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The MacGuffin

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EDITORIAL

Twelve issues in, and the time has come to throw a few punches. There's an 'Early Hitchcock' season starting around Australia, and I asked some media people to try and use the occasion - in an incidental way - to let Hitchcock fans know that a publication exists that might interest them. You see, the Mensa-authorized 'MacGuffin' has no advertising budget, being strictly non-profit-making. At the same time, it seems to me that we're the most knowledgeable periodical about Hitchcock's films that's going. And perhaps I should have said that long ago. For the fact is that so far not one of those media people has given us a plug. (Thanks Keith, Deborah, David ...)

I tell you, the situation feels a bit like being walled-up in the **Psycho** house with just Norman Bates for company!

But even that wouldn't matter too much, I guess, if it weren't for some other recent non-developments. See 'Letters' in this issue, for example. And how about a big mention to those academics in Australia who run 'Hitchcock' courses and to whom I've suggested that they subscribe to 'The MacGuffin' - only to be ignored by them? (Thanks Barbara, Noel, John ...)

Finally, one last punch (or whinge, depending on how you see it). Speaking of non-replies, I wrote two letters recently to the American author of the book 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality', which is reviewed in this issue. Both letters were full of praise for the book, and I had simply hoped that maybe I would get back an acknowledgment of my interest, if not a 'MacGuffin' subscription. In fact, I got nothing. (So, thanks, Dr P., up there ...)

Meanwhile, below, we toil on. As you read this issue, do try to see past the typewritten newsletter-format (which has thrown quite a few people) to the substance beyond. The Hitchcock film analysed this time is **The Paradine Case** (1947). I think that we're the first publication to point out the film's basis in two notable English murder cases, and its depiction of a couple of leading forensic figures of the early twentieth century.

As for the ongoing references in 'The MacGuffin' to the philosopher named Arthur Schopenhauer, I find it necessary to insist that these **aren't** hare-brained or frivolous or irrelevant to Hitchcock's films. And, yes, I have read some history of philosophy ...

Here's a thought about the great English essayist and aesthete, Walter Pater (1839-1894), whose work was praised by Oscar Wilde. One of Pater's best-known sayings is 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'. In view of Hitchcock's repeated emphasis in interviews on the art of 'pure film', and on analogies between film and music, I suggest that you keep Pater's saying in mind when you read the review of 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality'.

To everyone, good viewing.

LETTERS

(Editor's note. Just two letters this time, for reasons of space. Normally, being a modest fellow, I wouldn't have run the first letter. But, in view of the second, I've revised that policy. Evan Williams is film critic for 'The Australian'. The second letter concerns an inquiry of mine about why the BFI saw fit not to renew their 'MacGuffin' subscription after issue no. 10.)

Evan Williams, Killara, NSW, Australia.

Your article on the sources of **Vertigo** in issue no. 11 was the finest and most absorbing piece of Hitchcock scholarship I have read for many years. It should establish 'The MacGuffin' as essential reading for film writers and historians ...

* * *

Fiona Bolt, Periodicals Librarian, British Film Institute, London, England.

Every new journal title we receive is assessed at a monthly meeting, where various members of the library staff can comment and make recommendations for each title. ... [A]lthough acknowledged as an excellent journal of its type, 'The MacGuffin' was considered to be too specialist in its subject-matter to fall within our selection criteria, especially as we already have such a vast amount of material covering the work of Alfred Hitchcock.

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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.)

The return of Ealing

For many years the premises of the former Ealing Studios in suburban London have been used by the BBC to produce television programmes. Recently a company bought the site with the aim of making at least six quality features and documentaries per year in the Ealing tradition.

According to the Managing Director of Ealing Studio Productions, Alan Latham, the venture has the support of the industry and of such actors as Ian Richardson and Alan Bates. Anyone who warmly remembers such films as **Dead of Night** (1945), **Kind Hearts and Coronets** (1949), **Whisky Galore** (1949), and **The Titfield Thunderbolt** (1952), will appreciate the enthusiasm that the projected Ealing revival is sparking.

Alfred Hitchcock would surely approve. The influence of the famous Ealing comedies is clearly visible in his own **The Trouble With Harry** (1956).

The man who inspired 'Dead Poets Society' comes to Australia

Robin Williams played him in Peter Weir's film, but Dr Sam Pickering, 52, from Connecticut, is as large as life and living in Perth, Western Australia - on sabbatical leave. In fact, it seems he can't **stop** teaching, for that's what he's doing at the moment, teaching Creative Writing at the University of WA.

Dr Pickering smiles a lot (in his press photos, at least), but he isn't uncritical of the work of some of his academic colleagues. 'There's a lot of poor writing masquerading as profundity in US literary criticism', he says.

And about the film? 'It's a morality play. It says that if you crush creativity at a critical stage you destroy something valuable, but I don't know that that's so. Creativity gets out.'

'Uncle Charlie' dies

In Alfred Hitchcock's **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943), the villainous Joseph Cotten character called Uncle Charlie is based on the real-life serial killer, Earle Nelson, who was hanged at Winnipeg in 1928.

But the **name** given to the character in the film, Charles Oakley, apparently represents a good-natured joke on Hitchcock's part - for it belonged to his jovial Scottish friend, Dr Charles Oakley, who recently died, aged 92.

Dr Oakley, a qualified engineer and psychologist, was one of a group of enthusiasts who contributed to the development of the British film society movement in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a founder member of both the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Council. Another of his good friends was the famous documentarist, John Grierson.

New editor for 'Zoetrope'

In a letter, Jane Pitt tells us that she has had to relinquish editorship of the newsletter of the British Mensa Film SIG. Jane says that, apart from seeking a publisher for the novel she recently co-authored, she is directing a Mensa review. Her successor as editor of 'Zoetrope' is Wilson Fraser, who lives in East Lothian, Scotland.

Good luck for the future, Jane.

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BOOK REVIEW

Price, Theodore: 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality: His 50-Year Obsession with Jack the Ripper and the Superbitch Prostitute - A Psychoanalytic View' (Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, N.J., & London, 1992; hb only, 416pp.).

All fine ladies are witches.

- c. 1800

Or bitches. Theodore Price notes, with regret, that Hitchcock often used that word to describe the heroine-victims of his films. Hitchcock meant that such women are whores at heart. In flippant mood, he once referred to the notorious murderer, Dr Crippen, by saying that all he had done was 'get rid of his bitch of a wife'. Now, the fact that Crippen was a doctor (of sorts), and his unfaithful wife a music hall singer who aspired to be in opera, may explain why, in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956), the script makes James Stewart a doctor, and Doris Day, playing his wife, a retired musical comedy star who wants to stage a comeback. That film is essentially about a shaky marriage, and Price thinks that most of Hitchcock's films contrive to give the impression of Marriage as Hell.

Again, in **Frenzy** (1972), the rapist-murderer Bob Rusk (Barry Foster) calls women 'all the same ... bitches!' Mind you, he's not unbiased: according to Price (p. xiii), Rusk is 'clearly' in love with the film's leading man, Dick Blaney (Jon Finch)! Of the two women whom we see Rusk kill, one is Blaney's ex-wife and the other is his mistress, just as in **Strangers on a Train** (1951), Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) is in love with Guy Haines (Farley Granger), and the woman we see **him** strangle is Haines's 'tramp' of a wife. Here, too, Hitchcock seems to have detected a real-life precedent, the case of the world's most famous Killer of Prostitutes, Jack the Ripper. Throughout the book, Price uses the term 'film of its own' (FOIO) to refer to certain recurrent Hitchcock themes, and for the crucial Jack the Ripper theme there are actually two FOIOs: **The Lodger** (1926) and **Frenzy**. But even in the unlikely case of **Vertigo** (1958), the prostitute-figure Judy (Kim Novak) may be heard to say warily to Scottie (James Stewart), 'You don't look much like Jack the Ripper'.

In sum, the short title of Price's book is misleading, inasmuch that Hitchcock and Homosexuality is just a special case of the misogyny component in the films¹ - and even to speak of Hitchcock's misogyny is also misleading (I suggest) if acknowledgment isn't made of such heroic or spunky women as Juanita Cordoba in **Topaz** (1969) and Erica Burgoyne in **Young and Innocent** (1937). Equally, besides the grotesque Hitchcock mothers such as Mrs Sebastian in **Notorious** (1946) and 'Mrs Bates' in **Psycho** (1960), you have the admirable mothers like Juno Boyle in **Juno and the Paycock** (1930) and Jill Lawrence in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934) - while Mrs Brenner in **The Birds** (1963) is a bit of both.

Right at the start, then, I must make one of my two main criticisms of the book: it does distort. (My other criticism is related, and concerns the book's failure to go 'beyond psychoanalysis'.) Even so, I find it splendid. Most of the time, Dr Price explores his chosen key Hitchcock themes with rare originality and concreteness. If 'MacGuffin' readers have wondered lately just what I would put in place of all the under-informed or arch or dismally abstract academic books and monographs on Hitchcock - which usually say so little - 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' may serve as my answer. I think it's easily the best study of the director since Tania Modleski's 'The Women Who Knew Too Much' and Lesley Brill's 'The Hitchcock Romance' (both 1988), possibly even since Robin Wood's pioneering 'Hitchcock's Films' (1966). Significantly, Dr Price, who's a 70-year-old widower from New Jersey, says on his Acknowledgments page that he has had little help or sympathy from his academic colleagues.

So, whatever my criticisms of the book, the main thing is that most of what it says is richly suggestive of Hitchcock's psychology, and even of just why he once claimed in a moment of candour that only marriage to Alma (née Reville) had stopped him 'going gay'. Now read on.

Importantly, Price has seen all the films. As early as the book's second chapter he lists in detail how together they comprise a massive (Anti-) Marriage Cycle. I was struck by his description of **Downhill** (1927), which Hitchcock based on a play by the gay Ivor Novello and the actress Constance Collier. The film is divided into three sections: (1) The World of Youth, (2) The World of Make Believe, and (3) The World of Lost Illusions. In the first section, set in an English public school, two lads are best friends until one of them gets a waitress at the nearby tuck-shop into trouble, and the other lad (played in the film, as on stage, by Novello) takes the blame and is expelled. In the second section, the expelled young man works as a bit actor in a theatre; when his godmother dies and leaves him £30,000, the theatre's leading lady (Isabel Jeans) agrees to marry him, although as soon as the money runs out she ditches him for another guy. In the third section, the young man finds work in France as a gigolo and must sleep with rich, elderly women who - Hitchcock shows - look particularly ugly in daylight. Finally, the young man returns home where his stern father welcomes him, saying that his innocence is now known. The young man is even permitted to play football for the Old Boys.

Sheer melodrama - but illuminating. I've included the above synopsis, based on Price's, because it almost seems to represent a prototypical Hitchcock film. Such things as the initial hint of Eden (here both lost **and** found again); the embryonic 'wrong man' motif; the theatre-as-world metaphor; the theme of betrayal, which puts special emphasis on the fickleness of women; the picaresque format; and finally, the quasi-Oedipal resolution - these things suggest it might almost be **Stage Fright** (1950) or **North by Northwest** (1959) being described. But Price naturally wants to stress the misogynist elements, which he does thus: 'the story is really about two schoolboy homosexuals, one of whom betrays the other by going straight; that is to say, making love to women' (p. 44). And thus: 'we can say ... that this Downhill journey is that of the nice young public school homosexual ... all the way to the bottom: having to sleep with women!' (p. 46)

Beyond question, Novello's play gives Hitchcock's film a gay basis. My two main concerns with how Price explicates this fact are: (1) that he's rather cavalier about individual details (and not for the only time in the book); and (2) that he never ventures, in this section or elsewhere, to suggest the director's specific attitude to the material (e.g. indulgent, mocking, distanced).

First, as to details. It isn't true, as Price claims, that the two schoolboy best friends are called Roddy and Robin. Novello's character **is** called Roddy but his best friend is called Tim. (It's the actor's name which is Robin.) Nor, as far as I know, are the two friends ever characterised as gay: such

a relationship is merely potential. When Price claims that it's 'from English public schools that the slang term "fag" derives' (p. 44), he's guilty of false etymology. The term he refers to, in the sense of 'male homosexual', comes from the French 'fagot', a bundle of sticks, thus evoking the time when homosexuals were burned with witches at the stake.²

Likewise, neither the tuck-shop waitress nor the theatre actress are shown by the film to be prostitutes, yet Price implies it by putting both occupations in quotes and commenting elsewhere in the book that these are typical Hitchcock metaphors for prostitution. In other words, any job in which a woman appears in public can provide such a metaphor (cf. the shop-girl Judy in **Vertigo**). It's a very fluid concept Price is using here, although one which (by and large) does seem to fit the films. Nevertheless, I'll suggest below that it needs to be seen against a conceptual fluidity of Hitchcock's own.

Second, as to the director's attitude to his material. **The Lodger** had seemed both to mock its campy main character - Novello again - and to empathise with him in his predicament (especially when he was being hounded by the mob). I would have liked Price to say whether something similar occurs in **Downhill**, but he doesn't. We know that Hitchcock himself didn't attend public school, and that he came from a London shopkeeping-class background. So it's likely that his attitude to many scenes in **Downhill** would have been detached if not actually critical. As his career developed, Hitchcock certainly cultivated detachment - especially about anything that was either abnormal or potentially embarrassing. His television writer, James Allardice, once noted this, adding that 'by the very act of being detached, he takes the curse off any horror or brutality [in his pictures] that might otherwise offend'. Price's book naturally makes you wonder about the sources of that detachment.

Class probably had a lot to do with it, for Hitchcock always remembered that he was Cockney-born. (Hence his fondness for such things as jokes and rhyming-slang.) Other likely factors include his sense of being a British immigrant after he moved to the US; his self-consciousness over his life-long weight problem; and, yes, some sexual factor - for instance, his married life was largely celibate. But Price discusses none of this, probably because he thinks it irrelevant. If I don't, quite, it's because I see Hitchcock's detachment as a powerful factor in freeing his imagination - and his 'negative capability' (that which Keats praised in Shakespeare) ...

* * *

Elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin', I analyse **The Paradine Case** (1947) and suggest that the essential thing about the valet André Latour (Louis Jordan) isn't, as Price thinks, his gayness but his celibacy. Hitchcock seems to draw a parallel between the 'unnatural' situation that had prevailed at 'Hindley Hall' and the paralysis and sterility that in **Rebecca** (1940) descend on 'Manderley' - where even the butler Robert (Philip Winter) is having trouble with his teeth. In one of Price's four 'scenarios' for **Rebecca**, the head of Manderley, Maxim (Laurence Olivier), is not just impotent but gay. It's an extreme interpretation. As I've indicated before (e.g. 'MacGuffin' 5, pp. 1, 12), the aristocratic and idealistic Maxim seems the very model of your monogamous Englishman who's effectively traumatised when he finds that his 'polymorphous-perverse' first wife has been unfaithful. As in **Downhill**, the basic situation can bear the label 'misogynist' but the characters are only potentially (or latently) homosexual.³ By the same token, what's again highly suggestive is that the author of the original work, here Daphne du Maurier, was a (married) lesbian - just as the author of 'The Paradine Case', Robert Hichens, was gay, a friend of Oscar Wilde and, later, Somerset Maugham.

We have to come back to the matter of Hitchcock's attitude to his material. I think that a case can be put for how the oft-remarked 'sadistic' side of Hitchcock needed these 'gay' - and 'old-fashioned' - stories⁴ in order to comfortably transform them. Now, I know that sadism is itself sometimes linked to homosexuality (e.g. by Dr Edmund Bergler), but not invariably! And, in any event, what I now want to do is turn to the case of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912), one of literature's most famous misogynists. Strindberg is mentioned several times in 'The Paradine Case', allowing Price (p. 8) to suggest parallels between the mistress-valet relationship in Strindberg's 'Miss Julie' (1888) and the relationship of Mrs Paradine and André Latour in Hichens's novel. Of Strindberg himself, the first thing I'd note is that, despite his misogyny, nobody to my knowledge has ever suggested that he was gay. The two attitudes aren't synonymous.

Next, something which helps explain why Strindberg married and divorced three times: he has been called by biographer-critic Robert Brustein intensely 'dualistic'.⁵ Like the Romantics of Mario Praz's 'The Romantic Agony' (1933), Strindberg early split his 'mother' in two - into the chaste Madonna and the erotic Belle Dame Sans Merci (of Keats). Later, he 'vacillated between an intense worship of the female and an even more intense misogyny'. There's a parallel with Hitchcock, inasmuch that Price says of the latter that he hated, yet was attracted to, two kinds of women: the Virgin Bitch and the Whore Bitch (p. 183).

Further, in Brustein's view, although there was much more to Strindberg's inner dualism than his attitude to women - seen outwardly in his desire to dominate and be dominated - if we project that dualism onto the whole of his drama, 'we shall be able to understand his development from Naturalism to Expressionism, ... from a convinced misogynist to a resigned Stoic with compassion for all living things'. In other words, we'll be able to see the evolution of his drama from tormented problem-plays like 'Miss Julie' to the marvellously comprehensive, and almost Buddhistic, vision of works like 'A Dream Play' (1902). If, as I think, there's a drive towards comprehensiveness in Hitchcock, too, I'll want to suggest below that at times Price confuses such comprehensive vision with 'homosexuality' ...

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In Hitchcock, there's an almost mystical opposition between 'closed' and 'open', between concentration and aspiration. If I say that the 'closed' tendency in his work signals a wish to 'keep it all in the family', such 'incestuousness' will probably be seen as another symptom of his potential homosexuality! Still, the tendency **is** marked. In 'MacGuffin' 3, I noted it in **The Lodger** and in **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) - while pointing out that it can also be found in the works of Dickens, who's another author (and father of twelve children) about whom nobody has ever said that he was gay. Here's another instance. In **The Paradine Case**, I think it's significant that Mrs Paradine's family solicitor, Sir Simon Flaquer (Charles Coburn), turns out to be 'old friends' with the policeman on the case, Chief-Inspector Ambrose. And an example of Price's: in **The Birds**, manly Mitch (Rod Taylor) 'had been going for awhile with a perfectly eligible young woman (Susanne Pleshette); yet nothing happened, Taylor having preferred to stay at home with Ma and Little Sister' (p. 89).

I'll deal below with the 'open' aspect of Hitchcock's films. First, though, let's look at Price's very relevant chapter on 'The Father-Daughter Theme', which concerns Hitchcock's 'Griselda Complex' (p. 229), 'where the Father is in love with the Daughter and refuses her to any and all suitors'. I'll also bring in some of Price's comments on **I Confess** (1953). When Hitchcock's only child, his daughter Patricia, married a young Massachusetts businessman, Joseph O'Connell Jnr, in 1952, Hitchcock insisted on 'directing' every detail himself of the wedding ceremony in New York's St Patrick's Cathedral (p. 233). This, despite there having been some tension between father and prospective son-in-law over the latter's non-interest in entering the film business (which Hitchcock had offered to arrange). As further evidence of Hitchcock's 'possessiveness', Price cites how, in the late '40s and early '50s, Hitchcock never once attended any of actress Pat's three Broadway appearances - here Price gives a Freudian interpretation of public 'exposure' in a theatre (an interpretation which seems to square with my reading of the coming-out ball scene in **The Lodger**, in 'MacGuffin' 3).

Now, as soon as Pat married away from him, Hitchcock turned to making **I Confess**. Price notes how this is the story of a terribly-wronged man, one who has elected to serve God and become a priest, i.e. celibate. In the film, the married woman tells her husband, 'I don't love you. I've never loved you.' And to her former lover, the priest/'father', she says, 'I [still] love you. I've always loved you.' (p. 270)

Equally suggestive is the film's casting. For the role of the priest, Hitchcock chose the handsome gay actor Montgomery Clift; for the priest's Double, the real murderer, he cast another homosexual, O.E. Hasse; and for the priest's ex-lover, he wanted the star of the 1950 Swedish film of Strindberg's 'Miss Julie', blonds actress Anita Björk, but finally had to settle for Anne Baxter.

Also, **I Confess** seems to confirm a significant preoccupation of Hitchcock's - noted in Price's chapter on **Rebecca** - with the Shakespeare tragedy, 'Othello'. Actually, Price somewhat misleadingly coins the expression The Othello Theme as an alternative name for The Virgin/Whore Theme (p. 167), referring to how

women allegedly betray men. As Price shows, the 'Rebecca' novel does indeed equate its hero Maxim with Othello; and there's a strong hint, in the same source, that Rebecca herself had been a lesbian - being described by Maxim as 'not even normal'. But, as any Shakespeare fan knows, the betrayer in 'Othello' is actually the Moor's shifty soldier, Iago. Which brings me back to **I Confess**. When the villainous Keller (O.E. Hasse) shoots his wife Alma (Dolly Haas) because she has informed on him, there seems to be an echo of how in 'Othello' Iago stabs his wife Emilia for telling the Moor that all along Desdemona has been innocent. And here's another thing. While Hitchcock was making **I Confess**, Orson Welles's **Othello** won the Grand Prix at the 1952 Cannes Film Festival. In Welles's film, reports Charles Higham, 'Othello is a noble human being doomed by his involvement with the repressed homosexual Iago' ('The Films of Orson Welles', 1970, p. 137). Considering that Welles began shooting **Othello** in 1948, it's likely that there would have been plenty of occasion for Hitchcock to hear of the idea and consider its possibilities.

* * *

In order to show both the fluidity and the 'openness' of some of Hitchcock's filmmaking, I'll comment on another of Price's examples of The Othello Theme. Price notes that in the 1969 **Topaz**, Rico Parra (John Vernon), 'most Othello-like, kisses his betraying, double-agent mistress before killing her' (p. 168). But here's news for Price. The original of that scene is probably an episode recounted by the title-character in W. Somerset Maugham's short story 'The Hairless Mexican' (which was filmed by Hitchcock, although without the episode I'm referring to, as **The Secret Agent**, 1936). Suddenly aware, the character says, of being betrayed by the woman he loved, whom he now saw to be a spy, he had been forced to pass his knife 'across her lovely throat'. The 'Romantic Agony' of the moment is conveyed in this passage:

And I loved her, I loved her; oh, words cannot tell you the agony of desire that [had] burned in my heart; love like that is no pleasure. It is that heavenly anguish that the saints speak of when they are seized with a divine ecstasy. I knew that she must not leave the room alive ...

With this reference to sexual desire that is transformed into something else, something seemingly divine or transcendental, I can come back to the second of my two earlier reservations about Price's nevertheless fine book. Approximately, the reservation is this. When Hitchcock once said that 'everything's perverted in a different way', he scarcely meant that homosexuality is a perversion of heterosexuality, or vice versa - although that's how those things may appear to most of us. Rather, he was implying that both of them, along with sexuality in general, are only 'perversions' or 'representations' of something more fundamental, something (it seems to me) that is best conceptualised by Arthur Schopenhauer's post-Kantian philosophy of Will (life-force) and Representation (appearance). When I said before that Price's book doesn't go 'beyond psychoanalysis', I had in mind how, time and again, he seems to equate 'not obviously heterosexual' with 'therefore homosexual' - surely a reductionist position.

Put the matter this way. In psychoanalysis, which is patient-centred, sexuality is basic. But a film can take other optics, i.e. ways of seeing, and surely often needs to do so. I do think that Price fails to appreciate the 'mystic' and the 'abstract' areas of Hitchcock. Moreover, in saying this, I think I'm just following the lead of Keats and Kierkegaard, both of whom said of Shakespeare that he was exceptionally 'objective' (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10) - an assessment made, on their part, with no reference to psychoanalysis ...

The **Topaz** scene has a couple of further ironies. I've suggested that it's based on an anecdote told in Somerset Maugham's 'The Hairless Mexican' - where the title-character is called General Carmona although it's far from obvious that he's a general in fact. He dresses like a dandy and has smooth skin like 'a woman's'. In Hitchcock's **The Secret Agent**, the character is played by a campy-looking Peter Lorre. In turn, the General's co-agent, Ashenden, is played by another real-life homosexual, John Gielgud. And in both story and film, Ashenden wonders whether his companion can 'really be the lady's man he pretends'. More likely, the General represents a parody of the story's gay author - in much the same way that Ashenden, by Maugham's own admission, is the author's flattering self-portrait.

So here's what I suggest. The General's 'romantic' anecdote of killing his lover should be seen as

literally camped-up or as an allegory (of, say, a seduction rather than a killing, and the 'victim' an unlawful object, perhaps a boy).⁶ In which case, the story's mention of 'heavenly anguish' and 'divine ecstasy' is largely a blind. But now see what Hitchcock does with it. When you look at the novel 'Topaz', by Leon Uris, you find that there's no murder of his double-agent mistress, Juanita Cordoba, by the Cuban officer, Rico Parra, only a scene in which he tries to make love to her before picking up the telephone and reporting her to the authorities. In other words, Rico Parra turns out to be impotent ('I have this trouble all the time', he cries), and the scene is a classically Oedipal one. Price would naturally say, 'well, there you are'.⁷ For my part, I would want to stress Hitchcock's facility and detachment.

As Hitchcock said in a different context, you could study the scene forever. Notice, for instance, the emphasis again on doubles (here, Rico Parra and his Frenchman rival), at least one of whom **may** be gay. Typically, too, one of them is married - although, in the case of **The Secret Agent**, that's only because Ashenden has officially been given a wife as 'cover'! And the killing of the mistress recalls Oscar Wilde's 'each man kills the thing he loves', about which Hitchcock once said that he thought it represented a quite common phenomenon. (I think Schopenhauer would agree.) Finally, you remember that Juanita's wrenching death is filmed from overhead, an angle which shows her sinking to the ground with her dress spreading around her like a stain. That stain, which of course suggests the life-blood, also signals something more, an unseen dimension. Hitchcock might well have described the moment as raising 'the commonplace in life to a higher level' (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10).

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Price never seems to greatly appreciate Hitchcock's sense of humour, which is essentially an **English** humour. About Charters and Caldicott (Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne) in **The Lady Vanishes** (1938), he says that they're 'simply traditional, stock, sissified characters whose obvious lack of interest in women makes them the butt of screen comedy about their gayness; and Hitchcock certainly intends the comedy to be so taken' (p. 57). My own feeling is slightly different. Basically, I think that this pair of 'upper-class twits' show several common English male traits (including Anglomania and xenophobia) - traits **too** common, most of them, to be inherently gay. And it's the **situations** the pair get into, situations which compound their various follies, that make them look so out of place. One example: their avid discussion of English cricket on a train in central Europe that's on the brink of war. Another example: their appearing late for dinner in a remote Alpine lodge, wearing tuxedos. As for their evident lack of interest in women, it's more accurately described as an evident lack of interest in sex - another (supposed) common English male trait. (For example, Charles Barr's 1977 book on Ealing Studios notes that producer Michael Balcon actually preferred to avoid sexual situations in his films.) If, ten years later, the pair are in fact dubbed 'the heavenly twins' by their Army colleagues (in Alfred Roome's **It's Not Cricket**), such seeming reference to their gayness may only show how debased the nature of their comedy has become.

Likewise, Price thinks that the pipe-smoking Nigel Bruce characters in **Rebecca** and **Suspicion** (1941) are gay, again using the term 'sissified' to describe them. He does this by speaking of their 'sissified, Franklin Pangborn, Edward Everett Horton demeanour' (p. 59) - whereas, surely, there's both an ocean and a world of difference between the English actor and his two American colleagues.

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I want to end by saying more about the concentration/aspiration dichotomy in Hitchcock's work - a twin-emphasis on the one and the many which sits nicely with Schopenhauer's twin themes of Will and its Representation. Like many of Hitchcock's films, **I Confess** is set in one main locale, here the city of Quebec. That city becomes in the film a metaphor for the Lost Paradise. Now, Price ascribes Hitchcock's choice of locale to the fact that Quebec was the only city in North America where priests still wore the cassock, i.e. dressed like men in drag (p. 270). Which, of course, is another way of saying dressed like women. But I prefer the latter description because I think it better suggests what Hitchcock intended. As we've already had occasion to notice, he was always fascinated by situations whose meanings might suddenly imply their reverse. Another example would be his 'Nirvana'-like endings (e.g. **Suspicion**, **Psycho**) which involve a character seeming to happily accept her/his own death. (Cf. Schopenhauer's

emphasis, in his ethical writings, on the desirability of turning the individual will back upon itself.) On a more purely technical level, too, Hitchcock liked to explore contraries, as in those films (e.g. **Young and Innocent**, **Notorious**, **Psycho**) where the camera moves from very far away to very close.

The start of **I Confess** intimates a host of possibilities. Across water (the city is built at the confluence of two rivers), the camera drifts in disembodied fashion towards a mass of buildings, seen in near-silhouette, dominant among which is the Chateau Frontenac - which will figure in the film's climax. That Chateau, in latter days a hotel, is named after the former French governor of New France. As many people know, Quebec has a considerable military history: it had just recently been retold in J.E. Morgan's book, 'The Castle of Quebec' (1949). On the film's soundtrack, women's voices sing, siren-like ...

What's going on here? The play of contraries, as I say. A distant-view is becoming a close-view. **Women's** voices accompany a **disembodied** (non-subjective) camera-movement which directs our attention to a dominating '**masculine**' building on the skyline. That skyline includes also a lone church spire, so that the general effect is neither wholly 'secular' nor wholly 'religious', as well as being ambiguously 'sexual'. Moreover, and in keeping, there's at least one other Hitchcock film being evoked here, albeit (as Price would say) pre-consciously. That film is **Rebecca**. The massive building drawing towards us is like 'Manderley', or even Camelot, i.e. a fabled Heaven-on-Earth. And at first the river seems to bar our way, like a gate or a moat. But the moving camera presses on. Suddenly, as the opening titles fade, the film-proper begins, and with a cut we're taken inside Quebec City at night. Now the only troubling thing is that we find ourselves in dingy back streets (not quite what we had been led to expect). That is, until the camera tracks into an open window. As Dimitri Tiomkin's score gives a brassy screech, we see a man's dead body.

I think Price is largely wrong to regard **I Confess** as being about a gay priest who takes holy orders as a refuge. (The Father-Daughter reading is incidental, of course.) That interpretation makes nonsense of Michael Logan's heroism, both in the war and subsequently. Nevertheless, the nuance of homosexuality is present, for reasons I've indicated (e.g. the casting). Given that we're all, psychologically speaking, both male **and** female, perhaps Hitchcock's intention in the film is to show that Logan 'went gay', i.e. stopped being a practising heterosexual, as a result of what he saw in the war. After all, he's also something of an Othello-figure, i.e. a sensitive and noble man, like the appalled Maxim in **Rebecca**.

Anyway, my reason for describing the opening sequence of **I Confess** was to indicate the sheer evocativeness of that Lost Paradise film, something which I don't think Price takes the measure of. The film's use of Quebec anticipates **Vertigo's** of San Francisco - the latter a city described by Oscar Wilde as having 'all the attractions of the next world'. Also, 'with its missions, forts, shops, and art galleries, San Francisco may ... stand for perennial human concerns' (as I further noted in 'MacGuffin' 1). Here's my point, then. From about the 1950s, Hitchcock's films became increasingly comprehensive and, in a sense, 'open'. Sometimes it was basically a matter of a single motif or scene: the 'evolution' references in **The Wrong Man** (1957),⁸ the United Nations episode in **North by Northwest**, the visual analogies between people and birds in **The Birds**. But at times there were further Expressionist nuances: for example, as provided by the chill wind that blows through **Psycho** and the succeeding three films (see below). **Vertigo**, of course, was the richest film of all. Despite his name, Scottie is something of a Sinologue, who has the Chinese symbol for 'double happiness' in the railing outside his front door, and who tells Madeleine/Judy that 'the Chinese say that once you've saved a person's life you're responsible for it forever'.

But that's an irony, too. For Scottie is no more capable than the rest of us of suspending his human nature - tinged, in his case, with sadism. He 'kills the thing he loves' because he's never the true artist, the one of sufficient 'negative capability' to dwell (as Keats says) 'in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after ... reason'. Accordingly, Madeleine/Judy must be punished. She has betrayed him. She's a bitch.

I've given Schopenhauerian readings of the end of **Vertigo** before (in 'MacGuffins' 1, 3, 11). This time, I'd just like to note how that equally notorious misogynist, Strindberg, offers a related keynote. Running through Strindberg's great 'A Dream Play' is the refrain, 'Humankind is to be pitied'. It's the

same note of compassion at which Schopenhauer arrived, and after a not dissimilar survey of the evidence (including Buddhist texts). Strangely, I think it comes close to also being the real message of later Hitchcock: hence such things as the above-mentioned chill wind in **Psycho**, **The Birds**, **Marnie** (1964), and **Torn Curtain** (1966).⁹

Price thinks that Scottie in **Vertigo** could very well be gay. After all, he's a bachelor and obviously having trouble relating to women. On the other hand, by Price's own description, the reason 'why Hitchcock's films are perennially so popular - with both sexes, and with gays as well (sic)' is that they project a universal (childhood) desire to sleep with the parent of the opposite sex (p.197). In very many ways, in fact, Hitchcock's films offer something for everyone (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10); and by the time their director has finished with them, they all preclude **any** simple or obvious reading.

Except this. They start and end as manifestations of Will, both literally (the filmmaker's and the film's Will) and figuratively (the Will of the characters, events, etc., as Saul Bass's near-abstract titles-sequences may help suggest). In between, they're about Representation. It's in this area that Price comes into his own. I've not been able to deny the basic accuracy of his thesis - only try to give it a perspective that I felt was missing.

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Notes

1. Price himself points this out in his Introduction, p. x.
2. Cf. Chambers English Dictionary. For more information, see D. Altman, 'Homosexual' (1971), p. 32. (Altman is an Australian academic and gay activist whose book has been widely published, including in the US.)
3. In 'MacGuffin' 5, I likened Maxim to a character in the Australian film, **Picnic at Hanging Rock** (Peter Weir, 1975), the Hon. Michael Fitzhubert - whose maiden-ideal, Miranda, disappears at the Rock (cf. the sea in **Rebecca**), whereupon the lordly youth departs morosely, tantamount to his committing suicide. (The novel by Joan Lindsay actually quotes from 'Rebecca' when it says of Miranda that she had a face 'like a Botticelli angel'.) I also suggested of **Rebecca** that it hinges on the 'danger' that Maxim won't fulfil his expected role of patriarch/father. Hence the sterility that descends on Manderley, now dominated by the evil-mother figure (and seeming lesbian), Mrs Danvers, and where the men are all impotent (e.g. Maxim, 'Barmy' Ben).
4. A further example: Hitchcock's **The Manxman** (1929), based on the novel by the gay Sir Hall Caine. The novel was hugely popular in its day, but is now both unread and (almost) unreadable.
5. Brustein's 'The Theatre of Revolt' (1964) is a justly celebrated work. The quotations from it in the text come from the long excerpt reprinted in R. Brustein (ed.), 'Strindberg: Selected Plays and Prose' (1964).
6. Cf. how in Maugham's semi-autobiographical 'Of Human Bondage' (1915), Philip Carey's club-foot serves as a metaphor of its author's gayness (and his stammer).
7. For a comparison of Rico Parra with André Latour in **The Paradine Case**, see my analysis of the latter film in this 'MacGuffin'.
8. See 'MacGuffin' 6. At one point, Manny's wife (Vera Miles) reports how her dentist has told her that people's teeth have evolved at a different rate from their jaws, causing (dental) problems. There's also an 'evolution' (or 'zoological') motif in **The Birds**, of course.
9. In **Marnie**, Mark Rutland (Sean Connery) says to Marnie (Tippi Hedren), 'It's time to have a little compassion for yourself' - implying the need for a more general compassion, too. See also the above-mentioned analysis of **The Paradine Case**.

.....

Best of 1993

Here we go - three leading Australian critics (and 'MacGuffin' subscribers) give their top ten or twelve films of last year. The three critics are: Adrian Martin, Tom Ryan, and Evan Williams. Only a couple of films appear on all the lists (**The Age of Innocence, Unforgiven**). Tom's list originally appeared in 'The Sunday Age'. There, Tom noted that true heroism was a quality distinctly lacking in the bulk of last year's films ...

Tom's list

1. The Age of Innocence (Martin Scorsese, USA)
2. Unforgiven (Clint Eastwood, USA)
3. Best Intentions (Bille August, Sweden)
4. Stolen Children (Gianni Amelio, Italy)
5. Tilai (Idrissa Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)
6. La Belle Noiseuse (Jacques Rivette, France)
7. Lorenzo's Oil (George Miller, USA)
8. Much Ado About Nothing (K. Branagh, UK)
9. This Is My Life (Nora Ephron, USA)
10. Sleepless in Seattle (Nora Ephron, USA)

Evan's list

1. The Piano (Jane Campion, Australia/NZ/France)
2. Unforgiven
3. The Age of Innocence
4. Naked (Mike Leigh, UK)
5. Of Mice and Men (Gary Sinise, USA)
6. Blade Runner (1981/1993) (Ridley Scott, USA)
7. Pandora's Box (1927/1993) (G. Pabst, Germany)
8. Tous Les Matins du Monde (A. Corneau, France)
9. Damage (Louis Malle, France)
10. Salo (1975) (Pier Paolo Pasolini, Italy)

Adrian's list

1. Night and Day (Chantal Akerman, 1991)
2. The Bed You Sleep In (Jon Jost, 1993)
3. The Age of Innocence
4. Unforgiven
5. Passage à l'acte (Martin Arnold, 1992)
6. The Double Life of Veronique (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1992)
7. Les Amants du Pont-Neuf (Leos Carax, 1991)
8. Le Jeu de L'Oie (aka Snakes and Ladders, Raul Ruiz, 1980)
9. The Inner Circle (Andrei Konchalovsky, 1991)
10. Reservoir Dogs (Quentin Tarantino, 1992)
11. The Rapture (Michael Tolkin, 1991)
12. Hard Boiled (John Woo, 1992)

[Supplementary to Adrian's list ... 'four great films re-seen and rediscovered on TV': **Minnie and Moskowitz** (John Cassavetes, 1971); **Une Histoire Immortelle** (Orson Welles, 1968, French-language version of **The Immortal Story**); **On Dangerous Ground** (Nicholas Ray, 1952); and **Sweet Smell of Success** (Alexander Mackendrick, 1957).]

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BLOOPERS

Here are the correct overseas subscription rates for the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual'. Individuals: US \$9 per year. Institutions: US \$12. And here are the rates for US subscribers. Individuals: US \$7, or \$12 for two years. Institutions: US \$10, or \$17 for two years. Write to: P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022, USA.

In 'MacGuffin' 8, p. 13, we said that Hitchcock's original idea for **Torn Curtain** (1966) was to base the film on the Burgess and MacLean spy scandal in England, and to tell the film from the viewpoint of 'Mrs Burgess' after she finds that Guy Burgess is a spy and has fled to Russia. In fact, there **was** no Mrs Burgess - Guy Burgess was an unmarried homosexual. It was Mrs **MacLean's** viewpoint that Hitchcock had in mind.

In 'MacGuffin' 8, p. 3, we said that the 16 minutes trimmed from the original length of **The Paradine Case** (1947) included a party scene. That was incorrect. According to David Thompson's recent book on producer David Selznick, the cuts to **The Paradine Case** consisted largely of extended footage at 'Hindley Hall', the Paradines' country-house.

Not so much a blooper as an oversight. Last issue, in the 'Bloopers' section, we noted that Edmund Gwenn's brother, Arthur Chesney, was also an actor. Chesney had in fact appeared in a Hitchcock film himself - namely, **The Lodger** (1926), where he plays the heroine's father.

.....

The Lost Paradise: Hitchcock's 'The Paradine Case' (1947)

And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'll lay me doun and dee.

- William Douglas (1672-1748)¹

Orson Welles once said that the main theme of Western art is the search for the Lost Paradise. Something he probably had in mind was the legendary quest for the Holy Grail - which for centuries has provided a major motif of European and Middle-Eastern art. More or less separate from it, though, is an iconography based on traditional Persian and Old Testament images that show Paradise as a walled garden. Welles's own films contain many examples. Of these, the most obvious is 'Xanadu' in **Citizen Kane** (1941), recalling the private pleasure-grounds of the Persian kings.

Of course, the point of that film is that Kane doesn't find happiness in Xanadu. What he's really seeking is his lost childhood - represented by the famous image of him when a boy playing in the snow with his sled. Although Welles later called the idea 'tinpot Freud', it's worth spelling out. Playing in the snow suggests warm feelings of satisfaction and competence (yet still, in this case, with a mother-figure keeping a watchful eye nearby). Kane's sled has a robust, 'masculine' shape and function - yet is given a feminine name, 'Rosebud'. That's to say, possessor and possessed, male and female, are one! Then there's another thing. In terms of iconography, 'Rosebud' is a flower. And the snow lying all around is itself a kind of garden.

But did someone mention a womb? That's scarcely a new idea either. A 15th-century French painting depicts the Garden of Eden as not just walled but womb-like - and shows Adam and Eve being expelled into the world. Sadly, in Welles's **The Immortal Story** (1968), set in Macao, the wealthy merchant Mr Clay simply can't appreciate the truly rich suggestiveness of a conch shell ...

By the same token, Mr Clay needs constant interaction with other people just to carry on his business. The importance of cities to the Lost Paradise is that they provide another substitute (like Xanadu) for 'original pleasure'. With their wealth and opulence, cities too are important Lost Paradise symbols. The fact that they were traditionally walled helps reinforce the idea.

Actually, the port of Macao makes a doubly suitable symbol. As the oldest European colony in the Orient, there's the nice irony that all it succeeded in becoming was one more 'Western' trading- and recreation-centre (if you will, a brothel)² - something was still 'lost'. At the same time, the proximity of Macao to the sea almost turns it into yet another Lost Paradise symbol, an island. It's fair to say that islands are basically 'gardens' surrounded not by walls but by water. Yet that proximity of the sea, like Mr Clay's conch shell, is indeed suggestive. It can serve as a reminder of all humanity's restlessness and yearning, arguably the very condition that both raises and dashes our hopes of Eden's recovery.

Othello (1952) is a key Welles film, set partly in Venice. And Venice, built on a group of islets adjoining the Adriatic, is your quintessential Lost Paradise city. (As Nicholas Roeg's 1973 **Don't Look Now** tells us in a line of dialogue, Milton himself 'loved this city'.) What Welles's adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy does is simply remind us that in this fair spot lurks Iago with his evil.

I can sum up what I've been saying by telling a brief anecdote. I once showed a group of film-students Luchino Visconti's **Death in Venice** (1970). Afterwards, I put up on a screen for discussion a colour

slide of the film's sailor-suited youth, Tadzio, sitting pensively amid the Venice glasswork in the lounge of the Hôtel Excelsior. (For much of the film, of course, Tadzio is trailed around the city by the literally stricken composer, Aschenbach.) By Tadzio's side was a vase of Hydrangeas on a pedestal, the latter of a twisting design and made of turquoise. One student commented that 'it reminds you of the serpent in Eden'.

* * *

Alfred Hitchcock's films were full of Lost Paradise imagery from the start. His first feature was **The Pleasure Garden** (1925) whose title refers *inter alia* to a London night-club of that name, with its female dance-troupe. From London, though, the melodramatic and sometimes violent plot moves to Lake Como and to the tropics, before finally returning to London. For the film's credits, Hitchcock designed the image of a snake entwined around a tree.

Hitchcock's last-but-one film, **Frenzy** (1972), was set in London's **Covent** Garden. In a key scene, the presence of an apple suggests the misogynist thoughts of the murderer, Bob Rusk (Barry Foster). And in between these two films came many others, such as **Rebecca** (1940), whose famous line, 'We can never go back to Manderley', is particularly resonant. **I Confess** (1952) displays how the fair city of Quebec may conceal a murderer, whose occupations are sacristan and part-time gardener, and who seems at one point to be likened by the film to Shakespeare's Iago. As for **Topaz** (1969), what's literally central in it is the island of Cuba, where the hero, André Dévereaux, has his mistress - and which serves as a Lost Paradise metaphor for the goings-on (political and sexual) throughout the film. I'll come back to most of these films later.

* * *

The plot of **The Paradine Case** concerns a charge of murder brought against Maddalena Paradine (Alida Valli) and her eventual trial at London's Old Bailey in which she's defended by the famous barrister, Anthony Keane (Gregory Peck). But I think what's really on trial in Hitchcock's film is the institution of marriage and, beyond that, the flawed human condition. Keane has been married for eleven years to Gay (Ann Todd); their idyllic honeymoon was spent in Venice. There, it seems they mainly occupied themselves riding in a gondola - which the film likens to a bed. If that strikes an ambiguous note, an echo is soon heard when we learn that the marriage has been childless. What has happened? Robert Hichens's novel (1933), the basis of the film, gives some clues. It refers to such matters as Gay's shrinking from the ugliness of life, and her husband's ambitiousness which conceals a latent egoism. In other words, both partners have still some growing to do.

Soon, too, other facts about Keane emerge. He jokes with Gay about his 'lost ideals', about how he no longer cares to mock 'the decadence of the rich'. Could he himself be in danger of succumbing to that decadence? Or, at least, of flirting with it? The very first time he meets his rich and beautiful client, Mrs Paradine, who was born in Italy, we sense that he's starting to become infatuated with her. Behind her mask-like expression, Mrs Paradine hides a deeply passionate nature.³ Her role in the film may recall what the Italian critic and scholar, Mario Praz, in his book 'The Romantic Agony' (1933), calls the cult of the Fatal Woman. That book is indeed about Decadence, being a study of the legacy of de Sade and the perverse and pathological elements in Poe, Swinburne, Wilde, etc. (Camille Paglia calls it 'a major book'.) From the film's opening scene, Mrs Paradine is associated with serpentine camera-movements and with opulence. We watch as the camera enters her Portland Place town-house (with its curved front), tracks past two ornamental hallstands, both of them entwined with carved snakes, and arrives in the sitting-room where the mistress of the house is alone, playing a grand piano. A full-length portrait of her late husband, Colonel Paradine, dominates the room. She will shortly be charged with his murder.

* * *

In order to analyse the film further, it may help if I give some background about the novel and its sources. Robert Hichens (1864-1950), music critic and author of 66 books, is best remembered for 'The Green Carnation' (1894), a satirical account of Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas, in whose circle he

moved; and for 'The Garden of Allah' (1904), a romance about a wealthy English lady and a man with a guilty secret, who meet in North Africa and marry, but who fail to find happiness thereby. The latter novel was thrice-filmed, the last time in 1936 when its producer was David Selznick.

Further, Hichens wrote a celebrated ghost story, 'How Love Came to Professor Guildea' (printed in 'Tongues of Conscience', 1900), in which a celibate academic is haunted to death by a repulsive female spirit who addresses him through his pet parrot. That story shows Hichens's misogyny, an ingredient which reappears in two of his novels where women poison their husbands. One of those novels is 'Bella Donna' (also thrice-filmed), the other is 'The Paradine Case'.

According to Leonard J. Leff ('Hitchcock and Selznick', 1987), the novel of 'The Paradine Case' was 'based on a scandal that rocked the legal circles of London'. I rather think he means the case of Madame Fahmy, a Frenchwoman who in 1923 was acquitted by a British jury after she'd shot and killed her husband, a wealthy Egyptian prince, at London's Savoy Hotel. At the trial, evidence was given that the prince had treated his wife badly. Also, the prince had kept a male secretary with whom he was rumoured to have had a homosexual relationship. The fact that Madame Fahmy herself seems to have been a woman of loose morals was not disclosed to the jury - the famous advocate Edward Marshall Hall (see below) had obtained a Judge's ruling which prohibited this information from being introduced in Court.

Hichens's novel, though, neatly combines elements of the Fahmy trial with aspects of the famous 19th-century case of Florence Maybrick, a young American woman found guilty of poisoning her English husband with arsenic. The Maybricks had married in the USA but eventually settled at 'Battlecrease House' outside Liverpool, where they lived comfortably. Once again, the husband seems to have had a violent disposition - probably the result of his invalidism and chronic hypochondria.⁴ But what's also probable is that he began to suspect his wife of having an affair with a Mr Brierly (with whom, early in 1889, she had spent three nights in a London hotel). Mrs Maybrick was eventually condemned to be hanged but, largely as a result of public protests, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. In 1904 she was released, after which she wrote a book called 'My Fifteen Lost Years'.

At least as important to Hichens's novel as these two specific cases is the real-life precedent for the antagonism between the defence barrister, Keane, and the trial Judge, Lord Horfield. That antagonism clearly reflects the differing temperaments of England's most celebrated 20th-century criminal defender, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, and his period's most famous criminal Judge, the chilling Mr Justice Avory. Of Marshall Hall, you hear that he 'was handsome, excitable, and at his best when able to identify himself strongly with his client's cause'.⁵ He was adept at playing on a jury's emotions: in the Fahmy case, for example, his dramatic final speech contained flagrant appeals to racial and sexual prejudice. And of Mr Justice Avory, you hear that having been a merciless criminal prosecutor, he 'became an icy Judge, one who disregarded all except purely legal considerations'. He was called a 'hanging Judge', something that the novel's sadistic, as well as lecherous, Lord Horfield certainly is. So, too, is Horfield in Hitchcock's film, where he's played by Charles Laughton. The fact that, strictly, the burly Laughton isn't physically suited to the part (the novel describes Horfield as 'slim', and photographs of Mr Justice Avory show a hungry-looking man), may seem immaterial to most of us; nor, I think, does Laughton's tendency to jolly-up the character spoil matters.⁶ More regrettable, though, in terms of drama, is a failure of David Selznick's bowdlerised script to really bring out the barrister-Judge antagonism. In the novel, Keane develops a justified loathing of the Judge even **before** the Paradine case comes to trial.

* * *

You sometimes hear another criticism of the film, that it's 'old-fashioned' ... This time, the problem lies in distinguishing a clearly **intended** stylisation and 'period' flavour from what, I agree, is some weak characterisation and a further 'undramatic' tendency - whereby the film seems too readily to endorse 'home and hearth' values as the norm. (But that may just be part of the film's emphasis on 'Englishness'.) More specifically, I find Gay's character under-developed and priggish-seeming; and I suppose you could say that there's something arch about the presentation of the mysterious Fatal Woman, Mrs Paradine. Still, that presentation is the film's very **domnée**, and how it's seen should depend on how you understand the film itself ...

Old and new are combined from the start. Behind the credits, whose lettering is in both Gothic and modern styles, we see the Judges' Bench of the Old Bailey. The traditional mace is put up, indicating that a case is being tried. (The mace will be removed at the film's end - I've already said what I think is really on trial during the film.) Above and flanking the Bench are its pediment and scrolled columns. These things, too, become fully integral when later they're 'rhymed' in some non-courtroom scenes - notably when the story moves for a time to the Paradines' ancestral home in Cumbria, the imposing 'Hindley Hall', whose front door is set off in the same neo-classical manner. In general, the juxtaposing of old and new elements tells us that whatever we see at a given moment, and in a particular place, is likely to be both complex and yet just a fragment of the whole picture. Which seems appropriate in a film about the Lost Paradise ...

The film's London is especially fragmented, having many differing styles and moods. Time and again, a scene begins with an establishing-shot of a corner of a building, a stretch of the Thames, a part of a skyline - but never the same shot twice. (By contrast, the Cumbria interlude begins and ends with the same wide-view of the countryside.) We see the city by day and by evening, and in many weathers. Also, this being England, we're repeatedly reminded of class and class-differences. Take the first of the scenes set in Holloway Women's Prison where Mrs Paradine is being held. One windy day Keane arrives there with the Paradine family solicitor, Sir Simon Flaquer (Charles Coburn), to meet his client. As their tall English car (**not** an ordinary taxi, I think) enters the prison yard, we have time to appreciate the old trees and battlemented facade towering overhead - Holloway Prison was an old building even in Dickens's time. (Other aspects of its grim exterior will be glimpsed later in the film.) Inside, Keane and Sir Simon mount a wide staircase while cleaning-ladies scrub the vestibule nearby. Sir Simon is heard saying that Mrs Paradine has 'an almost mystic calm'.

Shades of **Vertigo** (1958). That's another Hitchcock film in which a man senses that a woman of almost mystic calm, and hidden fires, can help (as he says) 'put it together'. Also, in both films the man identifies the woman with the past yet comes to believe that she can free him of it.⁷ In this respect, we'll see that the Hindley Hall scene in **The Paradine Case** is as ambiguous as the literally gloomy Muir Woods scene in **Vertigo**.

* * *

I've said that Gay Keane seems priggish. That's as much the fault of the film as of the character, so far as the two can be separated. (Ann Todd's performance doesn't greatly help - but even she complained to the producer, Selznick, that he was over-dressing her in some scenes.) Until near the end, the poor woman isn't allowed to show what she can do, even if it's just play tennis. Her most vigorous action consists of towelling her husband's hair after he comes in from the rain. On the stairs on that occasion, she starts to greet him with enthusiasm but then barely pecks him on the cheek - ostensibly because she's dressed for the evening and he's soaked. The film's point seems to concern a fastidiousness that Gay has inherited from her upper-class background. As she towels Tony's hair and talks of what's 'nice', she remembers the evening he first called on her - and the horrified look on her mother's face because he had 'forgotten to dress'. In contrast, Keane now calls himself, with a touch of smugness, 'the greatest realist in the country'. (Cf. Scottie's reputation in **Vertigo** for being 'the hard-headed Scot'.) The rest of the film is going to teach Keane a lesson, and thereby begin to break down the class-barrier between him and his wife that her mother seems unwittingly to have reinforced those dozen years ago.

When Keane becomes infatuated with Mrs Paradine - who, like him, married into the upper class rather than belonged to it by birth - both Gay and Sir Simon see what's happening but are powerless to intervene. Parallels of the situation abound in Hitchcock's work. For instance, in a scene that visually anticipates one in **Topaz** between Nicole Dévereaux and her husband (concerning her knowledge of his Cuban mistress), Gay comes upon Keane and Sir Simon discussing their client. In fact, though, 'discussing' is hardly the word. So incensed is Keane at Sir Simon's suggestion that Mrs Paradine is a woman of 'rather easy virtue', that he calls his friend 'an insufferable snob'. Gay both hears all of this and sees her husband, foot on chair and with a wave of his pipe, strike an over-assertive pose that he'll later repeat at Cumbria when he seeks to berate the valet André Latour (Louis Jourdan) for much the same reason - for impugning Mrs Paradine's name.

Someone else who sees what's going on is Sir Simon's daughter, and Gay's best friend, Judith Flaquer (Joan Tetzl). She speaks of Keane as riding to Mrs Paradine's rescue like a knight in armour. Also, she thinks that 'men who've been good too long want to wallow in the mud'. The real reason for Keane's going to Cumbria, she suggests, is that he's 'after' Mrs Paradine's secret lover, Latour.

* * *

Judith means that Keane is jealous of Latour. She doesn't mean - despite an innuendo of Theodore Price's - that he could be sexually interested in the valet! By the same token, there's no doubt (cf. 'MacGuffin' 10) that Latour is either gay or essentially celibate, or both those things. The trap-driver who takes Keane to Hindley Hall twice calls Latour 'a queer one', who 'keeps himself to himself'. For Latour's part, he had apparently been well satisfied to serve his master, the blind war hero, Colonel Paradine, with the utmost devotion and loyalty - a loyalty betrayed only once when Mrs Paradine had seduced him. And yet, Keane's sole bent, not unmixed with sadism, soon becomes one of saving Mrs Paradine from the gallows by accusing Latour of the murder instead. There's a real-life parallel in Edward Marshall Hall's appeal to racial and sexual prejudice in order to save Madame Fahmy.

In the Hichens novel, the Latour character (there called Marsh) is described, despite his misogyny, as 'a very masculine male who ... would stand no nonsense from anyone'. He had been 'jilted' on his wedding day by his prospective bride, who had run off with another man. Thereafter he had turned to a life of celibacy, including a spell of war service. I mention all of this because I think it's how Hitchcock basically saw the character too. There seem to be parallels with **Rebecca**. For instance, Keane knows of Latour's **possible** homosexuality from the moment Sir Simon tells him that the valet had guided the Colonel's every step 'like a mother hen'. In **Rebecca** a similar phrase is used by Maxim (Laurence Olivier) to describe his pipe-smoking but fussy estate-manager, Frank Crawley (Reginald Denny) - but where what is being evoked by the film is a general **sterility** that descends on Manderley after Maxim kills his promiscuous first wife. The sterility is the essential thing. That situation echoes Arthurian legend and its 'Dolorous Stroke' which devastates three kingdoms - and which causes the magician Merlin to prophesy that its disastrous effect will be overcome only when a knight of great purity attains the Holy Grail.⁸

Well, neither the temper-prone Maxim, nor the 'knight in armour' who has 'been good too long', Keane, is really a potential Sir Galahad. That's another reason why - to anticipate, now - in both films Paradise will stay lost. Nevertheless, the respective situations at Manderley and Hindley Hall clearly fascinated Hitchcock. In them, some of his own darkest preoccupations could merge in a complex Romanticism.

It's to the scenes at Cumbria - Hindley Hall in particular - that I come next.

* * *

Keane's trip to Cumbria provides another situation that has many parallels in Hitchcock's work, virtually all of them turning on the Lost Paradise idea. In **The Wrong Man** (1957), Manny's hopeful return to the up-State resort, now lying under snow, has a disappointing outcome. So it proves with Keane's trip. Such 'disappointments' correspond to those incurred in 'the tropics' during the last half of **The Pleasure Garden** and most of **Under Capricorn** (1949),⁹ at Soda City half-way through **Saboteur** (1942), at the even more ironically-named Gabriel Valley in **Spellbound** (1945), on the country excursion in **I Confess**, at Prairie Stop in **North by Northwest** (1959), and on the island of Cuba in **Topaz**. And we've seen that Hindley Hall is another Manderley - Franz Waxman's music serving as a reminder. The Paradines had lived here, childless, until just before the Colonel's death, which had occurred on one of their occasional visits to London. In a parodic way, **Latour** had been their 'child'. At the same time, to quote **The Trouble With Harry** (1956), being really an adult, he had needed to be 'horribly good'. Eventually, tragedy had invaded this Eden, too, as something similar is going to befall the Keanes (when the novel will mention how 'Evasive Gay' 'had thought to dwell for ever within the glades of the Garden of Eden' - Chapter XXXII).

Keane's trip to Cumbria recalls **Topaz** quite specifically insofar as Dévereaux's Cuba visit involves (espionage) business but is really (a) to see his mistress, the widow of a hero of the Revolution, in her

villa; and (b), if possible, to have a show-down with his rival, Rico Parra (John Vernon), a strong-willed military man from the 'other' (political) side. Of course, Mrs Paradine isn't at Hindley Hall during Keane's visit - but her 'presence' is. In fact, it's clear that Keane is so kinky about Mrs Paradine that even her house attracts him; and that his vindictiveness towards Latour is so great that he'll unconscionably try to destroy him. Keane's cruel streak is mentioned in the novel - where cruelty is also attributed to the Judge, to the Colonel, and to 'the best of us' (Chapter XXIII).

The moral superiority in the Cumbria scenes is all on the side of the valet. When Keane arrives at the Hall, he's immediately caught out in an untruth by Latour, who has answered the door to him. Later, Keane will tell Latour that he hadn't expected to find him there, which is another untruth. (Recall Judith Flaquer's remark about the real reason for Keane's trip.) As for the valet himself, contra his usual dignified bearing, he tends in Keane's presence to skulk in shadow and to be shown making unorthodox late-evening visits to the barrister's lodgings (arousing Theodore Price's grave suspicion). Examine these scenes carefully, though, and you may find they simply show Latour's feeling of having been 'degraded' (Hitchcock's word) by Mrs Paradine. As he tells Keane, he supposes the barrister to be her emissary. That Mrs Paradine still fancies the valet is one of the courtroom revelations made later.

Inside the Hall, Keane removes his hat in the panelled hallway. The gesture anticipates Arbogast's in **Psycho** (1960), and is made in similar intimidating circumstances - as if the premises were a church or a palace. A tight-lipped housekeeper shows Keane around. A window in the gallery affords them a view of the Lake District. Such a view would normally be rich in poetic association but here mainly suggests, as the novel says, 'life closing in on a man'. (Cf. how in **Psycho** 'they moved away the highway'.) In turn, you would think that the note of melancholy would put paid to any immediate prospect for an Earthly Paradise. Yet soon a decadent version of it appears. Mrs Paradine's vast bedroom, and the adjoining bathroom, show an odd, but grand, mixture of Elizabethan and Italianate styles. Keane is understandably transfixed by what he sees. Situated amid sheepskin rugs (for which, deplorably, 250 Iceland sheep were killed), it's dominated by an oval portrait of Mrs Paradine herself, set into the bed head. That image is positively funerary - like the ones on gravestones in Italian cemeteries. The cult of the Fatal Woman is here enshrined. But that isn't to say that the film necessarily endorses it. Mrs Paradine is a murderer, and the glimpse the scene gives us of 'Nirvana' or 'easeful Death'¹⁰ might well be called as treacherous as any the Hitchcock canon has to offer.

As it happens, a reverse kind of 'love-death' (inflicted by a man on a woman) climaxes the Cuba sequence in **Topaz**, and mention of that film may return us to the matter of how Latour and Rico Parra are alike. When Latour visits Keane at the inn one windy night, his reason for calling so late concerns how the trap-driver would have spread the word about who Keane is (and the nosy innkeeper's wife would have helped). Latour has no wish to be seen publicly in the company of Mrs Paradine's barrister. Accordingly, Theodore Price's suggestion that Latour is really a homosexual prostitute seeking out a rich upper-class client is grossly misleading - and I mean 'grossly' - on at least two counts. As noted, Latour is essentially celibate. And Keane, although he's moderately wealthy, has already told Mrs Paradine that he doesn't consider himself a member of the upper classes.

No, the point of the scene lies elsewhere. Latour comes to the inn in order to answer Keane's questions and, if possible, to tell him the truth as he understands it. That he doesn't fully succeed is more Keane's fault than his. Keane starts by trying to dominate Latour. But then he finds that this man is easily a match for him in will-power (a point also made in the novel). Just as, at a dinner held by Lord Horfield earlier, Keane had refused the Judge's offer of a cigar and said that he would prefer to smoke a cigarette, so here Latour altogether refuses Keane's offer of a cigarette. (Keane: 'You don't smoke?' Latour: 'I **won't** smoke, sir. Thank you.')11 Eventually, resorting to schoolboy invective in which he calls Latour a 'dirty, lying sneak', Keane asks the valet to leave. The latter's insistence that Mrs Paradine is 'bad to the bone ... an evil woman' has roused Keane to fury. His fists are clenched.

What other point has the scene? I've already called Latour 'horribly good', and I suspect he represents what the novel calls 'a monster' - the unselfish man. ('The unselfish man is always half feminine, and something of a monster' - Chapter VII.) In this scene Keane is given the opportunity to learn some home-truths: not that he's secretly gay (for heaven's sake!) but rather that he's capable, like everyone else, of bigotry. Hitchcock once said that 'everything's perverted in a different way', and Keane, with

his egoism and cruelty and selfishness, has his fair share of perversions, whatever their Romantic basis. The wind that howls about the inn and which rattles the shutters before Latour's arrival simply sets the scene for the confrontation that follows, of 'monster' and 'man'. A further - traditional - point, of course, is that these two individuals are really almost 'doubles'. That's how it is in **Topaz**, too, with the French civilian Dévereaux and the Cuban military man Rico Parra - both of whom are sexually troubled and both in love with the same woman.

Again, I think it's interesting to speculate whether, in choosing to film the literally stormy scene in **The Paradine Case** in this way (from a bare hint in the novel), Hitchcock wasn't remembering the central epiphany in David Lean's memorable **Great Expectations** (1946). There, one stormy night, the character Pip (John Mills)¹² discovers the true nature of his 'expectations' when he's confronted by his doppelgänger, and secret benefactor, the returned convict Abel Magwitch (Finlay Currie). The latter, a rough-looking man of almost gentle dignity - and both a 'parent' and a 'brother' to Pip - has redeemed himself by becoming a successful pastoralist 'down under'. Accordingly, the ex-blacksmith Pip, now passing as a gentleman, finds that he must forgo snobbery and, in the rest of the film, begin to accept his common humanity, i.e. acknowledge the bond he shares with this man. In other words, he must acknowledge that his sexual and class infatuations have blinded him. (Leonard Leff reports that a reason Hitchcock was attracted to 'The Paradine Case' was that it offered him the prospect of filming in Dickensian locales, precisely as seen in a film like **Great Expectations**.)

And when you look at the inn scene in the novel of 'The Paradine Case', here's what you find:

Keane felt rather like a witness 'cornered' in cross-examination; yet, strangely perhaps, he did not resent the extraordinary line Marsh was taking [in proposing a swapping of information]. Afterwards he wondered why he had not done so, and found the explanation in the under things which abolish at moments the class differences, and indeed all the surface differences between man and man, and force men, often against their wills, into a brotherhood that seems to be the deliberate work of destiny. (Chapter XXV)

* * *

Nobody in **The Paradine Case** has a monopoly of right, or of anything else. Latour is nominally a villain, like Rico Parra in **Topaz**. He might almost equally be seen as a hero, or at least as a man terribly wronged, like Father Logan (Montgomery Clift) in **I Confess**, with whom he shares much in common (e.g. heroic war service; subsequent willingness to sacrifice everything to serve his 'Master'). Nor need Latour's impassioned description of Mrs Paradine as 'bad to the bone' be taken as the final word on that particular topic ... It's true, of course, that in the end Mrs Paradine is found guilty of murdering her husband, and is painted as being the veritable serpent in the Garden of Eden. Yet at least three men have contributed, if inadvertently, to her downfall. Keane is one, and Mrs Paradine rebukes him in Court for his vindictiveness towards Latour. (In fact, Keane's 'cruelty' will prove doubly fatal.) Another is the late Colonel Paradine himself, a man prone to outbursts of violent temper dating from the time he was blinded in the War. And there's Latour, the handsome celibate. If he himself hasn't 'wallowed in the mud', what temptation has he laid in the way of Mrs Paradine? She whose husband was almost certainly sexually dysfunctional as well as violent?¹³ In truth, despite the elderly Sir Simon's calling her a woman of 'rather easy virtue' - probably referring to the time before she met the Colonel - it looks as if her marriage had been remarkably forbearing. (The theme of a married woman unable to shed the stigma of her errant past wasn't a new one for Hitchcock. His 1926 film actually called **Easy Virtue** is the prototype.) In any event, Mrs Paradine's admission in Court of the love she feels for Latour isn't just heartfelt - it's made in the knowledge that it may convict her of the capital crime of murder.¹⁴

* * *

Despite the fragmented appearance of London during the film, there's a countervailing tendency at work. Significantly, it's provided by the film itself - which seems to take the 'old-fashioned' view that Art, by showing the 'under things', can evoke a compassion that brings Paradise a step or so closer. On the evening after the first day of the trial, Hitchcock effectively sums up matters in three linked images. First, we see a complacent Lord Horfield at home, puffing an after-dinner cigar and sipping brandy,

watched by an obviously concerned Lady Horfield (Ethel Barrymore). Then we see a darkened cell where Mrs Paradine is lying awake, watched by a wardress; and finally, Gay's bedroom where she, too, lies awake, although she pretends to be asleep when her husband looks in at her. Now, I think there's indeed a basic unity to this triptych of images - but it consists of none of the obvious things (e.g. of people watching). It's much closer, in fact, to that Dickensian 'whole' that I noted in 'MacGuffin' 6, something that Manny (Henry Fonda) in **The Wrong Man** can't grasp - a purely noumenal reality.

Regular 'MacGuffin' readers may have noticed that, like Mrs Paradine, I've been forbearing in this article - I've not yet referred to the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), whose generally cosmopolitan outlook seems to me to anticipate Hitchcock's. The fact is, though, that the Hichens novel specifically mentions 'the great Schopenhauer' (Chapter XL), and shows his influence. Indeed, there's at least one episode, and one scene, that needs a knowledge of his thought if it's to be fully understood. The theme of that scene is the need for compassion.

Once again Lord Horfield sits at home with Lady Horfield. The trial proper has ended, and only the verdict and the sentence have still to be given. In Court, Lord Horfield has managed the 'over-emotional' Keane with the utmost facility, and indeed has been the very model of one of His Majesty's judges. Perhaps that explains a feature of the décor in the Judge's home: its 'neo-classical' panelling, like that in the courtroom, the scene of his triumphs. But, ironically, the panelling also resembles Hindley Hall's. The notion of a Dickensian 'whole' again seems posited. In the above-mentioned article on **The Wrong Man** ('MacGuffin' 6), I likened that film to 'Bleak House', mainly because it, too, is a tale of institutional injustice. Now I'm again reminded of the novel. Its title specifies not just a particular English country house, and another even 'bleaker' version of it (called 'Chesney Wold'), but also a law court (the Court of Chancery) and, beyond that, the English nation.

Lord Horfield has his own apparently inflexible thoughts about the judicial system, thoughts which he's graciously prepared to share with his wife. But first, this being dinner-time, he'll crack a walnut and remark dispassionately on how its contents resemble 'the human brain'. (The business of the walnut isn't in the novel, by the way.) Whether or not Lady Horfield notices the **truly** monstrous image of her husband this simile suggests, she immediately refers to the trial. She'll pray, she says, that the verdict will be 'Not Guilty', because 'who needs pity more than a woman who has sinned?' Her husband sniffs.

But, just for once, Lady Horfield is adamant. This is her big scene. As Selznick's script here follows the novel fairly closely, it seems fair to quote the latter:

"Punishment is part of the scheme," said her husband. "And an extremely necessary part of it."
 "But doesn't life punish us enough, doesn't it, Horfield? Why should we hurt each other? We have no right to be cruel. If I am certain of anything, I am certain of that."
 Suddenly, with an awkward, even startling movement, she stretched forward over the dining-table, knocking over a glass as she did so.
 "Horfield, my dear - don't be cruel any more!" she said in a trembling voice. "Give it up! You may think it makes you happy, but you're wrong. It doesn't! It can't! It's - it's an illusion!"
 (Chapter XXXIX)

Perhaps the knocked-over glass may remind us of the glass of burgundy that had killed Colonel Paradine - another 'cruel' man who had been greatly honoured by his country. Or perhaps the accident is just one more instance of worldly imperfection. Either way, it's apt. Lady Horfield's point that her husband's cruelty doesn't make him happy is correct, firstly, because that cruelty makes her - and their marriage - **unhappy**. But, secondly, because the 'illusion' she refers to is basic - the idea is as old as Euripides and nowhere more cogently expressed than in Schopenhauer's distinction between **temporal** and **eternal** justice. The latter's the real 'judge' in **The Paradine Case**. Quite simply, even the person who's happy for a time, 'amid the sufferings of innumerable others', as Schopenhauer says, must eventually awake, 'in order to realize that only a fleeting illusion has separated him from the suffering of his life'. Or, if he fails to so awake, then in a sense enlightenment and justice are deferred, but really 'tormentor and tormented are one'. And that's what Lady Horfield wants the Judge to see.

A similar idea informs **Vertigo**, as I suggested in 'MacGuffin' 1. There, the film's nominal villain,

Gavin Elster (Tom Helmore), eludes temporal justice but the film's strong sense of **eternal** justice makes its own comment. Likewise, **The Paradine Case** stresses 'under things', as during the inn scene (where a further function of the wind may be to imply the levelling 'Will' that pervades all of Nature). Only one's knowledge of the sickening killing of the 250 Iceland sheep, as mentioned earlier, mars the film's delivery of its message (and the novel's) - fortunately, I think the later **Marnie** (1964) shows a greater maturity in this respect.

Lady Horfield keeps plugging away. Noting the Judge's total resistance to what she says, she adds: 'Oh Tommy, when you were young you were kind.' The parallel with Keane's 'lost ideals' may leave you feeling that there's something almost murderous about the egoism of these men of temporal justice, or at any rate about the 'scheme' that binds them. But His Lordship is in no mood to discuss such things tonight. Framed by burning candles, suggesting Lucifer in his domain, he announces: 'The Paradine woman will be hanged after three clear Sundays.'

The final scene follows immediately, and takes place towards dawn at Sir Simon's house. The theme of mercy having just been well and truly sounded by Lady Horfield - and **not** absolutely put out of Court by the Judge's hostility to it - what's now needed is a pragmatic note. It's provided in turn by Sir Simon and by Gay. First, Sir Simon tells Keane that the latter's thought of giving up the Bar is 'poppycock'. Then, in some of Hitchcock's economical-as-ever camerawork (executed in this film by the famous Lee Garmes), we see Judith call her father from the room. A worried Gay has turned up. With a wonderful little speech, Gay puts behind her all last traces of over-fastidiousness, and asks her erring husband not to be 'a beachcomber'. She wants him, rather, 'back on the job'. With subjective camera, Hitchcock now puts us **doubly** inside the marriage, something we never got with the Horfields (or with the Paradines). That is, he cuts directly between husband and wife as Gay says, 'Incidentally, darling, you do need a shave', and her hand reaches out from the camera lens to feel his stubble. It's a fairly explicit sexual symbol, at last ...

Gay's cautionary remark about beachcombing anticipates the equally cautionary line in **Psycho** about running away and setting up 'a private island'. It doesn't, or won't, do. As noted, Hitchcock's films are full of premature or misguided attempts to resolve unhappiness in exotic or isolated places. Such attempts never succeed in Hitchcock (with the possible exception of the comedy **The Trouble With Harry** - which is its **own** 'pastorale'). This, for perfectly unsentimental reasons. There's no going back to the womb. As they say, ontogenesis echoes phylogenesis (cf. the 'evolution' motif in **The Wrong Man**), and the problem needs to be seen accordingly. Yet the truth always lies close at hand.¹⁵ Perhaps that's why 'Paradine' is only one letter removed from 'Paradise'. And why, like Lady Horfield, we should keep plugging away.

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Notes

1. Lines heard echoing past a row of prison cells in **The Paradine Case**. William Douglas's popular song evidently didn't achieve its author's purpose, for the real Annie married Douglas's rival, Alexander Fergusson.
2. In Welles's **The Lady from Shanghai** (1946), Macao is called 'the wickedest city in the world'.
3. In the opening scene, Mrs Paradine checks her unruffled appearance in a gilt-framed mirror. Alongside, though, is a large screen on which is painted in modernist style a picture of rearing horses. The two images, so different, are nevertheless in apposition. (Later we learn that Mrs Paradine rode a black hunter.)
4. Jack the Ripper's diary, recently 'discovered', purports to show that James Maybrick and Jack the Ripper were the same person!
5. Julian Symons, 'Crime and Detection: An illustrated history from 1840' (1968), p. 123.

- 6. Relaxing after dinner, Horfield calls Sir Simon Flaquer 'Simmy' and asks not to be interrupted by him 'in the middle of an insult'. (Rather more of a Mr Justice Avory look-alike, by the way, is the epicene judge in **I Confess**.)
- 7. That is, in both films the man is working to save the woman but with a self-interested motive as well. Keane, described in the novel as still 'boyish', seems to identify the Italian-born Mrs Paradine with the wild oats he never sowed.
- 8. Daphne du Maurier set the 'Rebecca' novel in her beloved Cornwall - the legendary birthplace of King Arthur (at Tintagel).
- 9. Both films end with characters returning to their respective native countries. The Australia of **Under Capricorn**, constantly photographed in fiery reds, represents a virtual purgatory (as opposed to Ireland, where Lady Hattie had been accustomed to ride at a fence 'as if the Kingdom of Heaven were on the other side').
- 10. As Robin Wood has noted, Keats's 'Ode to a Nightingale' provided the very title of an early draft of **Vertigo**. The relevant lines are: 'Darkling I listen; and for many a time/ I have been half in love with easeful Death'. For my thoughts on the ambiguity of the Muir Woods scene in **Vertigo**, see 'MacGuffin' 11.
- 11. This strongly suggests Latour's celibacy. Smoking has sexual connotations throughout the film. Two signs of Gay's losing her over-fastidiousness are her electing to attend a murder trial (a 'first' for her) and her taking up smoking ...
- 12. Given criticism about the unsuitability of Gregory Peck (b. 1916) to play an English barrister, and the unavailability of Laurence Olivier (b. 1907) - he and wife Vivien Leigh were touring Australia - I think John Mills (b. 1908) could have been an excellent choice to play Keane in Hitchcock's film.
- 13. Blindness often has some such sexual connotation in films, of course.
- 14. Did Mrs Paradine's seduction of the celibate (and virginal?) Latour represent no more, and no less, than an attempted 'lesson in love' that went terribly wrong? Perhaps the most ambiguous lines in the film are Keane's question to Mrs Paradine in Court, 'Did he [Latour] try to make love to you?', and her answer, 'Yes'. Cf. the situation of Juanita Cordoba and the impotent Rico Parra in **Topaz** (as noted in 'Book Review' in this issue).
- 15. I have noted in some previous 'MacGuffins' (e.g. no. 10) the lines from Emerson that inform **Harnie**: 'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man'.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Hitchcock's **Young and Innocent**; Spielberg's **Schindler's List**; book reviews (e.g. 'Soul in Suspense', 'Colin Wilson's World Famous Murders', 'The Monstrous-Feminine'). Plus the usual features, including 'Letters'. Extra items always wanted.

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Film scripts, anyone?

Many of Hitchcock's films are available in their original screenplay form, and these sometimes contain information and material not included in the finished film. A reliable supplier is 'Hollywood Scripts', whose US address is: 5514 Satsuma Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91601; telephone 818-980-3545.

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Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **Vertigo** (no. 11), Adrian Martin on **Notorious** (10), Evan Williams on **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). Earlier, there were issues on **Suspicion** (7), **The Wrong Man** plus Charles Barr on Hitchcock's British Period (6), **Number 17** (5), **Psycho** (4), **The Lodger** (3), **Stage Fright** (2), and **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** (1). (The recent issues are the ones most recommended!) The next 'MacGuffin' will include a detailed Table of Contents for issues 9-12.

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ODD SPOT: NO HARD FEELINGS

John Ford's 1937 film **See Willie Winkie** (of which there's an echo - literally - in Alfred Hitchcock's 1939 **Jamaica Inn**) starred a 9-years-old Shirley Temple, and was reviewed by Graham Greene in the 28th October, 1937, edition of the British weekly, 'Night and Day', which ceased publication soon afterwards.

The reason that 'Night and Day' folded was, of course, that Greene's review had been deemed libellous by a British court, which awarded heavy damages against the journal to Miss Temple and Twentieth-Century Fox. Greene had referred virulently to the pre-pubescent Shirley as a 'fancy little piece ... with the mature suggestiveness of a Dietrich: her neat and well developed rump twisted in the tap-dance ...'.

Strange to relate, then, it appears that Shirley herself bore Greene no malice. As Christopher Hawtree (who edited a 'Night and Day' anthology a few years ago) has now shown, the two became friends. Shirley was eventually appointed US Ambassador in Prague, where Greene had occasion to write to her in 1990. His letters were signed 'affectionately', her reply referred to him as 'colleague of many years' and promised a party.

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