camellias** ("I had a sort of hope I should kill myself by all these excesses")'.¹⁷

(iii) Hitchcock called English novelist William Wilkie Collins (1824-89) 'quite brilliant',¹⁸ and Collins's 'The Woman in White' (1860) has been described by at least one authority as, 'in the highest sense of the term, the greatest melodrama ever written'.¹⁹ Here, I simply want to note how that novel provides, in its haunting apparition of the woman-in-white herself, one more precedent for the numinous Madeleine in **Vertigo**; and likewise, how the opera-loving, cosmopolitan Count Fosco, whom another critic suggests is 'the most brilliantly portrayed villain in mystery fiction',²⁰ anticipates aspects of the malevolent Gavin Elster. Crucially, Collins helped pioneer in fiction the type of plot I've referred to as the 'big lie'.

(iv) Clearly, Thomas Mann's 'Death in Venice' (1913) resembles Jensen's 'Gradiva' in some aspects of basic plot, being about a German man who, on an impulse, makes a springtime journey to an historic seaside city in Italy (Pompeii, Venice) where he becomes obsessed with, and starts to follow around, a classically beautiful figure (the girl Gradiva/Zoe, the Polish boy Tadzio). A direct influence of Jensen's novella on Mann's seems likely, although in the case of Mann (1875-1955), he is said to have drawn on events in his own life which occurred in the summer of 1911 - to the extent that the real-life Tadzio, one Baron Moes, eventually recognised 'himself' in Visconti's superb 1971 film.²¹ Also, Mann said that he partly modelled the German writer in his tale on the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler; and the tale overall shows the influence of the thought of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, both of whom Mann admired.²²

The image of Venice in Mann's tale, like that of San Francisco in **Vertigo**, is ambiguous. Venice is

described by Mann as 'half fairy-tale, half snare'. Here again we find the same ambivalence concerning pleasure and annihilation which I've already noted of Freud and of Hitchcock's film. Thus Aschenbach, the writer in the tale, and very much an Apollonian figure, has always striven in his work to create forms which 'would body forth to men ... the mirror and image of spiritual beauty'. He might be echoing Schopenhauer's notion of great art's capacity to reveal Platonic Ideas - just as one possible function of the many mirrors in **Vertigo** is to show the viewer (Scottie, the film audience) the eternal forms hidden within temporal ones. But now Aschenbach is growing weary, and for him the nearby ocean begins to exert that part of its profound appeal that is almost sensual and 'opposed to his art ... a lure, for the unorganised, the immeasurable, the eternal - in short, for nothingness'. For the artist, to succumb to the eternal is to stop creating, and it is on this ironic note that Mann's tale does in fact end.

Yet one of the most affecting scenes in fiction - and perhaps in film - is surely Aschenbach's death presided over by a seemingly abandoned camera on a tripod, 'its black cloth snapped in the freshening wind'. Nearby, the entrancing figure of Tadzio wades into the water, and it seems to the dying man that

the pale and lovely Summoner out there smiled at him and beckoned; as though, with the hand he lifted from his hip, he pointed outwards as he hovered on before into an immensity of richest expectation.

In it's way, this is almost Wagnerian, evoking thoughts of 'Tristan und Isolde' and Wagner's own comment on his opera that 'With the black flag that floats at the end of it I shall cover myself to die'.²³ Wagner-authority Bryan Magee has no doubt that '**Tristan** really is, ... as it so obviously appears to be, all-engulfingly erotic'.²⁴ But Magee is equally a Schopenhauer-authority, and he has shown how the end of 'Tristan' was profoundly influenced by Wagner's reading of Schopenhauer.²⁵ He then makes a comment which I think is pertinent to 'Death in Venice':

However, on the basis of Schopenhauer's philosophy there is an unresolved problem posed by [Wagner's] work, and it is this: the lovers speak endlessly of unity with each other in death, but they will be united in death only in the sense that they will be united with everything and everybody else, including all the other characters in the opera.²⁶

I think it's possible, and valid, to extrapolate from this the meaning attaching to the camera at the end of 'Death in Venice', and why that ending is problematic. Quite simply, the image of the black-draped camera may be said to stand both for Aschenbach at the moment of his dying - a forlorn enough sight - and for how each of the mundane photos taken by the camera has its own story to tell. (Moreover, the photographer will be back at work tomorrow, and the day after that ...) Accordingly, it seems likely that Aschenbach's 'relaxed and brooding expression of deep slumber' as he gazes for the last time on the ocean, and on Tadzio's beckoning figure, is again no more than a parody of Schopenhauerian or Nietzschean values. Of true Nirvana.

Something that reinforces my view is Magee's saying that, according to Schopenhauer, only 'compassionate, not sexual, love, a love in which the will was denied', could achieve a true oneness of individuals in this world, the world of phenomena.²⁷ In 'Death in Venice', we're specifically told that Aschenbach, a very one-sided man, no Superman in fact, has rejected all 'compassion with the abyss', i.e. the world at large, and that his concern has been 'with beauty only'.

Now I come back to **Vertigo**. Very much the equivalent of Mann's image of the camera is (I suggest) Hitchcock's image of the nun at the end of his film - the nun, whose black-clad figure becomes literally one of death when Judy falls from the bell-tower, yet whose valedictory line for the film's characters, 'I heard voices ... God have mercy', carries the note of Hitchcockian compassion. (Recall Hitchcock's 'enormous pity' for the sad life of Edgar Allan Poe, and - in the film itself - Midge's exclamation, 'Poor thing!', on hearing the story of 'the sad Carlotta, the mad Carlotta'. What's also significant here is how Scottie is unable to share Midge's capacity for compassion - which he seems to think amounts to merely being 'sentimental'.)²⁸ In a film about 'the small stuff of history', and people's brief lives, the nun's remark does bring a touch of resignation and Nirvana, but Scottie is oblivious of it.

The end of Mann's novella plays on the Schopenhauerian term 'nothingness', but I've dealt before (e.g. in 'MacGuffin' 10) with the ambiguity attaching to that word both in Schopenhauer and in Hitchcock. So I want

to take up now, instead, my remark that Freud's interpretation of 'Gradiva' is very 'Freudian'. In both 'Death in Venice' and in **Vertigo** there are at least two seemingly 'Freudian' elements that in fact should be understood more broadly. I'm thinking of what is often called the oceanic feeling (which Freud paraphrased as the feeling of 'oneness with the universe'), and its concomitant notion of the dissolution of the ego. On the first of these Freud corresponded with the French writer and musicologist, Romain Rolland, but professed that he could find no trace of such a feeling in himself. However, he proceeded to characterise it as a regression to an earlier state: that of the infant at the breast. His somewhat dismissive estimation doesn't satisfy psychiatrist and author Anthony Storr ('The School of Genius'),²⁹ who comments drily that the oceanic feeling 'seems a more important experience than [Freud] admits'. Storr acknowledges that the feeling may indeed be related to early infantile experience of unity with the mother, but he observes:

those who have experienced the states of mind recorded by [Admiral] Byrd and by William James record them as having had a permanent effect upon their perception of themselves and of the world; as being the profoundest moments of their existence. This is true both of those who have felt the sense of unity with the universe and of those who have felt the sense of unity with a beloved person.³⁰

Moreover, Storr notes as comparable expressions of the oceanic feeling two moments from works of art - which happen to coincide with two key moments sometimes cited (e.g. by Robin Wood) in connection with **Vertigo**: the **Liebestod** from 'Tristan und Isolde' (on which, see above) and the lines commencing 'Darkling I listen' from Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' (which, as Wood notes, provided the very title of an early script-draft of Hitchcock's film).³¹ I think it must be said, then, that Freud's description of Gradiva/Zoe's remark, 'I feel as though we had shared a meal like this before, two thousand years ago', as being just her convenient way of urging Harold to recall his childhood, patently misses something of importance. (A similar remark in **Vertigo** refers ostensibly to the age of the **Sequoia sempervivans**, 'the oldest living thing', but that age also happens to coincide with the length of the Christian era, and comes on top of Scottie and Madeleine's trips to a church, an art gallery, and the cathedral-like Muir Woods itself; and the tree's name means 'ever-living', a potent term first used in English by Shakespeare.)³²

In turn, Storr writes as follows:

For Freud, dissolution of the ego is nothing but a backward look at an infantile condition which may indeed have been blissful, but which represents a paradise lost which no adult can, or should wish to, regain. For Jung, [though,] the attainment of such states are high achievements, numinous experiences which may be the fruit of long struggle to understand oneself and to make sense out of existence.

That alternative, or additional, potential meaning is what I wanted to draw attention to in some of the works we've been looking at, as I'm sure that Hitchcock (if not Freud) often felt its significance.

(v) A synopsis of the short novel, 'Portrait of Jennie' (1940), by American writer Robert Nathan (1894-?) is included in the useful book 'A Treasury of Literary Masterpieces' (1969), and I must confess to having read only that potted version. But of course I've seen the exquisite 1948 film, starring Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotten, to which I'm coming. I want to mention the novella at this point, partly because it so obviously belongs with the other novellas already discussed, and partly because it may represent still others, such as Richard Matheson's 'Bid Time Return' (filmed in 1980 as the underrated **Somewhere in Time**), which I won't have further opportunity to deal with here. Also, there's at least one moment in Nathan's tale which, although 'Hitchcockian', I don't recall from the film version. Here's the synopsis:

One afternoon Jennie appears at [the artist] Eben's studio; she has come to pose. During their conversation, Eben mentions how lost he had been at the time they first met [in Central Park]. Jennie seems upset at the word 'lost'. She says that they couldn't **both** have been lost. On returning to the room after a brief departure, Eben finds Jennie gone. He had not heard the hall door close.

Jennie's saying that she and Eben couldn't **both** have been lost seems to anticipate the moment in **Vertigo** when Madeleine laughingly tells Scottie that 'Only one [person] is a wanderer - two are always going somewhere'. And the subtle suggestion of Jennie's ghostliness, in the detail about the door, likewise anticipates the several eerie moments in **Vertigo** when Madeleine seems to disappear around corners.

(d) A brief note on 'D'Entre les Morts'

So far is Boileau and Narcejac's novel³³ from being merely 'a squalid exercise in sub-Graham Greenery', as Robin Wood unfairly calls it, that I venture to suggest that it represents one of the two or three best novels Hitchcock filmed in America - after Daphne du Maurier's 'Rebecca' and perhaps Helen Simpson's 'Under Capricorn'. Its most obvious progenitor is some of the work of Georges Simenon, about whom Narcejac had recently written a most appreciative study, 'Le Cas "Simenon"' (1950). All I have space to do here, though, is indicate some of the allusiveness the novel's dry (but not arid) prose and spare form offers the reader, and which Hitchcock's film in many instances incorporates. Nothing could be further from the truth than Wood's claim that 'Hitchcock took very little from "D'Entre les Morts" apart from the basic plot line'.

For instance, Wood says that 'the novel offers no equivalent for the sequoias [scene]' in the film. Not only do Flavières (the Scottie character) and Madeleine visit the Forêt de Fontainebleau (Part I, Chapter 4), although this is merely referred to, but a key scene soon follows that takes place in the Louvre. Here, the couple pass 'through a dark entrance' to where they saunter 'among Egyptian gods in the coolness of a cathedral', and they converse on the very matters that Scottie and Madeleine raise in the film's Muir Woods. Finally, Flavières and Madeleine leave the building and find themselves, 'somewhat breathless, in front of a lawn in the middle of which a sprinkler was shedding a rainbow'. (As Scottie and Madeleine leave Muir Woods, the impression given is indeed that of their emerging from a cathedral into the light, a moment soon followed by the scene on the clifftop with its piece of overt romanticism, the crashing waves.)

Moreover, Flavières now begins to feel the same 'peaceful exhaustion he had known as a boy when he had been running the whole day along the banks of the Loire'. Two points here. First, that childhood haunt includes some ancient caves, which the novel repeatedly mentions. Not only is Plato's 'myth of the cave' part of what is evoked, but at one point (Part II, Chapter 4) Flavières is reminded of how Christ's body had lain in such a cave before the Resurrection. Second, Flavières' 'peaceful exhaustion' is part of a pattern in the novel whereby he is simultaneously drawn to, and repelled by, a peculiar passivity in Madeleine which he sees as being like that of animals, which 'have no pasts and no futures' (Part I, Chapter 5). For what this signifies, we need merely look at the novel's first chapter.

The novel's equivalent of Gavin Elster is the prospering shipbuilder, Gévigne (prospering, because it's wartime and ships are at a premium). When Gévigne mentions his wife's troubling recent behaviour, in which she suddenly appears to enter a trance and her face becomes like a 'mystic's', he refers Flavières to 'a German film called **Jacob Boehme** we saw at the **Ursulines** back in the 'twenties' (Part I, Chapter 1). The reference to the mystic Boehme (1575-1624) is a key to the novel and, to some extent, to Hitchcock's film. Not only had Boehme hoped, as part of a general reformation of Christendom, to reunite Protestants and Catholics, but his writings influenced later thinkers like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Germany and other groups and individuals like the Quakers and William Blake in England. Importantly for what I've been trying to show about **Vertigo** in this article, Boehme taught that 'will' is the original force.³⁴ Also, that

Man must die to self-centredness and enter a state of total surrender ... In this state he is 'reborn'. For Boehme ... rebirth is at the heart of all processes, both in man and in the universe.³⁵

But sadly for Flavières, another of the novel's themes is more pessimistic. It's true that he twice seems to come close to being 'reborn': first, when he almost possesses and 'saves' the apparently suicidal Madeleine, his mother-ideal; and again, when he starts to re-model Madeleine's look-alike, Renée, as if he were an artist 'painting the portrait of the Madeleine he remembered' (Part II, Chapter 4). But, like Hans Castorp in Mann's 'The Magic Mountain', he finally isn't good enough. (Literary scholar Frederick Hoffmann has noted how Hans Castorp, a trainee shipbuilder, becomes for the time he spends in the Swiss sanatorium, 'a student, an intellectual, **almost an artist**' - my emphasis - but then returns to the lowlands and a conventional young-man's death on the battlefield.)³⁶ In **Vertigo**, the failed artistic aspirations are given to Midge, but the implication concerning Scottie himself is clear.

As for Protestants versus Catholics, such a theme is just detectable in Hitchcock's film where I take it

that Scottie (whose real name is John Ferguson) is a (Scottish Lowland) Protestant who finds himself at odds, so to speak, with the film's omnipresent Catholic iconography and the yet more exotic, almost Buddhist, passivity of Madeleine/Judy. (For more on San Francisco as a 'representative' city, see 'MacGuffin' 1.)

(e) Some cinema sources for 'Vertigo'

For convenience, these can be listed as German, French, and American - although the distinction isn't clear-cut, as we'll see.

(i) The influence of German Expressionism on **Vertigo** has often been remarked, and is anticipated in the Boileau and Narcejac novel when it refers to a German film seen in the '20s (although, as far as I know, '**Jacob Boehme**' is solely an invented film-title). Similarly, Lotte Eisner's book about such German films, '**L'Ecran Démoniaque**'/'The Haunted Screen', first published in France in 1952, contains several entries on a kind of psychological vertigo. As for the actual 'vertigo' effect in Hitchcock's film, it's basically just a more elaborate subjective effect than the one used by E.A. Dupont in **Variety** (1925) and then re-worked by Hitchcock in the circus climax of **Murder!** (1930). And German Expressionism's emphasis on mother-figures, remarked by Siegfried Kracauer in 'From Caligari to Hitler' (1947), is seen in Hitchcock's film in the character of Midge. Specifically, Kracauer mentions the films **The Street** (1923) and **New Year's Eve** (1923), in both of which a man breaks down and rests his head on a woman's bosom, a gesture signifying 'desire to return to the maternal womb'.³⁷ It's the same gesture seen in **Vertigo** when Scottie collapses off the kitchen-stool into Midge's arms.

(ii) In an article on the Belgian director Jacques Feyder, Peter Cowie refers to an influential film made by Feyder for Films de France, **Le Grand Jeu/The Great Game** (1933). The Foreign Legion story is set mainly in Morocco, and the actress Marie Bell plays two different women. Here's Cowie:

The film's device of having a man haunted by the vision of a blonde woman he loved, and seeing her materialize in subtly changed guise as a brunette, would be used subsequently by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac for the novel that became the basis of Hitchcock's **Vertigo**.³⁸

Unfortunately, Cowie offers no evidence for his claim. So it's not clear how the alleged influence came about. In fact, the influence may have been indirect. In 1953, **Le Grand Jeu** was remade as a Franco-Italian co-production directed by Robert Siodmak (who had once shared a producer with Hitchcock, remember). The new film starred Gina Lollobrigida (with first red hair, then black), and was in colour. More than likely, it was the remake that Boileau and Narcejac saw just before they wrote their novel with Hitchcock in mind (on that last point, see Truffaut's interview with Hitchcock).

In the original **Le Grand Jeu**, actor Charles Vanel had a supporting role. As noted, Vanel would later play Bertani in Hitchcock's **To Catch a Thief**. In 1938 he featured prominently in the French film **Carrefour/Crossroads**, directed by Curtis Bernhardt. Like Siodmak (and Hitchcock), Bernhardt had earlier worked in Germany. He and Vanel now co-operated closely to make one of the touchstone 'big lie' films, which may well have influenced 'D'Entre les Morts' and **Vertigo**. Briefly, the plot of **Carrefour** concerns amnesia. The film's evil mastermind (Vanel) learns of a diplomat who has lost part of his memory, and sees in this an opportunity for blackmail. He employs an elderly actress to impersonate the diplomat's mother and help convince him that he has committed a crime. Parallels with **Vertigo** include the mastermind figure (whose origins lie in melodrama and its mutation, German Expressionism)³⁹ and the attempt to take advantage of a man's infirmity by means of an elaborate hoax, the 'big lie'. (In **Vertigo**, Judy imitates the real Madeleine, whom Gavin has murdered, and an elderly lady, possibly an actress, further helps confuse Scottie by playing the 'innocent' landlady of the McKittrick Hotel.)

Incidentally, I mentioned above how Wilkie Collins's 'The Woman in White' provided an early English version of the 'big lie' story. In fact, Collins based many of the story's details on a real-life French case, the sensational Douhault lawsuit of the 18th century.

(iii) If there's one American film which is the progenitor of **Vertigo**, that film is **Portrait of Jennie** adapted from the Robert Nathan novella by German expatriate director William Dieterle. The film was made at the David Selznick studio in 1947, at about the time Hitchcock was filming **The Paradine Case** there. It seems likely that Hitchcock would then have met Dieterle, whose work he had long ago admired to the point of imitation (the umbrellas scene in **Foreign Correspondent**). In any case, I feel that Boileau and Narcejac in France came to know the film and soon sensed how well its 'mystical' premise would combine with the central idea of Siodmak's **Le Grand Jeu** and other more 'expressionistic' ingredients to give them a potential Hitchcock plot in 'D'Entre les Morts'. If so, this was a brilliant insight, quite as advanced a piece of Hitchcock criticism as anything then being put forward (in the early 1950s) by André Bazin and his colleagues.

Alternatively, Hitchcock himself must have performed the master-stroke of seeing how Boileau and Narcejac's Simenon-like novel would admit of the 'supernatural' touch found in **Portrait of Jennie**. The essential point here is that Hitchcock's and Dieterle's films share much in common: for instance, their use of sea imagery. Of course, in this respect they also have a common ancestor in Hitchcock's own **Rebecca** of 1940 (and several of his English films), but their sheer similarity is further underlined by the fact that composer Bernard Herrmann worked on both. (For Dieterle, though, Herrmann composed just 'Jennie's Song' - while Dimitri Tiomkin, the film's official composer, adapted various themes of Debussy, including passages from 'La Mer'.)

Another fine American film of the '40s, making excellent use of its indebtedness to **Rebecca**, is Lewis Allen's ghost tale, **The Uninvited** (1944). Set on the coast of Cornwall and Devon, it anticipates **Vertigo** by referring to a Spanish ancestor (here named Carmel), to the **Liebestod** from 'Tristan und Isolde' (a rather sardonic touch this time), and to the sea as a place 'of life and death and eternity, too'. But what is certainly the most direct link to **Vertigo** is seen when the haunted heroine, played by Gail Russell, breaks away from her would-be protector (Ray Milland) and runs towards the nearby cliff-edge, clearly intending to commit suicide at the very place where she has been told her mother threw herself over. The spot is marked by a single, gnarled tree - a tree identical to the one we see in Hitchcock's film when Madeleine breaks away from Scottie and runs towards the cliff-edge ...

Now, there are many such 'quotes' in **Vertigo**, all of them deliberate (I suggest). Here are some more. When Scottie throws down several cushions before his fire and invites Madeleine to make herself comfortable, the moment recalls a famous scene early in **A Bill of Divorcement** (1932), the first film of Katherine Hepburn. The film's producer, David Selznick, afterwards described the scene as having given him 'one of the greatest experiences I've ever had'.⁴⁰ (The film was directed by George Cukor from the play by 'Clemence Dane', i.e. Winifred Ashton, who wrote the novel and play on which Hitchcock's **Murder!** was based.)

Near the end of **Vertigo's** Muir Woods scene, Scottie anxiously asks Madeleine, 'Can I take you somewhere?' Her distracted response is a murmured 'Somewhere in the night' (not 'Somewhere in the light' as recently misquoted by critic David Sterritt). That line is the title of Joseph Mankiewicz's 1946 film noir, another movie about confusion and searching. With an amnesia theme, it resembles both **Spellbound** and **Vertigo** in the way its hero finds his search inexorably leading back to himself (although in Scottie's case, as noted, he would like to break free of all such subjectivity).⁴¹ It's also like both those films in the way its central character is led to think himself the guilty party but finally learns he's been set up. Could Madeleine, then, have been trying to warn Scottie?⁴²

Here's a more complicated instance of Hitchcock's 'borrowing'. In 1940 he directed a few scenes in the San Francisco movie **The House Across the Bay** when regular director Archie Mayo fell ill. As one of its characters is an aircraft engineer, perhaps a memory of that film occurred to Hitchcock apropos the moment in **Vertigo** when Midge mentions a new type of brassiere designed by 'an aircraft engineer down the peninsula'. Another possibility, though, is that the line was something of a private joke by Alec Coppel, who wrote an early version of the film's screenplay: the principal character in Coppel's suspense novel 'Mr Denning Drives North' had been an aircraft engineer (played in the 1951 film version by John Mills). Then again, there's a third possibility: as is well known, aircraft magnate and movie tycoon Howard Hughes once attempted to design a strapless bra for Jane Russell ...

Anyway, Hitchcock certainly had various San Francisco movies in mind when he was making **Vertigo**. Let's

concentrate on those for a bit. One of the most impressive of them is George Stevens's **I Remember Mama** (1948) in which Barbara Bel Geddes plays Katrin, the film's narrator, who is first seen in the attic of her immigrant-family's house, where she has just finished typing her first novel. Her window looks out upon the city. That's to say, Katrin, an artistic San Francisco spinster, is the prototype for Midge. Conscious of this, Hitchcock may even have deliberately transposed some of Bel Geddes's mannerisms from her earlier role, as when she ventures to criticise a patrician doctor (a bearded Rudy Vallee) and then blushes in confusion at her temerity. The corresponding moment in **Vertigo** comes, of course, when Midge suggests to Scottie's Roman-looking doctor that the use of Mozart as therapy 'isn't going to help at all'.

Underlining the connection between the two films, actress Ellen Corby, the landlady of **Vertigo**'s McKittrick Hotel, appears in **I Remember Mama** as, even then, a frail-looking but determined old maid - who aspires to marry an undertaker. (Leslie Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' says that Corby specialises 'in noseys neighbours and prim spinsters'.)

Again, Anatole Litvak's vehicle for Bette Davis and Errol Flynn, **The Sisters** (1938), features the San Francisco earthquake at its climax and has an earlier scene in which actress Lee Patrick plays Davis's empty-headed neighbour whom we hear incessantly chattering - until the soundtrack fades her voice and we see that Davis has just received a note from her husband (Flynn) saying he has left her. Similar use of the soundtrack occurs in **Vertigo**, and for an identical reason: to silence Lee Patrick, this time playing the woman at the Brocklebank Apartments whom Scottie asks about her car. (Donald Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' describes Patrick as 'the archetypal flibbertijibbet'.)

We've already encountered director Vincent Sherman whose **All Through the Night**, starring Bogart, probably inspired the auction-gallery episode in **North by Northwest**. Sherman's **Nora Prentiss** (1947) is another San Francisco movie although it's said to be part-based on two British murder cases (presumably the Rouse and Crippen cases). Several moments in it anticipate **Vertigo**, including the moment when the lovers (Ann Sheridan and Kent Smith) head out of town. Feeling suddenly happy, the Smith character announces their destination as 'anywhere you like' - the same fate-sealing line the **Vertigo** script gives Scottie just before Judy dons her earrings and the couple drive away for the last time. (Jewellery serving as an unconscious giveaway is itself a detail taken from the Crippen case.)

Finally, I want to say some more about the work of directors Robert Siodmak and Curtis Bernhardt. In 1946 they both made films in Hollywood about twin sisters, i.e. look-alike women, respectively **The Dark Mirror** (with Olivia de Havilland) and **A Stolen Life** (with Bette Davis). The latter film, especially, anticipates **Vertigo** by having a scene set in a department store where Glenn Ford asks the 'good' sister - who secretly loves him - to try on a dress which he is thinking of giving to his wife, the 'bad' sister. The audience is acutely aware of the woman's discomfort and the man's insensitivity, a situation which obviously prefigures the **Vertigo** scenes where Judy is made over by Scottie.

Given these two directors' similarity of background (earlier work in Germany and France) and apparent shared predilection for certain themes and subjects (including crime dramas), their eventual co-operation on a project is hardly surprising: as we've already seen, Bernhardt's **Conflict** was based on a story co-written by Siodmak (with Alfred Neumann). This is the film, remember, where Bogart, who has murdered his wife, is tricked by psychiatrist Sydney Greenstreet into a confession. It is, in fact, an example of the 'big lie' story, like **Carrefour** which Bernhardt had made in France before the War. We've seen how it anticipated a scene in **North by Northwest**; now let's see how it anticipates a scene in **Vertigo**.

The basis of Greenstreet's scheme is that Bogart must be made to think that his wife has come back from the dead, or, at any rate, never died. In the street one day Bogart thinks he sees his wife walk by, wearing her customary green outfit, and he follows her into a building where she enters an upstairs flat. At this point a landlady blocks Bogart's way, saying how that particular flat is vacant and is always kept locked. Bogart protests, so she leads him upstairs - where the flat indeed proves to be empty. Thus the scene exactly anticipates the McKittrick Hotel episode in **Vertigo**, where Ellen Corby plays the seemingly guileless landlady, just as it harks back to **Carrefour**, where an elderly actress impersonates the amnesiac diplomat's mother.

Presumably, in the case of the **Vertigo** episode, it represents a trick engineered by Gavin Elster to make

Scottie become even more obsessed with the mysterious Madeleine. (Actor Tom Helmore thus corresponds to Charles Vanel in **Carrefour** and Sydney Greenstreet in **Conflict**.)⁴³ Such a playing on a character's weakness (amnesia, a sense of impotence, obsession) is itself a characteristic of these films. To end on, then, here's a more general example of a film anticipating **Vertigo**. Robert Siodmak's **The Great Sinner** (1949) is loosely based on an aspect of Dostoyevsky, and stars Gregory Peck as a man held captive in the Wiesbaden casino by his new-found mania for gambling. With beginner's luck he wins a fortune, but, as the casino's wily proprietor had foreseen, soon loses it again. Later he is visited in the casino grounds by the apparition of another victim who says, in effect, 'I told you so'. In all of this I see not so much a set of direct parallels with **Vertigo** as a significant general ambience common to several such films. For instance, gambling or infatuation or vertigo itself are recurrent motifs. When Peck finds out his weakness for gambling, it's like the moment when Scottie, clinging to a San Francisco rooftop, suddenly finds out he suffers from acrophobia. And when Peck wins a fortune only to lose it, this isn't so very different from how Scottie 'wins' Madeleine from death and then loses her. As for the wily proprietor, he of course harks back to German films of the '20s (and Hitchcock's **Spellbound**), as well as making common cause with all the other mastermind figures we've noted. Above all, as the ghostly apparition in the casino grounds could testify, what these various films most share is perhaps their general sense of worldly entrapment - a snare disguised as a fairy-tale.

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Notes

1. A. Trodd, Introduction to W.W. Collins, 'The Moonstone' (World's Classics, 1982), p. xiii.
2. S. Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' (1991), p. 20.
3. If Siodmak's **The File on Thelma Jordan** borrows from Hitchcock's **The Paradine Case**, even in matters of casting (Joan Tetzel appears in both films), Bernhardt's **High Wall** (1947) is indebted in matters of plot and characters to Hitchcock's **Spellbound** (although Audrey Totter is no Ingrid Bergman).
4. Entry on Dieterle in L. Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' (all editions).
5. Cf. J. Gassner and D. Nichols (eds), 'Twenty Best Film Plays' (1943), p. 694.
6. V. Burgin, 'Diderot, Barthes, **Vertigo**', in V. Burgin, J. Donald, and C. Kaplan (eds), 'Formations of Fantasy' (1986), pp. 85-108. Accompanying the text is an illustration of John Everett Millais's painting, 'Ophelia' (1851), included for comparison with Madeleine's attempted watery suicide in **Vertigo**.
7. R. Wood, 'Fear of Spying', in 'American Film', November 1983, pp. 28-35, reprinted, slightly revised, as 'Male Desire, Male Anxiety: The Essential Hitchcock', in M. Deutelbaum and L. Poague, 'A Hitchcock Reader' (1986), pp. 219-30.
8. P. Wollen, 'Hitchcock's Vision', in 'Cinema' (U.K.), No. 3, June 1969, pp. 2-4.
9. D.O. Chankin, 'Delusions and Dreams in Hitchcock's **Vertigo**', in 'Hitchcock Annual' (1993, Ohio), pp. 28-40.
10. F. Nietzsche, quoted in N.O. Brown, 'Life Against Death' (1959), Chapter VIII.
11. It's sometimes overlooked that Freud isn't writing art- or literary- criticism primarily, but psychoanalysis! Still, he had read Schopenhauer, and in some of his later writings put emphasis on the destructive aspects of the death instinct.
12. D. Spoto, 'The Life of Alfred Hitchcock' (1983), p. 39. The quotations from Hitchcock in the text, concerning Poe, are also from this source.
13. K. Miller, 'Doubles' (1987), pp. 154-66.

14. See Schopenhauer's Appendix ('Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy') to his 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. 1. Schopenhauer adds 'that Kant's teaching gives the insight that the beginning and end of the world are to be sought not without us, but rather within'.
15. C. Paglia, 'Sexual Personae' (1990), p. 573. Paglia adds that Ligeia 'defies God's law of mortality because she, not he, is the resurrection and the life'.
16. D. Coward, Introduction to A. Dumas **fi**ls, 'La Dame aux Camélias' (World's Classics, 1986), p. xix. This novel has a strong tinge of necrophilia, a fact which may also have been in Hitchcock's mind when he was designing **Vertigo**.
17. A. Martin, 'Reading **Notorious**', in 'Filmviews' (Melbourne, Australia), No. 119, April 1984, p. 9.
18. Quoted in N.P. Hurley, 'Soul in Suspense' (1993), p. 293.
19. H.P. Sucksmith, Introduction to W.W. Collins, 'The Woman in White' (World's Classics, 1973), p. xx.
20. A. Peterson, 'Victorian Masters of Mystery' (1984), p. 46.
21. This dramatic moment was recounted by film critic Gilbert Adair in an English Sunday newspaper in 1990. It's possible, though, that it isn't wholly accurate. Monica Stirling, in her study of Visconti, 'A Screen of Time' (1979), pp. 214-15, gives a different version of events: 'About ten years after Thomas Mann's death [in 1955], his daughter Erika received a letter from an elderly Polish nobleman, Count Vladislav Moes, saying that friends had recently given him the Polish translation of a novella in which he himself, his sisters, all his family were minutely described.' But it seems that Count Moes was 'not in the least offended'.
22. There's a good short entry on Mann in the Oxford Companion to English Literature, where the influence of both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is commented on. Cf. note 35 below.
23. Quoted in B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 355.
24. Magee, p. 363.
25. Magee, pp. 354-63.
26. Magee, p. 363.
27. Magee, pp. 363-4. Mind you, as Magee adds, 'Wagner was aware of this inconsistency with Schopenhauer's teaching, and he considered it was a point on which Schopenhauer was wrong ... that sexual love is also a way in which the will can be led to self-awareness and self-denial'.
28. Scottie, in Midge's words, is 'the hard-headed Scot'. Now, Sir Kenneth Clark says in his 'Civilisation' (1969), p. 182, that 'The Scottish character ... shows an extraordinary combination of realism and reckless sentiment' - a remark which explains a good deal about Scottie. But sentiment is not sentimentality, and it's the latter of which Scottie, for whatever reason, is so suspicious. Actually, I think Scottie lacks both love **and** compassion.
29. A. Storr, 'The School of Genius' (1988).
30. Cf. note 27 above.
31. The Keats passage was discussed in 'MacGuffin' 7, in my article on **Suspicion**.
32. At least, that's my understanding of the entry in Chambers English Dictionary that designates the term as being from 'Shak[espeare].'

- 33. Translated into English by Geoffrey Sainsbury as 'The Living and the Dead' (1956).
- 34. See the short entry on Boehme in the Oxford Companion to English Literature. Norman O. Brown's 'Life Against Death' frequently cites Boehme in the context of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud, et al. For example, in Chapter VIII: 'Boehme conceived of God's life as it is in itself as play. Eternity is the mode of play.' Cf note 10 above.
- 35. H. Popper, 'Jacob Boehme', in R. Cavendish (ed.), 'Man, Myth & Magic' (1970), p. 302.
- 36. Cf. F.J. Hoffmann, 'Freudianism and the Literary Mind' (1959), p. 212. Hoffmann says that Hans Castorp's stay in the sanatorium frees him from 'bourgeois time' and 'directs his attention inward'; and that 'Mann, from his reading of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and his observation of the powerful effect of Wagner's music, participates in the nineteenth-century romantic-irrational revolt against the sanctity of consciousness'.
- 37. See, in particular, illustration 22, and accompanying caption, in Kracauer's book (Noonday edition, 1959).
- 38. P. Cowie, 'An unfading talent: Jacques Feyder', in 'The Movie' (1982), p. 2403.
- 39. Cf. E. Bentley, 'The Life of the Drama' (1969), p. 214.
- 40. Quoted in R. Behlmer, 'Memo From: David O. Selznick' (1969), p. 74.
- 41. The sequence in **Vertigo** this most brings to mind is, of course, the one in which Scottie trails Madeleine to his own front door. But there's also, for example, the episode in which Scottie's pursuit leads him to the McKittrick Hotel, with its Scottish name.
- 42. Alternatively, or in addition, Madeleine may have been playing up to Scottie's 'Wagnerian' side. Magee emphasises that for Wagner 'night' represents the noumenal (as opposed to phenomenal) realm, the place of 'permanent reality'. See the analysis of 'Tristan und Isolde' in Magee, pp. 358-61.
- 43. Sydney Greenstreet was not actually the **evil** mastermind figure in **Conflict**, though. But he was certainly that when he played Count Fosco in Peter Godfrey's 1948 film of **The Woman in White**.

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ODD SPOT: VARIATIONS ON A THEME

Just for the record, here's how three reviewers saw the futuristic Los Angeles of Ridley Scott's **Blade Runner** (1982). 'A cross between Newark and old Singapore' (Pauline Kael, 'Taking It All In'). 'A cross between a Hong Kong street-market and a decaying 200-storey Metropolis' (David Pirie, in 'The Time Out Film Guide'). 'A cross between Chinatown and a Max Ernst fantasy' (David Shipman, 'The Good Film and Video Guide').

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