Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

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EDITORIAL

Until Britain's King Edward VIII abdicated his throne on December 12, 1936, because he wished to marry a divorced American woman, a commoner, his country had been bitterly divided over the matter. Even now, there are signs that the underlying divisions have not fully healed or gone away ...

Well, Hitchcock's **Young and Innocent** came out in 1937. It makes no direct reference to the so-called Abdication Crisis, something that no doubt only helped it appeal the more to audiences of the time. Yet, watching it now, you may sense that it touches on related topics, as if by design. For example, the question of divorce is raised in the (literally stormy) opening scene, only to be dropped from all of the (consistently sunny) scenes that follow.

More crucially, the film's young couple, Robert and Erica, are commoners who nevertheless have about them a good deal of grace and virtue. (That isn't to call either of them 'innocent', Robert especially.) Robert is a promising writer of movie scripts, whose impression of America must surely be favourable since he has already sold a script to Hollywood! Also, with his courteous voice and bearing, he may remind you of the present-day Prince Charles (grandson, let's notice, of Edward VIII's brother, who came to the throne as George VI).

Likewise, to critic Penelope Gilliatt Erica seems to resemble one of novelist Dornford Yates's courtly heroines, with 'great grey eyes'. Yet she keeps the common touch, not least in her attachment to her battered old car and to her mongrel dog, Towser. An article on **Young and Innocent** in this 'MacGuffin' suggests that ultimately what the film does is confer on its audience a kind of 'higher innocence' ...

I have to tell you that this 'MacGuffin' has its eccentric moments, or worse. (Honesty is the best policy!) A case in point is the review of a very readable new book about pop culture, 'Phantasms', by local writer Adrian Martin. As Adrian isn't exactly unknown to 'MacGuffin' readers, I apologise to both him and them for the idiosyncratic (or at any rate, 'personal') tack the review takes! There's also this time a review by film lecturer and critic Tom Ryan of a new 'international history' of film; and a review of the recently-published continuity script of Hitchcock's **North by Northwest**, edited by the prolific James Naremore.

We're considerably pushed for room in this issue. To save face, er space, the sizable 'Bloopers' feature has been held over; as has the Table of Contents for issues 9-12.

To everyone, good viewing.

Ken

P.S. Also to save space, there's no 'Coming Attractions' listing this time. But I can report that some pleasant surprises are in store. And among the Hitchcock films for special attention soon are **The Ring**, **Foreign Correspondent** and **Spellbound**.

LETTERS

Timothy Walters, Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA

Your review of the Theodore Price book [in 'MacGuffin' 12] was an intelligent discourse on homosexual characters in the films of Hitchcock. However, I noticed no mention of the morose Leonard from **North by Northwest**.

Leonard (Martin Landau) is the devoted henchman and 'right arm' of the traitorous Vandamm (James Mason). Sinister and gaunt, Leonard is a menacing and effective screen villain who exudes a callous evil. He also emanates a rather effeminate persona. He addresses Vandamm with a curt 'sir' that suggests a servant who is loyal in more than one sense.

In the climactic Rapid City sequence, Leonard attempts to convince Vandamm that Eve (Eva Marie Saint) is actually a treacherous female who has betrayed them. When Vandamm reacts skeptically, Leonard alludes to his 'women's intuition'. This is analogous with the pervasive 1950s stereotype that gay couples each assume a man and woman role . At one point Vandamm says to Leonard, 'I think you're jealous. I'm very touched.'

Leonard turns out to be correct in his distrust of Eve, so jealousy was obviously not his sole motive. Yet the film creates the vague impression that Leonard is a homosexual concubine and Vandamm his bisexual master. I have always found this to be a provocative implication for a film released in ultraconservative 1959, an era when homosexuality was largely suppressed and unacknowledged by society.

(Editor's note. Yes indeed. And yet, what you describe is virtually a rerun of **Rebecca**, with Vandamm as the 'polymorphous perverse' Rebecca, Leonard as the devoted/jealous Mrs Danvers - and Thornhill as the straight-laced Maxim. Ironically, Cary Grant in real life was bisexual, as, of course, was the actor who had played Maxim, Laurence Olivier.)

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Melanie Whiting, Mallala, South Australia.

In October we were fortunate enough to visit Hollywood and do the Universal Studios tour. As part of the tour, we visited a demonstration of Hitch's special effects. I was the first to put up my hand to volunteer to take part. The particular movie being illustrated was **Saboteur**, and the special effect was 'falling'. My experience that day made our trip extra special. I recommend the tour to anyone. 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' is still shown on TV over there.

* * *

Tim Costello, Cronulla, New South Wales, Australia.

Just thought I'd write out a 'top ten Hitchcocks' to let you know my tastes at this point. 1. **Shadow of a Doubt**. 2. **Vertigo**. 3. **North by Northwest**. 4. **The 39 Steps**. 5. **Stage Fright**. 6. **Strangers on a Train**. 7. **The Lady Vanishes**. 8. **The Paradine Case**. 9. **Rear Window**. 10. **Psycho**.

Probably no surprises there, except for **Stage Fright** which seems terribly underrated generally - it's easily the funniest film (Alistair Sim in particular) and does have great suspense.

* * *

Richard Kincaid, Bozeman, Montana, USA.

I really appreciate the ['MacGuffin's'] intelligent yet jargon free film criticism.

NEWS

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

Everything you always wanted to know about ... Dr Zizek

His photograph may remind you of the late Rainer Werner Fassbinder, being of an unshaven chap in a denim jacket. The photograph was published when he visited Australia recently to address psychoanalysts on how popular culture reflects society 'in its basic logic'.

Dr Slavoj Zizek, a senior researcher with the University of Ljubljana's Institute for Sociology, is the author of such books as 'Enjoy Your Symptom' and the catchily-titled 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)'.

Dr Zizek told his audiences that trends in contemporary popular culture allow us to detect fundamental shifts in how we see ourselves. For instance, Robert Altman's latest film, **Short Cuts**, based on the works of Raymond Carver, gives an insight into post-modern subjectivity.

'What Altman has done is portray an almost blissful vision of parallel stories, parallel lives which interconnect but in a totally contingent way.

'So I think it's wrong to view the movie as pessimistic, as an example of universe despair. It's really beyond pessimism or optimism, and it breaks out of the classic Hollywood formula.'

More about Hitchcock's wartime propaganda films

When Hitchcock's **Bon Voyage** and **Aventure Malgache** were screened in Los Angeles recently, Kevin Thomas of the 'Los Angeles Times' wrote an appreciative report. He notes that the films, each about thirty minutes long, were commissioned in 1944 by the British Ministry of Information for showing in Occupied France to Resistance fighters there. Both films have lately been given English subtitles prepared by author and [illegible] Tom Milne.

Thomas calls the films 'subtle, intricate, carefully detailed film noir, models of compression and resourcefulness' which 'clearly show the work of Hitchcock at his prime, coming as they do between **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Spellbound**'.

Bon Voyage sounds particularly intriguing. A young Scottish RAF gunner (British actor John Blythe), who has escaped from a POW camp in Germany, makes his way to London where he's interviewed by a Free French officer. In flashback, the gunner, Sgt Dougal, who's amusingly always hungry, tells how he was helped by another escapee, a Pole, and made his way through France with the help of the Resistance.

When the interviewing officer tells Sgt Dougal that the Pole was really a Vichy spy out to uncover as many members of the Resistance as possible, this triggers a rerun, in flashback, of the sergeant's journey, which takes on a whole new meaning, with many subtle details revealed.

The other film, **Aventure Malgache**, never made it to France. Thomas suggests this was because it somehow manages to show the French people in an ambiguous light 'surely not equalled until Marcel Ophuls's 1970 documentary **The Sorrow and the Pity**'.

Both films, though, have now been released overseas on video.

New books

Recent lists sent to us by the Electric Shadows Bookshop in Canberra include a couple of Hitchcock-related titles. They are: Robert Corber, 'In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock,

Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America' (260pp, pb); and Edgardo Cozarinsky (ed.), 'Borges In and On Film' (117pp, pb), containing Borges's collected criticism of such films as Ford's **The Informer**, Hitchcock's **Sabotage**, and Mayo's **The Petrified Forest**.

Another recent title of interest is E. Ann Kaplan, 'Motherhood and Representation: the Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama' (250pp, pb). The author looks at how motherhood has been depicted in novels and films from 1830 to the present, including Ellen Wood's 'East Lynne' and Hitchcock's **Marnie**.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Sklar, Robert: 'Film: An International History of the Medium (Thames & Hudson, 1994).

Reviewed by Tom Ryan

Robert Sklar's handsome 560-page tome on the history of film respectfully observes that by the 1960s Sir Alfred Hitchcock had become one of the cinema's 'ranking elders'. Alas, scholarly books like this aren't supposed to be controversial, and so one doesn't expect to find Sklar giving Hitch the kind of going over he gets in 'Movieline' columnist Joe Queenan's recently-published 'If You're Talking To Me Your Career Must Be In Trouble'.

I'll just note in passing, then, that anyone interested in Hitchcock is more likely to discover food for thought in Queenan's irreverent foragings (which I mention here only because I've just happened upon them) than in Sklar's book.

It's definitely not scholarship when the maverick Queenan claims that at the end of **Vertigo** (1958) Scottie's anguished outburst against Judy/Madeleine is Hitchcock's displaced anger at Grace Kelly's desertion of him for Prince Rainier. 'He made you over just like I made you over, only better ...', etc. But it is provocative muck-raking that isn't easily dispensed with, whether or not it finally helps you understand Hitchcock's masterpiece.

As for Sklar, the author of the illuminating 'Movie-Made America' (1975), a contributing editor to the enduring left-wing American film quarterly, 'Cineaste', and currently Professor of Film Studies at New York University, such musings aren't on the menu. As a scholar, albeit one writing a coffee-table history of the cinema, he is interested in Hitchcock only as a filmmaker and an artist. Parameters which I share, by the way.

Hitchcock aside, his 'International History' is cram-packed with statistics. Did you know, for example, that 'the video sales for Disney's **Beauty and the Beast** were higher than the net profits from theatrical box office returns of any film in history'? Or that 'in the 1980s India produced by far the largest number of films of any country - nearly one thousand annually'? Or that 'twenty-three features were released by Hollywood studios in 1953 in 3-D ... [that] in 1954, the number of releases was thirteen ... [that] in 1955 the total was exactly one, and in 1956 - zero'?

But they're not just statistics in a vacuum. Sklar provides them with a context you can get your teeth into. And, for him, the celluloid past is best understood at the intersection of artistic aspiration and political and economic circumstance. He's certainly provocative, but in a much more substantial and challenging way than Queenan.

Selectively tracing the development of film as an international medium, he ranges across more than a century of technological innovation, commercial opportunism, social change and aesthetic ingenuity. For him, film is an art, but it is also an industry, subject to the same forces as other industries. His capsule comments about particular films and filmmakers are those of an insightful critic, although the major strength of his approach is his recognition that any study of film as an international phenomenon needs to go much further.

He admires the same areas of Hollywood filmmaking as I do (not the only reason he's insightful). But he

also insists we recognise that Hollywood's domination of world cinema has nothing to do with the quality of its output, and everything to do with the emergence of the US in the twentieth century as a capitalist nation with global aspirations. To be commercially viable, a film has to be exhibited, and the larger the market that can be created for it the better.

Of course, Sklar's base in the US means that he is writing from an American vantage point. He includes some very useful introductory chapters on the struggle to establish national cinemas within various Asian, African and South American countries (or colonies). But his account of the past pivots on the entrenched landmarks that he grew up with: American cinema (Ford, Hawks, the later Hitchcock, et al.), French, German, Italian, Russian. And he is certainly not alone in this.

Moreover, any attempt to cover a century of international filmmaking within a single volume is inevitably going to be fraught with problems: of access and of selection. Many films have simply vanished. For example, of those made during the silent era, only a small percentage has survived the ravages of time. Others remain out of the reach of any single historian. And, from the thousands of films made each year around the world, Sklar's extraction of 'more than eleven hundred' is necessarily going to have its limitations.

However, as he points out in his introduction, and here his method wisely diverges from the one employed by most film historians, he is not pretending to be comprehensive, or objective: 'A history of cinema differs from a dictionary or an encyclopedia in its capacity to make connections.' However incomplete it might be, his is primarily a cultural overview whose focus happens to be film.

Sklar is constantly reminding us that there's always more to be known. He concludes his survey with the observation that 'history is never finished, and rarely stays the same way for long'. His contribution is that, despite the constraints (not the least of which is space), 'Film: An International History of the Medium' still manages to offer an informed view of the Big Picture. It is beautifully designed and gloriously illustrated, and the vast range of colour and black and white stills are (for once) captioned with a purpose.

[Tom Ryan is film critic for 'The Sunday Age', where a slightly shorter version of this review appeared. Our version is printed with permission.]

Martin, Adrian: 'Phantasms: The dreams and desires at the heart of our popular culture' (McPhee Gribble/ Penguin Books: Ringwood, Australia, 1994; 212 pp, pb).

> **In Bed With Madonna** [aka **Truth or Dare**, 1991] is a typically unruly, confused, contradictory, excessive pop artefact, and you'll only ever make sense of it and your own response to it by plunging in, armed with any theoretical tool that may or may not prove useful.
>
> \- Adrian Martin, 'Phantasms' (p. 31)

Adrian Martin is a professional elucidator of film and media - one whose comments are particularly lucid. Just recall his account of Hitchcock's **Notorious** (1946) in 'MacGuffin' 10, describing the 'enigmatic logic' of the relationship between the three main characters. I've read whole chapters in books on Hitchcock that have shown far less understanding. Well, now Adrian has sent us a review-copy of his own book, 'Phantasms', and its subject proves to be virtually every aspect of pop culture consumed in Australia circa 1991-1993. The book contains twenty-five short essays; unfortunately, I'll only be able to mention a few here. Also, for various reasons, I fear that my review will risk sounding slightly stuffy ...

Consider this. Almost at the outset Adrian shows that he hasn't overlooked one of the incidental lessons of Hitchcock. 'We do well to remember', he says in a Prologue, 'that ... Hitchcock ... was considered, not very long ago, a vulgar Hollywood entertainer whose presence in anything resembling high culture had to be tenaciously justified.' (p. 5) From this, he extrapolates that we shouldn't now dismiss as worthless even 'trash culture' - which is a neat analogy on Adrian's part, even if it rather blurs the fact that Hitchcock himself was never considered trashy: or why would David Selznick, producer of the

Notorious package, have employed him? I hasten to add that Adrian here cites Hitchcock as a representative of 'popular' culture, **not** trash; nevertheless, the possibility of a logical slide has been opened up. Reading further in the book, we had better be alert!

For instance, we soon come to the essay called 'Perish the Thought: Intellectualising Pop'. For me, it contains another type of slide: a sliding past (or over). I'm thinking of when the essay, albeit with some evident amusement, quotes without direct comment an article by two Australian critics praising **In Bed With Madonna** for '"destabilising the central position given to truth in conceptions of documentary"' (p. 26). I acknowledge the 'postmodernist' tone of that remark, but my point concerns how Adrian's essay dodges the implication (or assumption) of it, in preference to chastising certain 'mass media intellectuals' seemingly left floundering by the new pop ways.

I say 'seemingly' because I think there's an alternative explanation which Adrian overlooks, and which I'll come to. First, though, let me stress my main point: namely, that the book doesn't indicate where it stands in relation to 'documentary truth' and its relation to pop culture. For me, such truth exists, and is very precious. I think it refers, often, to what is **most** widely or deeply or lastingly fixed in general experience, i.e. not just the pop scene (as usually defined). A recent documentary, 'When the War Came to Australia', showing life on the home front during the Second World War, is very competently assembled - yet its capacity to affect a viewer has more to do with how, time and again, it directly illuminates that viewer's own (shared) life and history. Here's a slightly different example. For an Australian viewer, the excellence of 'The [American] Civil War' concerns its broad human truths, which shock or move us deeply. But I think both programmes are basic in a way that **In Bed With Madonna** isn't (sharing and shocking though **it** may be, after its fashion).

Well, Adrian advocates plunging in regardless. But why, exactly? Because Madonna is 'big' at the moment? Because someone may happen to nominate Alek Keshishian's film in a 'ten best' list? Personally, I think I would just rather read Adrian's (and one or two other commentators') expert opinions about the film - especially now I've seen it! And that's not meant as a criticism of the film, because it too is very competently made. Rather, I want to claim that if you're prepared to defy current wisdom, and admit that some truths **are** more basic than others - as I've tried to indicate above - then much else follows. For instance, you can be more detached. In turn, detachment may bring a certain wisdom of its own ...

Here's a rough analogy. In popular Hinduism there are hundreds of gods and goddesses, each with its own cult. The point is, you're not expected to worship - or even know about - any but the major deities and perhaps one or two of the lesser ones, in order to be a devout, practising Hindu. Now let's return to Madonna. I'm not sure if she's a major goddess, but anyone can tell that her principal appeal is sexual, allied to the fact that she has conspicuously sloughed off her Catholic upbringing. And it seems to me that nearly everything else follows from that: e.g. her public humiliation of her father, and the even greater adoration such an act brings her - including, apparently, from her father himself. Still, as Adrian reminds us (p. 31), Madonna is also the epitome of pop culture's tendency to change its own image, so who knows what she'll do next? But, in that case, I think I'll just let Adrian tell me.

You may be surprised to hear how there are signs that Adrian himself is moving towards a degree of detachment. (But if pop is as chameleon-like as he says, perhaps you shouldn't be.) In his Prologue (p. 3) he cites the expatriate Chilean filmmaker Raul Ruiz on how it may be better to watch and really think about just five films a year than to 'bullishly' see each new film in order to have an opinion about it. In turn, you may then be better able to isolate and track your own obsessions and thereby '"escape from yourself"'. (Anyone who has ever meditated, or has kept a dream-diary, will recognise that technique.)

On the other hand, if we look at where Adrian is coming from, rather than where he may be headed, it's certainly not surprising that he has never had much truck with mythologist Joseph Campbell - even after encountering his work in a six-part TV series shown in Australia last year. In the essay 'Heroes, Quests and the Meaning of Life: Mythomania', Adrian is leery of several filmmakers, such as Australia's George Miller, Yahoo Serious and Geoffrey Wright, who have each promoted one or other of their films by saying they embody a universal myth. (A sure sign of the director having been less than fully engaged creatively, I'd have thought.) But the crux of the essay may be the humorous passage where Adrian recalls discussion-panels on which someone has adduced a Jungian- or Campbell-type myth in order to

'explain' a particular film: at that point, 'everyone nods thoughtfully and then scurries away, visibly relieved at having to think no further.' (p. 126) That description merits a chuckle - but again might be said to slide past an important issue: namely, how there could indeed be some simple life-truths that frequently elude pop culture and its commentators.

At the risk (as I say) of sounding stuffy, I want to raise the matter of suffering. From Jung's reading of Schopenhauer, and his own early observations of the natural world, he saw that suffering is basic. That is, he reached exactly the same conclusion as Hitchcock did at the time of making **The Birds** (1963): 'catastrophe ... surrounds us all'. Well. it's also there every night on TV if you look for it, in news bulletins and in truth-based documentaries - such as the one on Channel 28 recently, about child-labour around the world, which quoted the staggering statistic that 200 million children are forced to work each day. And yet, almost the only contact the pop scene (as usually defined) will have with any of this is when, for one or two admirable nights, a concert is held to raise funds for famine-relief or the like. Otherwise, there'll just be some 'neat' or 'spectacular' use of images of drought or flood or a collapsing building in a rock video.

Now, I really don't want to be thought a party pooper (like those mythologising panelists!). So I'll quickly note a key essay of Adrian's in which he evinces concern for the suffering people he calls 'the walking wounded' (cf p. 130). The essay is titled 'The Everlasting Functional Dysfunctional Family', and it deals mainly with sitcoms like 'Roseanne'. (Adrian thinks the latter is 'one of the best shows on TV' - p. 74; for my part, I certainly consider the lady in question one of TV's most **real** people.) At one point, Adrian quotes the actor/director John Cassavetes, playing a rather frazzled divorcee-parent in his film **Love Streams** (1984). Matter-of-factly, Cassavetes remarks, 'Life is a series of suicides, promises broken, children smashed, whatever.' (p. 74) Not only does Adrian care to quote that doleful line, for which he deserves credit, he springboards from it into the forceful observation that some media depictions of so-called 'dysfunctional' families are really showing us new, unorthodox, yet above all **effective** ways out of the impasse of problematic relationships - and suffering.

Yet I still hold to how there's a place for a more detached approach to the media than, by and large, Adrian allows. There's a hit-and-miss aspect to his 'plunging in' approach. If you go that way, you may never identify the whole picture and simply be buffeted into a too-common (if Australian?) wry tolerance that's at once heroic and sad. Well, for over a decade, I sat at the feet of Shri Vijayadev Yogendra, from India. He taught us meditation and the wisdom of the golden mean (and worried, I learned eventually, that my exposure to media-studies was undermining the effect on me of his teaching). Years later, I still think that meditation or some equivalent (e.g. keeping a dream-diary) can lead to a knowledge on your own account of what Adrian calls 'phantasms'. With this important difference: being centred in the individual self, phantasms born of meditation have the potential to reach deeper and eventually free that self. Whereupon, the whole picture should indeed become clear.

A point of clarification. We tend to forget that the media are what their name says: as intermediaries, or go-betweens, they interpose between us and reality. For that reason, we don't always need them, or even media commentators, in order to see plainly what is happening. To the extent that Adrian's essay called 'Find Yourself a City' moves beyond describing various city-based movies, and talks about the metropolis itself, it becomes obvious (e.g. in telling us that cities have always been places for visionaries to work upon, or from - p. 47). Mind you, the descriptions of the films are often beautifully done; they bind their own spells on the reader. Nevertheless, the essay is one of the book's shallower 'meditations'. Better to 'do it yourself'?

A theme of this review has been how we should stand back to see the wider picture as often as we jump right in. Adrian expresses the same idea when he criticises some lop-sided commentaries on the image of the city in films (p. 45). But perhaps he isn't immune from lop-sidedness himself! Earlier, I implied that not all 'mass media intellectuals' are as obtuse as Adrian paints them. If some of them (e.g. Phillip Adams of 'The Australian' and Radio National) don't always 'plunge in' gleefully when confronted with **In Bed With Madonna** or even the much greater work **Taxi Driver** (Martin Scorsese, 1976) - both of which are films that Adams has expressed vehement reservations about - then the reason may concern nothing less than the perennial issue of where art stands in your ideal republic (or biosphere) - and who and what else matters. I find Adams to be, on balance, the most level-headed and best-informed of Australia's public commentators; with his above-average knowledge of films, he is usually able to quickly

'savvy' what an **In Bed With Madonna** is about (in ways I've indicated) before he then decides whether or not he wants to **savour** it further. Now, an interesting thing about these two films is that they're both, at some level, about the inherited Catholic sensibility - and frequently these days, rage. Arguably, Adams felt no urge to respond to the 'necessity' of their making, whereas that's very much what Adrian did do. Probably the most passionate essay in his book is about Scorsese's 'secret' purpose: its title is 'Martin Scorsese's Indirect Aim'. Like the Madonna essay, it welcomes the **in extremis** experience. But finally neither piece convinces me.

But, hey, there's a great deal to enjoy in this book. If you're a film or media buff, it constantly offers the delights of recognition. And Adrian's quality of writing - second to none in his field - affords handsome bonuses. Here's the sort of thing I mean. The title of one essay tells us to 'Send in the Ghosts' - it's about ghost movies. But don't you hear an echo of Stephen Sondheim? The same essay proceeds to inform us that a reincarnation story like **Chances Are** (1989) belongs to 'a sub-genre that is a kissing cousin to the ghost story' (p. 21). How about that unexpected Elvis reference? As for Joe Dante's gremlins tearing up a cinema showing **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, or Pee-wee Herman riding his beloved bicycle, or the sinister music teacher Dr T working out his '5000 fingers' (500 captive children at pianos) - 'these', says Adrian, 'are a few of my favourite myths'(p. 129). So he happily evokes the sound of Julie Andrews for good measure! But then, you almost suspect that this author never forgets **anything** he's seen on some screen or other ...

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Naremore, James (ed.): 'North by Northwest' (Rutgers Films in Print: Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1993; 238 pp, pb).

My copy of Eric Ambler's 1939 thriller 'The Mask of Dimitrios' (aka 'A Coffin for Dimitrios') carries an endorsement by Alfred Hitchcock on its cover, calling it 'An amazing novel'. Thanks to Professor Naremore's **North by Northwest** book, I now know where the Hitchcock quote comes from. When Hitchcock first arrived in America, David Selznick attempted to bring him and the London-born novelist together. In 1943 Hitchcock wrote the introduction to an omnibus of Ambler's fiction called 'Intrigue'. (Later, in 1958, Ambler married Hitchcock's long-time associate, Joan Harrison.)

Now, among the 'amazing' things about 'The Mask of Dimitrios' that Hitchcock may have had in mind is its structural resemblance to the famous Orson Welles film **Citizen Kane** (1941): both explore a person's life by means of an investigation conducted by an outsider - a writer or journalist - which results in a series of overlapping flashbacks. When, a few years later, Graham Greene created his own Dimitrios-like character, Harry Lime, for the Carol Reed film **The Third Man** (1949), it was fitting that Welles played the part.[1] Welles, meanwhile, had already produced and starred in his own film of an Ambler novel, **Journey into Fear** (1942).

Surprisingly, none of this is mentioned by Naremore (author of 'The Magic World of Orson Welles', 1989), even though his book's introduction sets out to trace in Hitchcock's films a tradition of British spy fiction whose practitioners included both Ambler and Greene, as well as John Buchan. (There are some even more surprising omissions, as we'll see.) Perhaps Naremore simply wanted to stick closely to his main text, Michael Denning's 'Cover Stories: Narrative and Ideology in the British Spy Thriller' (1987). From that source comes the information that the spy novel was typically 'patriotic' in outlook yet often almost Kafkaesque in its depiction of individuals beset by authority (p. 7). More generally, the modernist or 'artful' suspense story had four essential features: (1) skepticism towards government institutions, especially legal and political ones; (2) morally ambiguous characters; (3) systematic presentation of points of view; and (4) violent disruptions of typically middle-class propriety and order. (pp. 9-15)

Clearly, a spy thriller could be a very sophisticated object. Well, Naremore has insights to match. He's especially good, in fact, at showing how historically it was Hitchcock, along with several other writers and directors of the 1930s, who strove to refine the genre by reflecting contemporary events and audiences, thereby evolving "'a full-fledged aesthetic ideology'" (p. 9). Thrillers by novelists like Buchan (1875-1940) had lacked irony, and featured 'rather dated plots ... based in a polite ethos of

gentlemanly games' (p. 9). Hitchcock, in particular, kept the polite surface but deepened the stories' psychology as well as other areas of 'realism'. One result, shared with 'modern literature as a whole' (p. 12), was a new sense of 'the tension between individual consciousness and a problematic, unknowable totality' (p. 12). Here Naremore mentions the work of Henry James and Conrad, as well as Greene's 'The Ministry of Fear' (1943) and Ambler's 'The Mask of Dimitrios'. (Something he **doesn't** mention is how the thought of Kant and Schopenhauer seems at least a legitimating factor, especially in Conrad's case.)[2]

Well, apart from neatly expounding matters of ideology, Naremore's Introduction to the **North by Northwest** continuity script, and selected study material, is basic reading about the film because it synthesises several critical approaches - and is written with evident enjoyment. Its tone is never less than sensible-academic (as opposed to, say, what Naremore on page 190 calls the 'wilfully delirious' style of some 'Cahiers du Cinéma' critics), and it's also typically exact. As here:

> fascination of [Hitchcock's] work derived in part from a conflict between his sinister irony and pellucid syntax, which gave each sequence the clean, simplified look of a storyboard or a cartoon. ... The anal-compulsive neatness he brought to the construction of his films was rather an austere dandyism ... (p. 18)

The reference to dandyism invokes an earlier comment on 'Hitchcock's almost Wildean aestheticism' that 'added to the feeling of irreverence' (p. 11). Curiously, Naremore has lately made similar comments about the work of Minnelli, whose career he calls an 'aesthete's progress through the modern economy' ('The Films of Vincente Minnelli', 1993, p. 17).

For my part, I just wish that he had probed further the well-springs of Hitchcock's art in British thriller fiction. After all, there's an audaciousness about **North by Northwest** that isn't so much (or just) 'irreverence' as the sign of a deeply stimulated imagination! In the first place, Naremore doesn't spot the most likely source of the film's MacGuffin - in Greene's 'Our Man in Havana' (1958). Hitchcock had tried to acquire the rights to the novel, but the author had refused to sell them to him: 'I felt the book just wouldn't survive his touch', Greene said later.[3] Miffed, Hitchcock went ahead to create in **North by Northwest** the MacGuffin he called his best, i.e. 'the emptiest, the most nonexistent, and the most absurd' (Hitchcock, quoted by Truffaut). By this, he meant the film's trade in government secrets, which has a kind of correlative in the Prairie Stop scene - another emptiness. Also, of course, there's the middle initial of protagonist Roger O. Thornhill's name ...

Well, the protagonist of Greene's novel, and of Carol Reed's 1960 film version (where he's played in fittingly self-effacing manner by Alec Guinness), is called Wormold, otherwise known as Agent 59200/5 of the story's title. And when Wormold, a vacuum cleaner salesman, has somehow to come up with evidence of secret Cuban military activity, to gratify his bosses in Whitehall, he hits on the idea of sending them sketches of his product known as the Atomic Pile. Soon he finds it necessary to fabricate further 'sightings', and to recruit sub-agents ... (Mind you, an additional stimulus to **North by Northwest**'s concern with mythical agents like 'George Kaplan' - for whom Thornhill is mistaken - may well have been Ronald Neame's enjoyable and well-named 1955 spy thriller, **The Man Who Never Was**, starring Clifton Webb.)[4]

Again, although I don't want to labour this, Naremore's use of the term 'aesthete's progress' (re Minnelli) may conveniently remind us of the indirect descent of **North by Northwest** from the famous morality tale 'Pilgrim's Progress' (1684). Buchan, the son of a Scottish minister, often cites it. For example, in 'Prester John' (1910) he reminds us 'how Christian and Hopeful, after many perils of the way, came to the Delectable Mountains, from which they had a prospect of Canaan' (Chapter 3). The influence of 'Pilgrim's Progress' on his own 'picaresque' story-telling is strong, and thus (I suggest) influences Hitchcock's. In particular, the Mount Rushmore climax of Hitchcock's film shows just such an indebtedness - though as I indicated in 'MacGuffin' 10, among other contributing factors may have been Hitchcock's recently frustrated wish to film Laurens van der Post's adventure novel, 'Flamingo Feather' (1955). The latter is accurately described in a 'Daily Telegraph' review as 'Buchan's "Prester John" crossed with the cream of Rider Haggard'. I'll say something else about it shortly.

But most of all, I wish Naremore had managed to note the contribution to the **élan** of Hitchcock's film of some other British authors, albeit unfashionable ones nowadays. For in fact Buchan was only one of about

three hugely popular, and very skilled, writers of thrillers in England between the wars: the others included 'Dornford Yates' (C.W. Mercer) and 'Sapper' (H.C. McNeile). (The work of all three is the subject of Richard Usborne's 'Clubland Heroes', 1983.) Of Yates, whose technical influence on Hitchcock was probably considerable - as it was on Ian Fleming - I'll say nothing else here, except to commend his work.[5] But I can't pass over the very palpable influence of 'Sapper' on **North by Northwest**.

When I referred above to Hitchcock's audaciousness, I was already mentally comparing him to the exuberant author of 'Bulldog Drummond' (1920) and 'The Final Count' (1926). 'Sapper' was more than the purveyor of what Naremore calls 'square-jawed heroics' à la the American dime novel of the nineteenth century (cf p. 7). Not only did he show himself knowledgeable of Buchan's work, and that of Edgar Wallace, but he invented fictional situations that were often as rousing as anybody's. When, in **North by Northwest**, Thornhill (Cary Grant) is whisked away by his kidnappers to a Long Island house they've occupied while the owner is conveniently absent, and where Vandamm (James Mason) impersonates that owner in his wealth and elegance, the absurdity of the situation echoes one of the London scenes in 'The Final Count' (Chapter 6). Moreover, Vandamm's 'performance' is worthy of Bulldog Drummond's arch-foe, Carl Peterson himself - a criminal mastermind and master of disguise, like Fritz Lang's Dr Mabuse.

Although Hitchcock camouflages the absurd element by giving the events a modicum of plausibility (not least with a motif carried over from the 1958 **Vertigo**, whereby we keep returning to the everyday world), that element can't help but contribute to the film's tone. Which brings me back to the literally fantastic Mount Rushmore scenes. They are more than Buchanesque (or Bunyanesque). To take their full measure, it certainly helps to know of a similar scene set near Land's End in 'The Final Count' (Chapters 8 and 9). There too a nest of Russian spies and thugs, its work done, is preparing to ship out. The scene takes place at night in and around the spies' house built on a rocky cliff. As Drummond approaches the house with a couple of his willing helpers, they see some mysterious signalling out at sea. Just then, a door in the house opens, and for a moment someone is framed in the doorway. Drummond decides to investigate. Crouched in the darkness, and peering into a cave under the house (to which he has climbed down), he and his men overhear some of the Russians conversing nonchalently, while nearby is their prisoner, a kidnapped scientist. Drummond is horrified to hear the spies say that the scientist is soon to be killed. Stepping forward, he and his men try to take charge, only to be surprised in their turn and overpowered - though not before several of the Russians have died a horrible death from a toxic liquid. (This typical 'Sapper' touch of sadism is something Hitchcock himself was not averse to using when it came to the crunch, if you'll allow the pun.) Shortly afterwards, a dirigible arrives overhead ...

That dirigible belongs to Carl Peterson. In the story's climax he dies when the dirigible catches fire and crashes - I dare say, the deep inspiration for the fate of the plane in **North by Northwest**'s Prairie Stop scene. But my main point has been that Naremore, in showing us Hitchcock's indebtedness to 'respectable' authors of spy fiction like Buchan and Ambler, has neglected to mention the director's equal delight in 'Sapper' and his kind.

* * *

About the fifty pages of 'readings' on **North by Northwest** that Naremore provides, I'll be brief. In general, the tone of these pieces is rather dull, especially as compared with the film's full-bodied flavour. And one or two of them offer specimens of tortured academic writing of the worst kind. For instance, how about this sentence of Marion Keane's - which I think must have swallowed strychnine - describing the film's credits sequence?

> The deep issue raised in the magical appearance of the film's image regards what the world so conjured actually is. (p. 217)

Fortunately, sanity and good writing are represented by Robin Wood's overview of the film, reprinted from his 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (1989). Also, if at times Hitchcock lies his head off to Jean Domarchi and Jean Douchet of 'Cahiers du Cinéma', saying of the expressionist touches in his work that 'I've been influenced by no one' (p. 182), John Brady's interview with screenwriter Ernest Lehman sticks to pragmatics - in a most delightful way.

I was gratified, too, by 'Cahiers' critic Luc Moullet's 1959 comparison of Hitchcock to Cecil B. De Mille ('the two masters of Paramount' - p. 196). Moullet makes the point, picked up by Naremore, that 'In the same way that De Mille represents the Red Sea and the burning bush as if they were animated drawings, Hitchcock adheres strongly to the cartoon tradition' (p. 197). Earlier, I mentioned Hitchcock's interest, when he was at Paramount, in filming the novel 'Flamingo Feather'. Well, the climax of that tale (Chapter 17) has its hero approach an African chieftain in a vast mountain basin, filled with 50,000 watching tribesmen. And around the rim of the basin are a further 100,000 women and children, also watching. As you read the account, you're reminded of a scene staged by De Mille! Sure enough, when the hero, one Pierre de Beauvilliers, rides his horse at full gallop through the tribesmen, you read that they 'split open as the waters of the Red Sea once parted before Moses's command'. I'm convinced that a major factor in Hitchcock's wanting to film the story was the opportunity it would give him of emulating De Mille's spectacular **The Ten Commandments** (1956)! Just as I'm convinced that when he learnt that he wouldn't be allowed to have the 50,000 Africans he had asked for (see Truffaut), he immediately lost interest in the project.

* * *

The continuity script (transcript) of **North by Northwest**, which provides the bulk of Naremore's book, is scrupulously done - a complete description of the film, all 1,330 shots of it. Naremore has picked up little details that not all of us had noticed. Did you realise, for instance, that one of Vandamm's henchmen holds his cigarette between thumb and forefinger, Gestapo style (p. 49)?

On the other hand, several technical matters have eluded description. Hitchcock's turning off of the 'buzz-track' (ambient noise) when Thornhill is told by the Professor in the pine forest that Eve (Eva Marie Saint) is leaving with Vandamm that night, isn't mentioned, except in the transcript's single description, 'a shocked pause' (p. 144). More crucially, the reddish or earthy colour of the skyscraper facade in the film's credits, followed by shots of office-workers pouring out of buildings and down subways, is divested of any of its Dantesque significance (in fact, the film's artful use of tints and filters is nowhere noted). As I mentioned in 'MacGuffin' 11, the credits sequence of **Vertigo** also has its Dantesque passage. This time, another 'Inferno' reference combines with the famous echo of Dante in T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' ('A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,/ I had not thought death had undone so many'). Professor John Carey has commented recently on how it was largely through Eliot's influence that, by the 1930s, the (Nietzschean) assumption that most people are dead had become 'a standard item in the repertoire of any self-respecting intellectual' ('The Intellectuals and the Masses', 1992, p. 10).

Rightly, Naremore's transcript keeps what appear to have been slips made during the film's shooting. Thus Thornhill's line at the Plaza Hotel about the man in the photograph being 'Our friend who's assembling the General Assembly this afternoon' (p. 65) is retained, with its faint similarity to his earlier remark, 'Why don't we colonize at the Colony one day next week for lunch?' (p. 37) As even the original Ernest Lehman screenplay (Viking Press, 1972) has the reference to 'assembling', perhaps the line was felt to be suitably informal - there are precedents in **Vertigo** in some of Scottie's more extempore-sounding remarks!

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Notes

1. Both Dimitrios and Lime are ruthless drug-runners. Thought to be dead, both turn up very much alive.

2. For the considerable influence of Schopenhauer on Conrad, see Bryan Magee , 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), pp. 385-6.

3. See Neil Sinyard, 'Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation' (1986), p. 108. Sinyard has a four-page discussion of Hitchcock and Greene as 'kindred spirits'.

4. Neame's film was scripted by the estimable novelist and screenwriter, Nigel Balchin.

5. Fleming was particularly impressed at how Yates could handle car chases. To see why, look at 'How a Telegram Came for Jill', in Yates's 'Jonah and Co' (1922) - with a likely influence on Hitchcock's To [illegible] (1955), too.

::

Mood Swings: Hitchcock's 'Young and Innocent' (1937)

The night always exaggerates things, doesn't it?

- Robert to Erica, **Young and Innocent**

It's a strange world, isn't it?

- Jeffrey to Sandy, **Blue Velvet** (1986)

Claude Chabrol thinks that what stirs us most as we watch the road scenes in Hitchcock's **Psycho** (1960) is Bernard Herrmann's score, or 'metaphysics'.[1] That is, Marion Crane's panicky drive into the night affects us mainly because of the eloquent, headlong music.

It's a good point. Of course, it needs to be seen in its proper context. And such a context, I suggest, is simply the complementary nature of Hitchcock's and Herrmann's work together. For a start, Hitchcock was never a director to concern himself unduly with abstractions.[2] He always said that his main job was to keep his films moving, 'to tell a good story and develop a hefty plot.'[3] Themes (including 'metaphysical' ones) might be left to 'emerge as we go along'.[4]

By the same token, every film buff knows how propitious it was that Hitchcock and Herrmann found each other. As Herrmann said, the two men shared 'a great unanimity of ideas' (see 'MacGuffin' 8). Well, that unanimity may have had at least this much of a metaphysical basis: both artists seem to have believed in the existence of a universal 'Under-nature' which their respective mediums might at once express and transcend (ibid).[5] From the waxing and waning of autumn (fall) in **The Trouble With Harry** (1956) to the strident 'cry in the night' that accompanies the very titles-sequence of **Marnie** (1964), what you always feel in the Hitchcock-Herrmann films is the presence of powerful forces, sometimes apparently benign but more often threatening (or contending).

I repeat, though, that Hitchcock always strove to keep his films moving, and he developed a further metaphysic to match. Movement in film, he told 'Cahiers du Cinéma', has inherent meaning, if only because it reflects the essential circumstance of film production and film projection.[6] So what I now want to note is this. If you combine Hitchcock's 'dynamic' metaphysic with the other one, the one concerning a universal Under-nature, you arrive at something very like the philosopher Schopenhauer's notion of an all-pervasive Will or life-force - seen in nature most fundamentally as an implacable, blind striving.

Nor is that quite all. Movement is the most characteristic extension of Will, and when photographed and projected it may remind us of the essential categories of our knowledge (time, space and causality).[7] That would seem to make Hitchcock's concept of dynamic cinema reflexive not just of the medium but - virtually - of the viewer's very existence. In this spirit, when the director chose to film the Robert Bloch novel called 'Psycho', he could hardly have failed to see just how rich in 'fundamentals' it is. In movement, above all. It contains a car journey, a particularly vicious murder in a shower (plenty of running water and blood), an investigation. Also, it's palpably about life and death. It speaks to us of forces that are indeed both implacable and blind. And, being about psychology, it could be said to touch on a universal Under-nature which is very real if invisible.

Now, Hitchcock would do his best to put all of this on the screen. Given suitable collaborators (the project had a modest budget), why mightn't the result affect audiences in truly existential ways, at the very core of their being?

Certainly, with Bernard Herrmann's help, that's what it seems to have done.

* * *

But this article is about a comparatively early application of Hitchcock's metaphysic, and especially the aspect that stressed a film's need to 'move around'.[8] Looked at thus, **Young and Innocent** is likely to be revealing, for it was Hitchcock's favourite among his British films.[9] I'll also make reference below to a much more recent work, David Lynch's bizarre **Blue Velvet**. Both films have a similar storyline inasmuch as they're about a youth who finds himself poised between an older, married woman - a public entertainer - and a teenage girl, the daughter of a policeman.

Further, I'll try to show in some detail what use Hitchcock and his screenwriter, Charles Bennett, made of Josephine Tey's novel, 'A Shilling For Candles' (1936). In particular, I want to show that the film's famous climax, which unmasks a murderer, owes more to the novel than Bennett's ingenious adaptation has been given credit for (thereby also blocking the credit due to Tey).

To begin, then, here's a paradigm of just how readily movement in film can generate meaning. Among the many lively scenes in **Young and Innocent** - a film rightly described by critic Penelope Gilliatt as one of Hitchcock's sunniest -[10] is the collapse of an old mine-workings. In a matter of seconds, the teenage heroine, Erica Burgoyne (Nova Pilbeam), loses her antique car and very nearly her life. If the scene is a fraction too rapidly done, it still has impact anyway just because of its context: we're suddenly plunged out of sunshine into gloom and peril. Simultaneously, a couple of thematic points get made. One of them (to be found in the novel) concerns how Erica is growing up: it's time her slightly absurd attachment to her car was transferred to something - or someone - more fitting ...[11]

But that's only the half of it. In this moment of peril, Erica loses some of her innocence. To make the point, Hitchcock inserts close-ups showing the girl wide-eyed with terror, clinging for her life. These shots could almost have come from **Psycho**, and they manage to imply not just oblivion but a glimpse of our untranscended Under-nature, i.e. things that Marion Crane also seeks to turn from (in her case, too late). [illegible] being 'metaphysical' here, but just go back and look at the film. Then consider this passage from a novel by Josephine Tey called 'The Singing Sands' (1952). The protagonist, Inspector Alan Grant, is recuperating in the Scottish Highlands from overwork, and becomes momentarily impatient with his hostess, his cousin Laura.

> She was far too complacent. She was far too happy, here in her fastness, with her ... security. It would do her good to have some demons to fight; to be swung out in space and held over some bottomless pit now and then. (Chapter 3)

That's all - but it's sufficient. No reader of the passage misunderstands the 'metaphysical' meaning of those 'demons' and the image of the bottomless pit.

* * *

Something Hitchcock doesn't do in the mine-collapse scene is include a shot à la **Vertigo** (1958) of the chasm over which Erica becomes suspended - probably because it would have been next to impossible to shoot directly down a coal mine![12] But then, we don't need such a shot anyway, inasmuch that the film's opening scene concludes with a high-view of waves breaking on rocks at night, a shot which effectively stands in for the later peril.

That memorable opening scene is crucial to the film's strategy. Its tone is decidedly melodramatic. One night, in the clifftop cottage of the successful but now middle-aged film actress, Christine Clay, she's confronted by her husband who accuses her of sleeping with young men. No doubt out of jealousy and because he feels his own advancing age, the husband not only refuses Christine's request for a divorce but indicates that he intends to come back and live with her. As the couple quarrel, lightning flickers on the walls and thunder rumbles. The husband's basic charge is specific. 'You lied when you married me and you lied to get rid of me. ... I, who worked for you, took you out of the chorus, lifted you out of the gutter.' Christine protests, but when her husband again says he's disgusted at her 'going around with boys', she slaps him. Whereupon, the camera, by means of a cut, follows him through a heavy door and onto a balcony, where waves are breaking in the background. A flash of lightning shows that his eyes are twitching.

Very soon Christine will be dead and her husband will have fled. Then the film's sunny tone and summery skies will belie what we've just seen - much as a similar strategy is employed in **Blue Velvet** (where, though, it's the film's opening that is idyllic, and subsequent events that are frequently grotesque). Nevertheless, once again a point or two has been made: not all marriages are blessed in Heaven, and decidedly youth and innocence are short-lived.

And Hitchcock's ambiguous touches will keep teasing us. For instance, the circumstances of Christine's alleged misdemeanours aren't given, and anyway are balanced by the portrait of the plucky, 'innocent' Erica that follows. Nor do we ever learn the exact background of the young man called Robert Tisdall (Derrick de Marney), a budding screenwriter, who's about to figure at the centre of the story - although it **is** clear that he's the 'boy' whom Christine's husband saw at the cottage. The difference between the film and the novel on this point is one of shadings. The film all but convinces us that Robert's several visits to the cottage were purely innocent ones to discuss a script he'd written. The novel employs darker hues. There, Robert admits he'd started to steal Christine's car but had then returned it. Also, when news comes that Christine's murdered body has been found on a beach, most of her colleagues are stunned and want to know more about the 'good-looking boy' who has been arrested.

> 'Tisdall?' they said, puzzled. 'Never heard of him.'
> All but [actress] Judy Sellers.
> Her mouth opened in dismay, stayed that way helplessly for a moment, and then shut tightly; and a blind came down over her face. [Inspector] Grant watched the display in surprised interest.
> (Chapter 6)

As nothing comes of this small incident, I take it merely to be a hint that Tisdall has been sleeping around, and breaking a few hearts in the process. Which, of course, makes him no more nor less innocent of major crime than young Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle MacLachlan) in **Blue Velvet**, who cheats on Sandy (Laura Dern) and sleeps with the married Dorothy (Isabella Rossellini) whose involvement with the brutal gangster called Frank (Dennis Hopper) he has been investigating ...

* * *

Young and Innocent, too, involves an investigation. Suspected of being Christine's murderer, Robert goes on the run. With Erica's at-first reluctant help, he decides that if he can locate his stolen raincoat (whose belt had been used to strangle Christine), he will have found a vital clue to the real murderer's identity. Meanwhile, the police ploddingly pursue their own investigations. (In **Blue Velvet**, the police aren't so much plodding as dilatory ...) Which raises a further aspect of the film. I've called this article 'Mood Swings' in order to focus attention on a key 'binary' principle of the film's structure, one that is 'theatrical' and related to the implicit maxim that 'the show must go on'. Consider for a moment the credits sequence. Musically, it consists of a succession of **contrasted** moods, culminating in a specific dance number which will figure at the film's climax as the all-important 'Drummer Man'. Visually, it consists of a single semi-abstract design: a large slanting area of whiteness shading into black at both sides. To my eyes, the suggestion the design makes is of the broad beam of a theatrical spotlight, and hence of the film itself as a kind of stage. Well, in 'MacGuffin' 10, I noted how Hitchcock's films often climax in a theatre, or some equivalent place such as a dance-floor, thereby carrying the (levelling) reminder that 'all the world's a stage'. To that point I would now add this: that for all Hitchcock's characters, whether they're nominally heroes or villains, there **is** no running away - a similar 'maturing' (or 'learning') process acts on both. I'll try and show below that such a motif is particularly strong in **Young and Innocent**.

* * *

In 'MacGuffin' 6, Charles Barr remarked of **Young and Innocent** that it contains 'an extraordinary and perhaps calculated symmetry in what might be termed the hypnagogic structure'. He was referring to how the film can be seen as both the boy-meets-girl fantasy of Robert, a scriptwriter, and as Erica's reciprocal fantasy or dream (she twice falls asleep and has to be physically rescued or otherwise 'saved' by him). Moreover, the scenes in which **one or the other** character is shown losing consciousness seem to mirror each other in their relative positions vis-à-vis the start and end of the film.

I think the notion of a 'hypnagogic' structure (one that accommodates various states of consciousness) fits well with the notion of film as continuous movement or flow that I'm exploring here. At the same time, it's important we note how the motif of consciousness/unconsciousness represents only one of several sets of contraries, or binary oppositions, that propel the film. We've already met some of these. They include: day/night, high/low, seashore/countryside, fast/slow, smart/stupid, rich/poor - as well as the two most obvious ones of young/old and innocent/experienced (or innocent/guilty). Apart from helping to underline points (as in the mine-collapse scene) and establish themes (above all, life-as-theatre), the play of contraries also contributes to the film's tone, rhythms and suspense - note the several musical terms. Many were the interviews in which Hitchcock likened 'pure film' to music (while Schopenhauer, for his part, thought that music was pure, orchestrated Will) ...

* * *

After Christine's murder, Robert is taken in for questioning. His all-night interrogation ends at dawn, twenty-four hours after the actress's body was found in the surf. When two Scotland Yard detectives tell him that Christine has left him £1,200 in her will, Robert faints. This is ambiguous: it might, or might not, be just a sign of his tiredness. At any rate, the moment is ripe for a **fresh** consciousness to enter the film. That consciousness proves to be Erica's. Significantly, she's looking for her father.[13] The latter is Chief Constable of the county, and this is his office. Erica seems quite at home here. Sizing up what has happened, she takes charge. She sends one of the detectives for brandy and meanwhile administers to Robert other forms of resuscitation such as ear-pulling, which she explains she learnt in 'a boxers' dressing-room - brings them round like fun'. The tone of the film has brightened perceptibly. Sunlight is shining through the window; and Erica, an outdoors type of girl, will be associated with it throughout the film.

When Robert first comes round, then immediately appears to suffer a relapse and sinks back against Erica's 'motherly' figure, this moment is ambiguous too.[14] The more so, as next instant he recovers again, and scrambles to his feet. It's typical of Hitchcock that contradictory meanings flow from this brief episode. The feigned and the genuine - which is which? For a comparison, recall a moment of coyness between Jeffrey and Sandy in **Blue Velvet**, in which she tells him, 'I don't know whether you're a detective or a pervert.' In Americanese, that means roughly 'extravert or introvert' ...

Erica exits the room as dramatically as she'd entered it, casting a dismissive glance back towards Robert and saying, 'Next time throw a bucket of water over him.' Of course, what her sudden presence in the room has done is distract us from the possibly thorny question of why Christine left Robert a large sum of money. Something similar will occur during the scene in an old mill, when Robert tells Erica that he'd met Christine only 'three or four times'. As he says this, he casually throws a paper wrapping out the window - and the film cuts outside to two searching policemen who have spotted it. Keeping things moving, then, has the added advantages for storytellers of both helping to get them out of corners and of not dispelling the suspense!

Erica has already impressed us with her resourcefulness. Now it's Robert's turn. At least three times in the film he shows remarkable forethought in stealing an object for later use (cf his stealing Christine's car in the novel). Here, faced with being represented by a decrepit local lawyer named Briggs, he steals the man's glasses and uses them as a disguise when he sneaks away from the court-house. (Meanwhile, another court hearing has just ended, significantly involving a husband being bound over not to desert his nagging wife. Shades of the 1954 **Rear Window** - even to the possibility that the husband may have been the more blameworthy party in the first place. On the other hand, we can't be sure ...)

Briggs, without glasses, is left practically blind. As Robert slips away, he passes someone else who's preoccupied about a lens: namely, Hitchcock, who's playing a photographer equipped with a ridiculously small camera. With futile gestures, this rather portly man in a cloth cap (symbolic of the working-class?) tries to wave away the crowd spilling out of the court-house and spoiling his camera's view. In 'MacGuffin' 4, I noted how in **Psycho** a myopic little man dominates the background of the scene on the Fairvale church steps. Myopia seems a common infliction in these films, including **Blue Velvet** - where, though, the **blind** man who works in Beaumonts' hardware store seems more percipient than nearly everyone else.[15]

Much of the rest of the film occurs in the countryside, allowing a great deal of further 'local colour'. I suspect it was this ingredient that prompted Penelope Gilliatt to invoke the good-humoured 'Berry' stories of Dornford Yates (1885-1960).[16] Perhaps reflecting Erica's own helpfulness (Robert likens her to both Florence Nightingale and Flora Macdonald),[17] many of the characters along the way prove to be particularly obliging. Mind you, by the nature of Hitchcock's cinema, you don't get anything without its opposite. So in these same scenes, there's the Chaplinesque free-for-all (cf **Easy Street**) at the pull-in known as Tom's Hat, and there's the surly proprietor of the no less Chaplinesque flophouse called Nobby's (cf **Triple Trouble**). In turn, the Chaplin references are doubtless connected with the crucial importance in the film's second half of the old china-mender named Will, described by one of the other characters as 'more or less of a tramp'.

It's time we looked at some particular scenes.

* * *

Of several masterly set-pieces in **Young and Innocent**, the first I'll mention is the dinner-table scene in the Burgoyne household. Actually there are two such scenes - suitably opposed in mood - as well as a third that was never used: it was to end the film and show Robert, after being exonerated of Christine's murder, sitting down to join the Burgoynes in a meal. But I'll describe only the first, which occurs when Erica has come home after leaving Robert hidden in the old mill. She is clearly preoccupied - to our eyes, at least - and thus is unappreciative of her four schoolboy brothers' chatter. And as her father, at the other end of the table, is also thoughtful, because his men haven't yet found the court-house escapee, the meal might have been a dismal affair all round. But nobody told the four boys that: so the scene is at once comic and charming and dramatic, as well as adding to the local colour.

Erica, whose mother had died when she was born,[18] has the maternal role in the household, and now she says grace. Two parlour-maids serve the meal. Immediately, the boys start talking. Of these, the eldest is the family 'swot': he thinks that grace 'ought to be said in Latin, really'. (When the film later shows an even more patrician family, that of Erica's aunt and uncle, the Roman influence will indeed be displayed.) We don't learn this boy's name. Next comes Richard, who likes nothing better than to make good-natured (?) fun of his older brother. As for young Stanley, he's happy to show off at table the large filling the dentist had given him during the day; he prefers to forget that he'd been 'wobbling like a jellyfish' at breakfast. Finally, there's the youngest boy, Christopher, who keeps saying 'okay' and whose triumph of the day has been to shoot a rat in the back-yard with his air-gun. He produces the hapless creature at table - rather like Arnie with his rabbit in **The Trouble With Harry**.

Not only does Hitchcock contrast one dinner-table scene with a second, but he typically breaks each individual scene into halves, also of differing moods. Here, he does it by having Erica's father (Percy Marmont), a generous soul, take a phone call in the next room, during which we hear a conversation that sounds the film's characteristic note of sympathy for the man-on-the-run. Colonel Burgoyne observes that the escapee is probably feeling very hungry by now. Naturally Erica hears the remark too. When the Colonel re-enters the dining room, one of the boys is - in all innocence - merely contemptuous of the police's lack of success. 'They want some young blood, don't they father?' With the possibly double-edged meaning of that comment echoing in her ears, Erica excuses herself from table.

* * *

The ensuing scene, back in the mill where Erica has brought Robert some bread, includes the latter's extempore meal. Standing up, because there's no table, and spreading butter with his fingers, because Erica has either forgotten or dared not provide, a knife, he makes good use of his pockets and the folds of his jumper to dispose of left-overs. Erica watches, and can't help be impressed. It's a touching scene, and just a little bit erotic. Note the actors' expressions. Piquancy is added by the threat of discovery, by Erica's uncertainty about how to handle her new feelings, and by the fact that **both** parties are in some way defying (Lacan's) 'the name of the father'. In much of this, of course, **Blue Velvet** may again come to mind ...

I shan't describe the scene at Tom's Hat, except to note how Robert tries at first to stay out of sight but gets drawn into the mêlée when it forms. And how once again an obliging person comes forward:

here, a lorry driver, who thinks he knows where Will the china-mender may be found. Namely, at Nobby's, thirty miles away.

At the end of the Tom's Hat scene, Erica, who is still a little confused, wishes Robert luck in searching for the raincoat; he thanks her and sets off on foot, hoping to soon get a lift. Before him stretches one of the mile-long straights of English lane described in Josephine Tey's novel. The film gives this vista pathos by showing it from Erica's viewpoint and by having a car pass Robert without stopping. (Cf the livery-stable scene in **Vertigo**, in which Scottie feels he's losing Madeleine and looks up to watch a car receding down a road.) An ellipsis restores him to her side, as they drive towards Nobby's ...

* * *

However, to give Erica an alibi for being away from home, they must first visit her aunt and uncle's house nearby. We've already just seen a chauffeur-driven car, and clearly this is an exclusive residential neighbourhood - not at all like Tom's Hat and its environs. Sure enough, the house proves to be a large, two-storey affair, and a manservant answers the door. Inside, a children's party is in progress.

Now comes another of the film's major set-pieces. It really has no **plot** reason for being in the film - but then, the memorable scene in **Blue Velvet** with Ben (Dean Stockwell), the effeminate brothel-keeper, has little or no direct reason for its inclusion there, either. Nevertheless, both scenes are fully functional in almost surreal ways. The one in Lynch's film shows us an alternative, hidden centre of power in the town of Lumberton; Hitchcock's scene perversely mirrors its wider world, too. Interestingly, Hitchcock called his scene 'a deliberate symbol' - only to see it cut from the original American-release print!

If the children's-party scene is indeed a symbol, one of the things it's most symbolic of is ebb and flow, i.e. movement. It has no single centre, and that's its vital point. Of course, it's **about** youth and age, and the defeating by common action of a too-rigid, matriarchal supervision - yet literally **no one** is in control here, unless it's Hitchcock. Let's look more closely.

For a start, there's no corresponding scene in the novel, but just a passing reference to Erica's having a rather fearsome great-aunt who lives near (Royal) Tunbridge Wells. The great-aunt sometimes promenades 'under the lime trees' (Chapter 13). This, I take it, constitutes a reminder of how Tunbridge Wells, for centuries a fashionable spa centre, remains a place to be 'seen' in, with its promenade called 'The Pantiles'. (I'll note below how, in both the novel and the film, nearly **everyone** seems to want public 'recognition'.)[19] In the film, when Erica arrives at her Aunt Mary's house, the manservant tells her that today is young Felicity's (seventh) birthday; he shows her into a large drawing-room from which the slightly jarring strains of some BBC children's programme are coming. Here, Felicity's guests, and their minders, are assembled to watch a conjuror perform. Prominent features of the room's décor are large Roman-type marble busts, on pedestals.[20] Aunt Mary, played by character actress Mary Clare, sits in a high-backed armchair, from which she beckons Erica to join her.

Erica instantly feels trapped. Robert is still in the car (just as he had been before the mêlée at Tom's Hat), and may be recognised at any moment. But her aunt wants her to help entertain the children. So it's ironic, and for Erica, galling, when she soon finds herself sent outside the room again while the children hide a thimble. And it's even more ironic when next moment Uncle Basil (Basil Radford) arrives home for the day in his chauffeur-driven car, and insists on inviting Robert in. As he says, 'We can't leave you outside like a criminal.'

When Aunt Mary comes to the drawing-room door to call Erica back, the first thing she sees - a nice piece of literal direction by Hitchcock - is her niece and Robert in the hall, whispering anxiously, for all the world as if they were fugitive lovers, or worse.[21] 'I'm sorry, I didn't know', she says coldly. Uncle Basil barely retrieves the situation by explaining how he'd come upon Robert in the car. We've already recognised Aunt Mary to be the imperious type, and she remains suspicious. The scene is no longer 'innocent'.

Yet, in a neat counterpoint, children feature at its centre. Hitchcock's direction of very young actors

throughout the film is superb. When, as here, they're required to portray children being little adults, with their own mores, they do it in style. First, the children sense that something is up, and that nice Erica has lost interest in playing find-the-thimble. Whereupon, the young man called Harold (who shortly before had been requesting permission to go to the lavatory) snaps, 'C'mon, we'll play it on our own', and pulls Felicity away. Now some signalling between Erica and Robert is noticed by Aunt Mary, who makes her niece come and sit beside her (like a child or a pet). Party hats and bonbons are distributed. Aunt Mary starts to read out the motto from Harold's bonbon - '"Love calls but once, So passion ..."' - then breaks off. Just then, ice-creams arrive, prompting Uncle Basil to murmur that it's 'in the nick of time'. He blows on a roll-up toy whistle, not without a certain suggestiveness.

Which isn't to say, in psychoanalytic parlance again, that Uncle Basil has been 'de-sexed' by his matriarch of a wife. On the contrary, their marriage stands out as the **least** dysfunctional in the film - being based, you feel, on a mutual compromise whereby the wife rules the household and the husband has his work! It anticipates, in a way, the Oxfords' marriage in **Frenzy** (1972). But then, it's very rare to find in Hitchcock **any** questioning of the sustaining-power of a man's job - whereas professional women (like Christine Clay) are often shown to spell trouble.[22] So the depiction of marriage in this scene effectively balances the melodramatic opening scene. Also, to the extent that it paints an **affectionate** if warts-and-all picture of Aunt Mary as matriarch, it complements the palpable **absence** of a mother in the Burgoyne household: the message is that mothers matter.

[illegible] there are times when the mother's power must be got around (just as there are times when patriarchy must be circumvented). After all, even parents have their blind-spots, and can't quickly be made to see reason! We scarcely need scientists or philosophers to tell us such basic truths![23] That's why Uncle Basil has no trouble in calling on Felicity and Harold for a spot of necessary collusion. At any rate, not after Harold has first swiped another child's ice-cream for his trouble. No fool, he! But once he's suitably fortified, he turns to see what Uncle Basil wants.

Uncle Basil has noticed that his spouse's questions are causing Erica and Robert discomfort. Being another of the film's helpful, sympathetic characters, he decides to put the children up to requesting a game of blindman's-buff. Then he suggests that Aunt Mary herself should be 'blindman'. Harold is enthusiastic. 'Tie her up, Uncle', he encourages. Aunt Mary starts to object, but Robert adds his own encouragement. 'Then you can try to catch me', he says innocently. At this moment the radio plays a snatch of 'Three Blind Mice'.

The upshot is that Erica and Robert manage to flee the house and rejoin Erica's dog Towser waiting in the car, then drive away. What we've just watched has been a marvellous, swirling scene, a microcosm of the film and of perhaps rather more: for example, of 'dear old England'. (Not without satire. Aunt Mary might be a Victorian or Edwardian relic. Perhaps it's significant that she mistakes Robert, a very modern young man, for a family acquaintance who rather anachronistically proves to be in India.) Several of the scene's motifs, such as perspicacity/blindness, occur elsewhere in the film. Also, in its little escapades and dodges, the scene partakes of a life we can acknowledge as our own. Part of what's marvellous is how Hitchcock's art transforms it - in a way, **restores** its innocence.

* * *

The police's search for Robert extends to 'Ashcroft Forest' at night, their torches flashing futilely against the tree-trunks. Like other place-names in the film, this one is fictitious, although redolent of Ashdown Forest in Kent. The film seems to be, in fact, a slightly bizarre amalgam of Kentish locales - thus far following the novel - and others, such as we glimpse in the opening scene where no doubt to get the specific effect of waves breaking on fierce rocks Hitchcock had sent a unit to Cornwall.[24]

In any event, the scene I'm now coming to seems to fit best one of the populous Home Counties (e.g. Kent). It's another set-piece, and a fine one. Erica and Robert have stopped under cover of night beside a railway shunting-yard outside a town. Hitchcock here uses a model-shot, one whose mood, contrary to reports by some truly dull critics, is palpable and very lovely. I'm referring to the right-to-left tracking-shot showing a steam-train rushing under a moonlit bridge where we've just seen a car cross; to the play of light on the nearby housefronts from the car's headlamps and from a lit-up signal box; to the sounds of the speeding train, of shunting, and of a tolling bell; and to the tilt of

the camera as, arriving near Erica and Robert's parked car, it moves to show this focal-point of the tableau. For at least one viewer, this tracking-shot is the technical highlight of the film, excelling the later crane- and track-in to a man's twitching eyes which everyone notices (and **compliments** each other for noticing, as Hitchcock undoubtedly knew they would!). In 'MacGuffin' 5, I quoted Maurice Yacowar's appreciative comments on the complexity of a shot of a miniature bus and train in **Number Seventeen** (1932), but the model-work in **Young and Innocent** achieves a whole new sophistication.

Erica and Robert's ensuing conversation in the car gives them a few moments of intimacy. In this, the scene corresponds to the pine-forest scene in **North by Northwest**. The mood is one of how it's always darkest before the dawn. As Robert puts it: 'You can see no end, can you? The night always exaggerates things, doesn't it? Personally, I like the night. It's much more alive than the day.'[25] The lights of another train flash by. As Erica begins to fall asleep, her natural self-concern becomes concern for Robert. 'I don't want anything to happen to you, either', she murmurs. But Robert doesn't hear, for he has already moved off, leaving Towser on guard.

The next scene takes place at Nobby's, nearby. I'll note only its outcome. No sooner has Robert, early next morning, found Will the china-mender, than he looks out the window and sees potential disaster: Erica is still asleep in her car which is now fully exposed beside the railway tracks. On the film's motif of its hero and heroine's constant seeking to avoid public 'exposure' - the obverse of the urge to be 'recognised' - I'll say more below.

Grabbing the startled Will, Robert runs from the building. The camera tracks along behind, creating a 'getting nowhere fast' effect. Meanwhile, the suspicious flophouse proprietor has called the police. Now comes another witty homage to old-time movies, of the Keystone Kops variety, which is adroitly assembled - not least in how it manages to incorporate views of the town and its bridge we had glimpsed in the moonlight. The effect on the viewer is elating, speaking again of a higher innocence ...

* * *

The mine-collapse scene follows. During it, Erica becomes parted from Robert. She returns home, disgraced in her father's eyes, and retreats to her upstairs bedroom where she sobs herself to sleep. This is the second time she has fallen asleep, matching Robert's fainting-spell and his sleep in the loft of the old mill. We have now arrived at the absolute Slough of Despond (or darkest hour) in this 'Pilgrim's Progress' of a film.[26] Yet, as Maurice Yacowar notices, as Erica lies on her bed she assumes the foetal position ...[27]

Hereabouts, too, there are further 'iconic' references for Hitchcock to invoke, from fairy tales to current movies. Thus Robert now comes to the rescue by climbing up to Erica's window, like a fabulous prince. And as Erica is about to attend her first 'ball', he's certainly her potential Prince Charming. By displacement, as it were, a witty policeman in the next scene will tell Will (who is escorting Erica in Robert's stead) that he's like a character in 'Cinderella'. Moreover, that next scene will centre around the Grand Hotel (cf the novel's Marine Hotel). Greta Garbo must have been in Hitchcock's mind. When Erica first wakes from her sleep, and Robert tells her he has come to say goodbye, the music and some radiant, William Daniels-type backlighting portray her as a tragic heroine, à la Garbo in **Camille** (1936). But then the pendulum - and the mood - swings again, and provides a clue which everyone has overlooked.

That vital clue combines small and large : a matchbox with 'Grand Hotel' printed on it. Such a conceit would have appealed to Hitchcock (cf 'MacGuffin' 12). It introduces the play of contraries in the final scene. One instance of that play is the famous crane-shot moving from a distant view to an extreme close-up, which unmasks a villain. Another is the important motif of 'inside' versus 'outside'. Let's examine the scene for what it shows of Hitchcock's 'pure cinema' - and the extensive way it transposes material from the novel.

Erica and Will gain admittance to the Grand Hotel not as paying guests but merely as casuals, as patrons of its tea-room where a well-attended (in two senses) thé-dansant is in full swing, this being the height of the holiday season. Unfortunately for the pair's intentions, Will's shiny new suit has already aroused the suspicion of a constable in the street; even when the pair are seated in the tea-room, the

policeman keeps an eye on them through a window. Further, the policeman has dutifully reported to his superiors that the Chief Constable's daughter is inside. As they anxiously look around for the man with the twitching eyes, they're very aware of being watched themselves, and that time is short. In turn, the man in question - Christine Clay's husband, who is now a drummer in the hotel's minstrel band - has already spotted them, too. When he recognises Will, he begins to blink hideously. His twitching eyes are not exactly concealed by his black-face make-up ...

Now, much of what I've just described is transposed from several quite different scenes in the novel. The latter even has a different guilty party: namely, an acquaintance of the murdered Christine, a seeress named Lydia Keats, who prophesies the actress's death - and who secretly proceeds to carry it out. (In the novel, both Tisdall and Christine's aristocratic husband merely number among the various suspects. These further include Christine's ne'er-do-well brother.) The key chapter here is Chapter 19, ten from the end, told through the eyes of a journalist on the case, 'Jammy' Hopkins. Learning that Lydia Keats is to give one of her lunchtime talks at a public hall in London, Jammy decides to attend. But his initial interest is not with the rather boring Lydia:

> Jammy refused the seat which had been reserved for the **Clarion** representative, and insisted on **having** one ... on the far side of the hall below the platform. This had been refused, with varying degrees of indignation, by both those who had come to see Lydia and those who had come to be seen. But Jammy belonged to neither of these. What Jammy had come to see was the audience.

Next, Jammy notices something surprising. Someone else at this large gathering isn't attending to Lydia either. This person, who had been yet another member of Christine's circle, is named Marta Hallard; and Marta is intently watching a 'small, round-faced Jew with [a] sleepy expression' seated near her in front. He's Jason Harmer, 'popularly supposed to have been Christine [Clay's] lover'. Well, this whole elaborate business of 'the watcher watched' proves in the novel to be something of a red herring, i.e. largely wasted, though not before Jammy has begun to suspect that one of the pair **he's** watching is the murderer. In fact,

> [he] hadn't been so excited since Old Man Willingdon had given him the exclusive story of how and why he had beaten his wife into pulp.

Just as the meeting seems about to break up, Lydia Keats calls for questions. In answering one of these, she steps to the front of the platform. 'The murderer of Christine [Clay]', she says, 'is here in this hall.' There's a moment's hush, then consternation. As people rush to the exits, someone goes to assist Lydia. That's when Jammy hears her blurt (recalling Mr Memory in Hitchcock's **The 39 Steps**, which preceded the Tey novel by a year), 'Oh what made me say that?'

These details amount, let's notice, to a play on different types of 'seeing'. Yet the novel has other climaxes - and it looks as if Hitchcock was reluctant to forgo any of them! One occurs in a Roman Catholic monastery at, of all places, Canterbury (famous for its Anglican cathedral). Here, Christine's ne'er-do-well brother is tracked down. Far from being the 'Brother Aloysius' he's been calling himself, he proves to be a phoney evangelist and con-artist who has fooled even the monastery's head monk, and who has had his eyes on the monastery's valuables. Moreover, those eyes provide the very focal-point of the scene in which Inspector Grant comes on his quarry praying with the other monks at a midnight service. Grant speculates how 'Being theatrical to no audience but oneself must soon pall'. He confronts 'Brother Aloysius', who denies everything, yet Grant notices 'that the expression in the man's small eyes was hate'. (Chapter 21)

And again, Robert, contra the film, spends much of the novel not on the run but simply hiding in the roof of the Marine Hotel. Late one night he climbs down into the hotel's deserted kitchen where he chances upon a newspaper, which he idly starts to read. Suddenly, says the novel,

> he began to laugh. Softly and consumedly, drumming with his fists on the scrubbed wood. His laughter grew, beyond his control. (Chapter 24)

Thus does Robert learn that he has been cleared.

Finally, there's the arrest of the true murderer, Lydia Keats. This occurs at her riverside apartment in Chelsea. She offers no resistance until she suddenly breaks down and starts to rave - and is later pronounced insane. The police surgeon attributes her condition to 'delusions of greatness' (Chapter 26).

Of all the suspects in the case, perhaps in the end the only untarnished ones are Christine's husband, Lord Champneis (pronounced Chins), and her reputed lover, Jason Harmer. These two men, in fact, turn out to have collaborated on the very night of the murder to smuggle into the country a Jewish refugee and political leader from the Continent, one Rimnik (Chapter 26).

In sum, the novel paints a sprawling social canvas, many of whose details, except the political ones, are boiled down by the film to enrich its own climax set in the Grand Hotel. (The political situation on the Continent would be implied a year later in Hitchcock's next film, **The Lady Vanishes**.) Some of the details make for recognisable-enough borrowings, such as the way the novel's Marine Hotel may have suggested the seaside setting (Falmouth? Folkestone?) of the hotel in the film. That setting, of course, allows the film to arrive full-circle from the clifftop scene at the start. But the matter is still not exactly simple. In changing the hotel's name, and in emphasising the insouciance of its staff and patrons, the film provides an equivalent to how the novel depicts Christine's circle of theatrical friends, from Marta Hallard to Lydia Keats. To some extent, **everyone** in that circle has suffered 'delusions of greatness'.

In fact, only Christine herself, among her friends and acquaintances, had approached even remotely the stature of a Greta Garbo. So the Grand Hotel setting (recalling the title of Garbo's 1932 film) manages both to evoke Christine's memory and to make a comment on the people who have now gathered here, most of them oblivious of the latest life-and-death drama they're about to witness - though exactly as in a theatre (the tea-room dance-floor and the orchestra platform). Note the haughty looks several of the hotel staff give Will and Erica when they first arrive. By the scene's end, when Robert will have joined them, those three will be heroes. And Christine's husband will have been 'exposed' as a villain ...

* * *

To properly grasp this very Hitchcockian situation, we should consider the person I've just called a villain. In fact, this once-proud man, who had rescued his wife from the chorus, and who has now become a nonentity himself, is a compound of practically all the outsiders (**qua** outsiders) in the novel. By such a designation I include the Jew with the 'sleepy expression', Jason Harmer (cf in the film the drummer's black-face and twitching eyes), and even the novel's husband who is specifically **not** a murderer (but who secretly engages in nocturnal escapades to rescue Jewish refugees). In addition, there's Christine's ne'er-do-well brother, who ends up disguised as a monk in Canterbury and who wears a look of hate (such as we see cross the drummer's face); there's the generally mediocre seeress, Lydia Keats, who feels a compulsion to confess in public and who goes mad (like the drummer); and there's Jammy Hopkins's boss, 'Old Man' Willingdon, who perversely allows his reporter to write about the time he beat up his wife. (Note that the drummer is repeatedly called 'old man', thereby sounding a further note of pathos in a film about triumphant youth.) And of course the novel describes a critical moment when Robert, exonerated at last, starts to **drum** upon the kitchen table and to **laugh uncontrollably** (as does the film's drummer when accused of killing his wife).

The fact that in the film both Robert and Erica, and Christine's husband, go on the run, ending up together at the suitably 'theatrical' Grand Hotel, is vital to the 'levelling' purpose of the film I remarked earlier. Without exception, everyone in the film wants - or wills - the same thing; and the theatrical occasion is its ideal representation. By the same token, a lesson of the film is that the representation is not the thing itself, nor does it last - no more than does the summer, or youth or (for that matter) the experience of viewing the film in front of us. In turn, what seems likely is that **everyone** in the film is 'deluded'. In Hitchcock, there are **no** untarnished characters, even if some of them, like Erica, are still young enough to retain vestiges of their original innocence.

Well, there's also a higher innocence. For Schopenhauer, it could be attained by those rare individuals who somehow manage to repudiate the Will by turning it back upon itself, thereby achieving an ethical transcendence. No doubt the experience of life itself - which is usually, of course, an **extended** experience - is the best teacher of this most important of all lessons. Yet Schopenhauer acknowledged

that some works of art might also teach it, or at least give glimpses of what higher innocence is like. I dare say Hitchcock's film is such a work. Earlier, I stressed its ongoing motif (not unconnected with its very movement or flow) whereby both Robert and Erica are repeatedly being 'exposed' in public to fresh dangers, fresh exigencies. Whenever one of them attempted to hang back, and wait in the car with Towser, circumstances would soon intervene. Often the result was both exhilarating and painful (as at Tom's Hat). You could say that such 'exposure' represents part of the learning process, the most obvious and 'theatrical' part. Yet equally important, if paradoxical, is how during the film both Erica and Robert, and Christine's husband, must still try **not** to star in their own drama, i.e. try to avoid being recognised. There lies another learning experience, and another vital one. In other words, proper 'modesty' is just as educative as public 'exposure'. Hitchcock once described the typical double-chase situation of his films as allowing the audience to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare. It's the same idea, merely a different (binary) metaphor.

Let's return to the Grand Hotel. To my point in 'MacGuffin' 10, that various Hitchcock films climax in a theatre or other public space, I there added the observation that the respective villains have typically spent the films either 'rendered mute or ... denied access to any form of public platform, or ... forced to shun "exposure" altogether'. Christine Clay's husband fits this pattern, and perhaps almost the only difference in the end between him and Robert (who may have been Christine's gigolo, remember), lies in the grave and irrevocable nature of his particular crime. Plus the fact that he no longer has access to one half of the educative life-process I've just described, i.e. the 'theatrical half'. I take it that he joined the minstrel band as some sort of substitute, as well as refuge: interestingly, this would seem to parallel Theodore Price's reading of another of Hitchcock's 'theatrical' films, **I Confess** (1953), which also ends beside a stage, and in which the leading character (according to Price) had joined the Church as a refuge from his homosexuality ...[28]

* * *

In this final scene, Hitchcock fully plays up the theatrical nature of the occasion, availing himself of touches he would have found in the novel's description of Lydia Keats's public talk attended by Jammy Hopkins. The people at the talk, with their various reasons for being there, correspond to the different groups listening to the minstrel band at the thé-dansant. Jammy himself, observing Lydia's audience, has a counterpart in Hitchcock's camera - whose showy crane-shot is particularly 'theatrical'.[29] And the novel's business of 'the watcher watched' (or 'the seer seen') has further equivalents in the film, particularly in the business of the policeman watching Erica and Will who are looking out for someone else - who then sees them before they see him ...

Also, just as the meeting in the London hall falls into roughly two halves, consisting of Lydia's talk followed by questions, so Hitchcock divides the thé-dansant scene into two sections, with an 'intermission' separating them. Naturally, he takes the opportunity provided by that lull to go 'behind the scenes', showing both the arrival of Erica's father (to whom Robert turns himself in, to save Erica further embarrassment) and the drummer popping pills (with the bizarre explanation, 'this twitch is getting on my nerves').[30]

Each of these details helps build suspense - which is palpable Will (cf 'MacGuffin' 10). Indeed, it's hard to separate the scene's 'theatricality' from the satisfying and even erotic aspect of suspense/Will (ibid). Hitchcock needs us to feel a mounting tension if only to understand by empathy the drummer's condition, which has already begun to show itself in his 'immodest' percussion. Importantly, Hitchcock takes care not to break that tension until he's ready. That's one reason why he has Erica and Will, our identification-figures in the scene, join in with the dancers for a once-around the floor. And why, even when the drummer's mad cadenzas begin to draw people's attention to him, these sound just intentional enough to leave us wondering, 'Did he mean that, or not?'

The drummer's final collapse, and 'exposure'/arrest, provide a kind of parody of the notion of rapturous death - which, in turn, isn't far removed from those parodies of 'nirvana' which I've previously detected in **Murder!** (1930), **Suspicion** (1941), **Psycho**, etc. (See, in particular, 'MacGuffin' 10.) In this connection, let's not forget the eloquent image of the ocean in the film's opening scene, never directly referred to thereafter. In Hitchcock, the sea inevitably carries a connotation of Will, and true nirvana entails becoming at one with it through a cessation of individual willing. So it's interesting that **Blue**

Velvet contains a comparable image, or so critic Danny Peary might convince us. He notes of Lynch's film how its memorable early close-up, of a severed human ear, is 'accompanied by sound effects (by Alan Splet) of what may be brain waves or the roar of the ocean one hears when listening to a seashell'. And he sees in this image - the camera tracks right into the ear's dark interior - Jeffrey Beaumont's 'passageway from young innocent to far-from-innocent adult'.[31]

So here are some final thoughts. With its generally innocuous surface, **Young and Innocent** prefigures Hitchcock's ironic depiction of small-town America in **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943), which is an obvious model for **Blue Velvet**. With this difference. In **Shadow of a Doubt**, depravity comes to town in the person of the charming, dandified serial-killer called Uncle Charlie; in **Blue Velvet**, the town breeds its own depravity, as exemplified by the vicious, possibly bisexual, gangster called Frank Booth.[32] (In Lynch's film, it's young Jeffrey who comes to town.) Nevertheless, Hitchcock's film uses the metaphor of wartime to imply the real problem: namely, what the detective Jack Graham calls in the film's last shot, a world that 'Seems to go crazy every now and then'. **Blue Velvet** settles for Jeffrey's reference to a world that's 'strange'.

Now, **Young and Innocent**, like both **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Blue Velvet**, ends with smiles all round. Its last shot stands in for the novel's entire final chapter (Chapter 27) in which Erica invites home for a celebratory meal both the detective on the case, Inspector Grant (a father-figure, on whom Erica seems to retain a crush), and Robert (who seems to have his own crush, on Erica). In the film, she simply smiles from Robert to her father. Meanwhile, the drummer has been led away, now quite mad and seemingly already half-forgotten. But Erica is an intelligent girl, like the niece of Uncle Charlie (she who marries the detective Jack) and young Sandy (a detective's daughter). It's not likely that any of these girls will be unchanged by what they've seen in their respective films. Or, henceforth, will remain altogether innocent, in even the most profound sense of that word. For them, too, the learning process has well and truly begun.

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Notes

1. Chabrol was interviewed for a recent documentary on Herrmann, co=produced by Channel Four (Britain) and Films d'ici (France).

2. Hence he told Truffaut that 'Directors who lose control are concerned with the abstract'.

3. Cited by Donald Spoto, 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (1992), p. xviv.

4. Ibid.

5. See the review there (pp. 3-7) of Steven C. Smith's 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann'. The term 'Under-nature', though, is A.P. Rossiter's, and I've borrowed it from Robin Wood's essay on **Rear Window** in 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (1989).

6. See 'An Interview with Alfred Hitchcock', translated in James Naremore (ed.), 'North by Northwest' (1993), p. 179.

7. These categories represent Schopenhauer's simplification of Kant. Cf my comment on Hugo Münsterberg's use of them, when I reviewed S.S. Prawer's 'Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror' in 'MacGuffin' 2, pp. 3-5.

8. Naremore, p. 179.

9. George Perry, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (1965), p. 61.

10. Programme note on **Young and Innocent** in National Film Theatre's 'Critic's Choice' brochure (to accompany a season of films, February-March 1964), p. 5.

11. Cf the novel, Chapter 12 (and passim). An obvious parallel, too, is with how the heroine of Hitchcock's **Marnie** comes in time to transfer her affection from her horse, Forio - killed after a hunting accident - to her husband, Mark.

12. That it was a **coal** mine (and not, say, a Cornish **tin** mine) is according to the account of **Young and Innocent** given in Harris & Lasky, 'The Films of Alfred Hitchcock' (1976), p. 64.

13. The film gives Erica a female 'Oedipus complex' just as it gives Robert the fairly conventional male itinerary of finding a woman who will be to him both 'mother' and 'mistress'. For a (very sophisticated) discussion of how in **Blue Velvet** Frank and Jeffrey are alike in desiring 'to be both son and father', see Barbara Creed, 'A Journey Through **Blue Velvet**: Film, Fantasy and the Female Spectator', in 'New Formations', No. 6, Winter 1988, pp. 97-117, especially p. 113. If I read Creed's article (and the film) aright, the underlying itinerary in **Blue Velvet** is one of overcoming **all** sexual difference, 'of closing the gap between masculine and feminine' (p. 114). But then, that's arguably a Hitchcockian theme, too. See my discussion of **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Blue Velvet** at the end of the present article, and cf my review of Theodore Price, 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality', in 'MacGuffin' 12.

14. Cf the moment early in **Vertigo** when Scottie collapses off the kitchen stool against Midge's bosom (see 'MacGuffin' 11) - though **that** moment, I grant you, is hardly ambiguous at all, given the (phallic) nature of Scottie's main quest ...

15. Cf the blind Philip Martin in Hitchcock's **Saboteur** (1942).

16. 'Critic's Choice' brochure, op. cit, p. 5. A typical Berry story in this respect, involving much dashing about the countryside under a summer's sky, is 'How Will Noggin Was Fooled', in 'Berry and Co' (1921).

17. Flora Macdonald, of course, helped Bonnie Prince Charlie elude his English pursuers ...

18. See the novel, Chapter 14.

19. This theme really emerges later in the film, where it applies most obviously (and naturally) to the wealthy characters. As for Hitchcock's depiction of Erica's Aunt Mary in the present scene, consider this. A recent news item noted how frequently people write from Tunbridge Wells to conservative newspapers (e.g. London's 'Daily Telegraph') and sign their letters 'Disgusted'. Surely Aunt Mary epitomises such people, and Hitchcock is having some sly fun at her expense!

20. The art director on many Gaumont films of the 1930s, including **Young and Innocent**, was Alfred Junge, formerly of UFA in Germany.

21. Actor Derrick de Marney was 30 (though he looks younger) when the film was made; Nova Pilbeam was a sweet 17. As in **Number Seventeen** (see 'MacGuffin' 5), there's at least a faint suggestion of cradle-snatching!

22. Although the credits of **Young and Innocent** list Alma Reville (Mrs Hitchcock) as co-scenarist, her official collaborator on the script, Charles Bennett, says that she 'never did a damned thing' on either this picture or any of the other Hitchcock pictures he wrote, such as **The 39 Steps**. Bennett hastens to add that Alma 'was one of the most wonderful people in the world' whom he, Bennett, 'adored' - but that even her nominal 'continuity' function on Hitchcock's pictures was just a salary dodge, justified by the fact that Hitchcock's careful pre-planning and economy of shooting obviated the need for a continuity person at all ... See Pat McGilligan (ed.), 'Backstory: Interviews With Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age' (1986), p. 27.

23. Nevertheless, the **Young and Innocent** party scene may perhaps call to mind such a well-known article as Joseph Luft's 'The Johari window: a graphic model of awareness in group relations', in Cathcart & Samovar, 'Small group Communications: A reader' (1984), pp. 29-57 ...

24. Cf Perry, p. 61.

25. Remember that the 'innocent' Erica, by contrast, is associated with daytime and sunshine.

26. Cf the 'swamp of boredom' in which Jeffries finds himself at the start of **Rear Window**. Still, perhaps there's a sense in which Erica's present travail corresponds more nearly to Bunyan's Doubting Castle or even Valley of the Shadow of Death. Be that as it may, **Young and Innocent also** seems to say that the world has its Vanity Fair aspect ... For the (indirect?) influence of Bunyan on Hitchcock, see my review of Robert Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation', in the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', pp. 110-11 and pp. 115-16 (notes 22 and 23), as well as my review of Naremore, op. cit., in this 'MacGuffin'. Also, let's note that Richard Usborne, 'Clubland Heroes' (1983), p. 71, says that Dornford Yates's writing style in the 'Chandos' thrillers was often Bunyanesque ...

27. Maurice Yacowar, 'Hitchcock's British Films' (1977), p. 221.

28. However, there the character is certainly redeemed, like Robert in **Young and Innocent**, and the film's villain who dies at the end is a **political** refugee and murderer/blackmailer (and possible homosexual, although he's married), who has been working as a sexton in the priest's own church. See my review of Price's 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' in 'MacGuffin' 12.

29. Strictly, Hitchcock's camera corresponds to Josephine Tey's prose, as Jammy's report of Lydia's talk is given in the third person, not directly ...

30. In my review of Hitchcock's **Stage Fright** in 'MacGuffin' 2, I referred to how some modern philosophers like Gilbert Ryle believe that mind and body are indistinguishable, that the mind is part of the body's activity and not a separate, independent entity ...

31. Danny Peary, 'Cult Movies Three' (1988), p. 39.

32. Cf note 13 above. Note that neither Uncle Charlie nor Frank Booth is married, though both 'invade' a typical nuclear family and usurp the father's place (in Frank's case, by actual murder). In **Young and Innocent**, by contrast, Robert matures during the course of the film from 'boy' to man, and is finally acknowledged by a smiling Colonel Burgoyne as his heir-apparent ...

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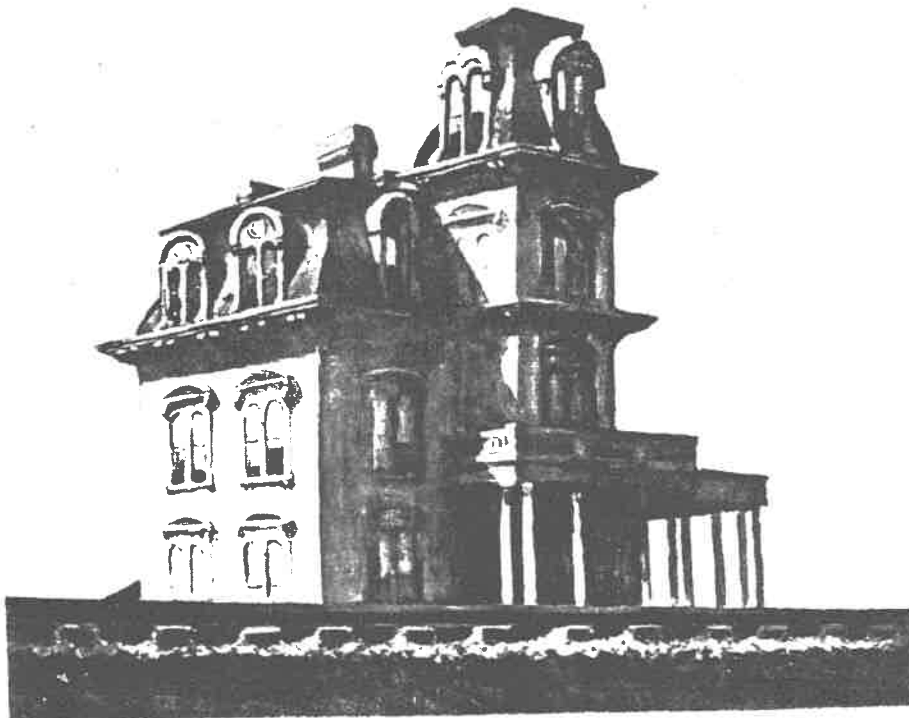

'House by the Railroad' by Edward Hopper (1882-1967)

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

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ODD SPOT: TO CATCH ANOTHER THIEF

Daring burglar Steven Paul Thompson, 24, was dubbed by Queensland police 'Spiderman' because his favourite modus operandi involved his scaling the outside of luxury high-rise apartments on the Gold and Sunshine coasts.

Thompson was recently gaoled for twenty years after confessing to an Australian record 2,289 offences. A Brisbane court heard that he used no equipment during the burglaries, and climbed the multi-storey buildings using only hands and feet.

The police might equally have called him 'The Cat', given the similarity of his crimes to those carried out on the French Riviera in 1950 by a young man named Dario Sambucco. Sambucco's story was fictionalised by author David Dodge in his 1953 novel 'To Catch a Thief', which in turn was filmed two years later by Alfred Hitchcock, with Cary Grant as 'Le chat'.

Footnote. Up to $2.95 million worth (Australian) of the Spiderman's loot still hasn't been recovered.

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