Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

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LETTERS

(Editor's note. There's no actual Editorial this time. Apart from the following informative letters, almost the whole issue is given over to an analysis of **Spellbound**. In his book, 'Hitchcock and Selznick', Leonard J. Leff claims of Hitchcock's film that it represents 'one of the best - and most 'Hitchcockian' - screenplays of' its director's career. Not everyone would agree. By all means, write and tell us **your** views ... To everyone, good viewing - Ken.)

Sidney Gottlieb, English Department, Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA

Thanks very much for sending me a copy of 'The MacGuffin'. I am already an avid reader (I share copies with a friend), and I always find many items of interest in each issue. I am particularly interested in the way you and your contributors widen the Hitchcock milieu. I may not (yet!) be convinced of the Schopenhauer connection, but I find extremely valuable your MANY references to novelists that form an essential part of Hitchcock's background (and foreground!) as a filmmaker. Hitchcock was, as he always insisted, primarily cinematic. But he was also literate and literary, and these latter subjects deserve all the attention they can get, especially as they are intimately related to the former!

(Editor's note. For the record, Hitchcock was a friend of at least two notable figures in English literature: the poet C. Day-Lewis, who wrote detective fiction as 'Nicholas Blake', and the short-story writer and critic, Sir Victor Pritchett, who contributed script suggestions for **The Birds**. I thank Professor Gottlieb for his letter - which also contains the welcome news that Professor Gottlieb's own book as editor, 'Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews', is forthcoming from the University of California Press/ Faber and Faber.)

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Timothy Walters, Muskogee, Oklahoma, USA

I was very impressed by Thomas Elsaesser's piece in 'MacGuffin' 14.

Americans who subscribe to cable television or own a satellite dish are familiar with the Arts & Entertainment Network. One of its regular features is 'Biography', a one-hour documentary series. A segment devoted to Alfred Hitchcock was aired in 1994. This video biography includes a few interview clips with The Master, as well as some of his home-movie footage. There are no new revelations for the serious Hitchcock student, but it's an entertaining encapsulation of Hitch's life and career. There are comments from Patricia Hitchcock, Ernest Lehman, Norman Lloyd, Richard Schickel and others. This 50-minute programme is available on video from the A&E Network.

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John L. Kuhns, Woodland Hills, California, USA

Re **Elstree Calling** and Ed Buscombe's letter in 'MacGuffin' 14. We should really straighten out the matter of Hitchcock's contribution to this wretched film! It's important for the Filmography. Your 'editor's note' indicates that you, yourself, and in person, believe that Hitchcock directed the Calthrop-Wong episode. I don't want to insult you by questioning the basis of this belief, but I **would**

like to know how you know that. If such a fact were confirmed, think of all the gender studies that would come of it, and all the Assistant Professors of English in the US whose tenure would be more assured because they could create a new feminist book on Hitchcock. (It's easier to have students watch movies than to motivate them to read 'Paradise Lost'.) ... And, after all, wouldn't the Director remember directing Anna May Wong?

(Editor's note. I thank John Kuhns for his letter, which goes on to note, with considerable zest, the apparent discrepancies in Donald Spoto's three accounts of the film. And I must own up that I have only lately seen the film in its entirety. My attributing the burlesque of 'Taming of the Shrew' to Hitchcock was based on mere conventional wisdom, i.e. hearsay. But now, briefly, here are my thoughts. The film's titles credit 'sketches and other interpolated items' to Hitchcock. By contrast, the 'ensemble numbers' are credited to the performers involved; and overall direction is attributed to Adrian Brunel. Next, the 'Taming of the Shrew' burlesque is the film's culminating sketch - and to my eyes has several Hitchcockian touches: e.g. the escalation involved when Donald Calthrop first 'tames' - with a whip - a truculent motorbike and then **tries** to tame an even more truculent Anna May Wong. Note the near-surrealism. But Anna May Wong herself is only on-screen for a matter of seconds. So I don't think it's necessarily significant that Hitchcock never spoke of her later. Personally, I'm happy to think that Hitchcock directed this - and several other - parts of **Elstree Calling**.)

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NEWS

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

Remembering film history

This issue of 'The MacGuffin' pays tribute, in effect, to the 50th anniversary of the release of Hitchcock's **Spellbound**, one of the first commercial films to deal in an integral way with psychoanalysis. (In Europe, there had already been 'art films' that dealt with similar matters, such as G.W. Pabst's 1926 **Secrets of a Soul** and Werner Hochbaum's 1935 **The Eternal Mask**.)

But as 1995 is being celebrated as the 100th anniversary of cinema itself, it's nice to note that someone is still alive who attended one of the original Lumière screenings. Recently, the world's oldest person celebrated her 120th birthday by reminiscing about the time in 1888 she sold crayons to Vincent Van Gogh - whom she remembers as 'ugly as sin ... bad-tempered and smelly' - and the trip she made in 1895 to a 'movie-hall' where she saw **L'Arroseur arrosé** (**The Hoser hosed**) ...

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APOLOGIES/ BLOOPERS

No less than three apologies to Adrian Martin. First, his article on some recent Hitchcock-derivative movies has had to be held over (along with some of our regular features, such as 'Book Reviews'), for lack of space. Second, his selection of best new releases/screenings of 1994 has also had to be held over. Third, the 'Contents' index for issues 9-12, which we printed last time, gave a wrong page-reference for Adrian's long article on **Notorious** in 'MacGuffin' 10. The correct page-reference reads 'pages 14-25'. Also, to some other recent would-be contributors, we say: please be patient. Your pieces should appear next time.

The 'academic in Oregon' who has done considerable work on the Schopenhauer-Woody Allen connection ('MacGuffin' 14, p. 4) actually lives in Seattle, Washington. Apologies to Dr Don Miller for 're-locating' him.

And we were wrong last time to say (p. 13) that at one point in Hitchcock's **Spellbound**, Dr Brulov thinks that the winged figure in Ballyntine's dream may refer to himself. A more accurate reading of the **Spellbound** dream appears later in this issue.

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Their Way: Hitchcock's 'Spellbound' (1945)

> Freud maintained that frustration of the libidinal drive was the cause of anxiety; although the most primitive of all forms of anxiety he ascribed to the individual's experience of the normal process of human birth.
>
> - David Stafford-Clark, 'What Freud Really Said' (1967), p. 122

> ... the cosmic anguish of 'space-time'.
>
> - Jacques Dopagne, 'Dali' (1974)

> 'We have the word "white" on our side.'
>
> - Constance Petersen to John Ballyntine, in **Spellbound**

1. Fathers

Essential reading on **Spellbound** includes articles by Andrew Britton (1986) and James Bigwood (1991),[1] but I'd like to start by commending Raymond Durgnat's sensible remarks in his book, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' (1974). Here's how he summarises the film:

> The asylum's [i.e. Green Manors's] current director, Dr Murchison (Leo G. Carroll), is due for retirement. His replacement is to be one Dr Edwardes, whom John Ballyntine[2] (Gregory Peck) impersonates and whom he comes to believe that he has killed. But Constance (Ingrid Bergman) takes him to the analyst who analysed her and he ascertains that Ballyntine is suffering from (1) guilt at seeing his younger brother's death while playing as a child, and (2) its reinforcement by witnessing the death of the man whom he pretends to be, and whose real murderer turns out to be Dr Murchison. Obviously, in analytical terms, Murchison is the evil father-figure, angry at being supplanted, and Constance's analyst, her father-figure, [whose name is Dr Brulov,] is the kindly father-figure, willing to yield the mother-figure to the son.[3]

Obvious or not, I think the point Durgnat makes here is crucial. So let's not lose sight of it, notwithstanding that Britton would add that both Murchison **and** Brulov are finally 'guilty', inasmuch that they both urge 'repression and sublimation as a cure for [Constance's] attachment to Ballyntine'.[4] I'll come back to this.

Further, notice that Durgnat in fact makes a double point about Brulov's role: that he's Constance's ('good') father-figure and that he's the kindly father-figure of Ballyntine, her patient and suitor. That Brulov is a surrogate father to Constance seems beyond any doubt. In the original novel, 'The House of Dr Edwardes' (1927), by 'Francis Beeding', Constance lands her first doctor's job when the head of Château Landry (cum Green Manors) offers her a position: what's significant about this is that he had been a friend of her father, 'dead these twenty years'.[5] Just as significantly, in the film we're told that it's Brulov who had got Constance the Green Manors job.

As for Brulov's willingness, or otherwise, to 'yield' Constance when the time comes, it helps to notice that he's one of several similarly-placed 'fathers' in Hitchcock's films - some more amenable than others. Three such figures are Colonel Burgoyne in **Young and Innocent** (1937), the blind Philip Martin in **Saboteur** (1942) and Professor Lindt in **Torn Curtain** (1966). Of these, the eminent - and irascible - scientist, Lindt, resembles Brulov in more ways than just having white hair and a goatee beard! But also, let's recall how a key scene in **Torn Curtain** requires its young American physicist, Michael Armstrong, the fiancé of Sarah Sherman (in whom Lindt has shown a perhaps more than fatherly interest), to **trick** the older man of his superior scientific knowledge ...

By contrast, in **Young and Innocent**, Robert Tisdall has only to finally prove himself worthy of Erica Burgoyne's love and trust before her policeman father, a most pleasant man, acknowledges Tisdall as his heir-apparent (see 'MacGuffin' 13). Even so, there's a certain cosy incestuousness, a sense of 'keeping it all in the family', about this resolution.[6] Below, I'll discuss the significance of Brulov's twice-uttered remark in **Spellbound**, that 'any husband of Constance is a husband of mine, so to speak'.

That leaves Philip Martin in **Saboteur**. He is, in fact, the **most** readily yielding of all these 'Oedipal' father-figures. Could anyone forget the moment, just halfway through the film, when he bids Barry Kane to take care of his niece Pat Martin and 'go and do the things I cannot do'?

Now, something else to notice about all these prospective fathers-in-law (real or symbolic) is that they're either widowers or bachelors. It's not exactly clear which category Brulov belongs to, though we may guess that he has lost his wife in the War. (He's Russian.) In any event, he describes himself as 'living on my own with a can-opener'. The point is, each of these men has a reason to feel that his 'macho' image has been undercut. In the case of the gentle and wise Philip Martin, I'm tempted to say that he's potentially what Camille Paglia calls a 'Teiresias' figure, the male mother. Though Paglia cites television talk-show hosts as a modern example, the original Teiresias of Greek legend was, of course, the blind prophet who told Oedipus the truth about his crime ...[7]

The two irascible scientists, Brulov and Lindt, are a different matter! We readily sense that neither of them will **yield** any part of his virility without a fight. Of Brulov, notice that he wears assertively patterned ties, and carries a pipe and tobacco pouch; that at one point, when a rival psychiatrist - the ubiquitous Edwardes - is mentioned, he angrily waves a knife; and that near the end of the film, we see him gripping his metal-headed cane. On the other hand, there's a great difference between these symbolic gestures of Brulov's and Dr Murchison's actual resort to **murder** to try and retain his position as 'patriarch' of Green Manors. Let's not lose sight of that, either.

2. Forces

Despite **Spellbound**'s innovation, then, in being one of the first films to deal with psychoanalysis - something of which Hitchcock and his scriptwriter Ben Hecht were very aware - it also reworked ingredients from earlier films. For instance, an older man's fear of being supplanted, and his being driven to murder, is the same basic situation that we find in **Young and Innocent**; in both films, too, a younger man is suspected of the crime, and must go on the run with his girl, who works assiduously to try and clear him.

Then there's what I'll call the thrust of **Spellbound**'s imagery. Many of the images have their own precedents in Hitchcock's films. To see both these things, let's take the credits-sequence. As the credits unroll, they do so over a view of a tree whose leaves are blowing away. Simultaneously, Miklos Rozsa's score imitates the wind, most elaborately in an eerie passage played on the theremin; it's the same passage that will accompany the onset of each of Ballyntine's anxiety-attacks from the time he meets Constance. In fact, it's one of the score's main motifs. But here it's soon followed by the equally important love theme, then by various complications, foreshadowing how in this film love's course will indeed be difficult.

Now, the image of leaves blowing from a tree has its most obvious precedent in the opening scene of **Number Seventeen** (1932), where on a windy autumn night a man chases his hat along a street ... But that episode, I'd suggest, is little more than a neat piece of scene-setting and a plot-device (cf the windmills sequence in **Foreign Correspondent**, 1940). Whereas, the allusion to Nature we're given at the start of **Spellbound** seems to invoke an altogether different order of film, one going back to **The Manxman** (1929). The latter, the last of Hitchcock's silent features, opens with a brief view of waves pounding a coast, followed by a tranquil scene of fishing-boats returning to port, their sails hanging limp ...

Next, here's a related matter. **Spellbound**'s chill wind may be opposed by the **warmth** of love, yet we sense that the outcome is uncertain. In both **The Manxman** and **Rebecca** (1940), the cold hand of the past threatens to constrain the characters' happiness indefinitely. Indeed, when **Rebecca**'s narrator, in that film's opening scene, describes how 'Nature had come into her own again ... with [her] long tenacious fingers', this is at once true of what we see on-screen at that moment and emblematic of the malign power we'll feel working throughout.

Malignity is also the keynote of **Jamaica Inn** (1939). Its first shot is of a weather-beaten inn-sign. Then a printed legend occupies the screen, though twice its lettering is 'erased' by fierce waves. All of which anticipates the credit-titles of **The Birds** (1963), whose words are **pecked** away by swooping birds. In contrast, an intended titles-sequence for **The Trouble With Harry** (1956) would have been **benign**

in mood. It was going to show, in speeded-up motion, the budding and maturing of a maple-leaf to its full autumn splendour.[8] This last fact may remind us that the action of **The Trouble With Harry**, like the Green Manors scenes of **Spellbound**, is set in Vermont in autumn/fall ...

That should do. I've listed these several shows of 'natural' force in Hitchcock's films because they begin to suggest what's at stake in **Spellbound**. In previous 'MacGuffins', I've described how Saul Bass's titles, with Bernard Herrmann's scoring, for films like **North by Northwest** (1959) and **Psycho** (1960) convey a more generalised force.[9] Altogether, I think we're talking of something very like what the philosopher Schopenhauer called 'Will', or life-energy. It's not unconnected with 'suspense', of course. Also in previous 'MacGuffins',[10] I've noted how an audience engages with a Hitchcock film in a near-libidinous way - to the extent that when an aging Roger Thornhill in **North by Northwest** tells us that he has 'never felt more alive', the feeling should be mutual ...

The point, for **Spellbound** specifically, is that all its on-screen action - involving contending father-figures, intense love-affairs and just considerable frustration - may find an echo in our own world where such things aren't exactly unknown - if only in our nightly dreaming. The reciprocity of **Spellbound**'s world and that of its audience is certainly one of the themes of this article. It takes its cue from the quotation that follows the film's credit-titles, a quotation from 'Julius Caesar': 'The fault ... is not in our stars,/ But in ourselves ...'.

3. Fears

I haven't forgotten Freud, by the way. But **Spellbound** is more than Freud, just as Schopenhauer's Will is more than Freud's 'Unconscious', and Jung's use of the term 'libido' extends Freud's use of it - yet **all** these concepts overlap.[11] Likewise, Freud's attributing the cause of anxiety to 'frustration of the libidinal drive' is helpful, but it's hardly the last word on the nature of fear and anxiety.

Let's combine Freud and Schopenhauer for a moment. Schopenhauer wrote that 'the sexual impulse' is 'the kernel of ... all willing',[12] but he stressed that the nature of willing is such that we're forever dissatisfied, and in danger of falling into a state of languor or boredom.[13] His view of human beings has been summed up as implying how we're 'caught between the Scylla of willing and the Charybdis of boredom'.[14]

That's about as good a description of the predicament of the typical Hitchcock protagonist as you'll get! Think of **Rear Window** (1954), where Jefferies finds himself sunk in a 'swamp of boredom' and virtually **wills** something to happen. Then, with considerable libido - some of it the audience's - riding on the outcome, he becomes **frustrated** when nobody at first believes his story of what he's seen. In effect, he's like the child who witnesses Freud's 'primal scene' - the parents' love-making - and for a long while thereafter feels puzzled and excluded, and therefore anxious.[15] Also, note the 'Oedipal' implications. For both Jefferies and the audience, then, the situation is doubly suspenseful, combining past and present torments.

Spellbound follows a similar pattern. As we'll see, the Green Manors scenes involve both a state of boredom and a condition of sexual frustration, neatly symbolised in the opening card game. (For Schopenhauer, and very possibly Hitchcock, card-playing expresses 'the wretched side of humanity', i.e. of people subjected to sustained boredom.)[16] And yet, once again, none of this may feel wholly unfamiliar to us. Not for nothing, surely, did an early draft of **Spellbound** have the Green Manors inmates staging numerous rehearsals of Congreve's comedy of self-interest, and frustrated marriage, 'The Way of the World'.[17]

Another source of anxiety for both **Spellbound**'s characters and audience is, naturally, the matter of Ballyntine's amnesia. Is he a murderer, or not? What traumatic event did he once see? But there seems to be a further and more general cause of anxiety, one resembling that 'cosmic anguish of "space-time"' invoked by Jacques Dopagne in his book on Salvador Dali.[18] On this matter, Schopenhauer is undoubtedly an authority. He tells us that 'space-time' (his term) is **subjective**, the very **principium individuationis** whereby we each try to make sense of the phenomenal world and our place in it.[19] He doesn't refer to the 'anguish', exactly, that such cognition may entail, but it's implicit in how he builds his whole philosophy on the opposition between phenomenon ('Representation') and noumenon (Will),

and on the twofold cause of human suffering: the blind, indifferent striving of Will itself and our **separation**, intellectually, from absolute knowledge of that Will. I think that it's the latter aspect of suffering that is most 'Daliesque' - and an essential element in **Spellbound**. But because I've touched before on this particular matter, i.e. the entrapment of Hitchcock's characters in their subjective worlds, when I've written on such films as **The Wrong Man** (1957, in 'MacGuffin' 6), **Vertigo** ('MacGuffin' 11) and **Torn Curtain** ('MacGuffin' 8), this time I'll just give some instances.

Most obviously, there's the dream-sequence, 'based on designs by ... Dali', as the credits tell us. In particular, there's what the storyboard calls 'a weird deserted place'[20] where we see Ballyntine running; and there's the background Dali provided for the section of the dream where a masked figure on a roof hides behind a chimney. In both these cases of - an almost palpable - 'space-time' anguish, note the distinctive Dali landscape: a vast alluvial plain, a massive cracked tor or crag, one or two scattered boulders typically so smooth and worn they're like eggs. Also, in the dream's 'gambling-house' episode, note how lines of perspective drawn on the floor and background extend the view to infinity, both in front and (by means of a reverse-shot) behind.[21]

In turn, the dream refers to other locales in the film: Green Manors, New York, Gabriel Valley. Each of these places has both a 'representative' and a 'symbolic' function (matters discussed below), but also contributes to an overall meaning related to 'space-time' anguish. So it isn't fortuitous when the drunk from Pittsburgh whom we see in the foyer of the Empire State Hotel complains, 'A fella could live and die in this town and couldn't meet nobody.'

He's an interesting person, this drunk. (Less so, his equivalent in the novel: an 'offensive young man' who annoys Constance when she first sets out for Château Landry.)[22] He parodies not only a cosmic anguish but also the other main type of anxiety, i.e. that caused by frustrated libido. Once he sees Constance, not even the hotel house-detective can easily dissuade him from his single-minded purpose! Of course, most of the anxiety/anguish involved is felt by Constance, who is trying to find Ballyntine in this huge building. As her name may tell us, she has a single-minded purpose of her own, though it concerns mainly her **love** - an exalted form of libido - for her patient.[23] (**His** name suggests 'valentine' ...) Moreover, it practically goes without saying that our own 'libido' is thoroughly engaged, and with it our suspenseful interest in what happens. In other words, whatever anxieties and hopes the characters feel are shared by us - a case of what I've previously called Hitchcock's subjective-technique. **Spellbound**, in fact, may be the very best illustration of its master director and story-teller's ability to put us at film-centre and keep us there, using all manner of devices.[24]

With that last point in mind, let's now work through the film from where we left off, i.e. as the credits end.

4. Indoors, out of the cold

A long-shot of Green Manors shows it to be a country mansion with a wide lawn. There are no high walls: Durgnat's term 'asylum' is somewhat misleading. In the foreground, leaves blow along a road past the entrance-gate which has knobbed gate-posts (see below). Superimposed over the shot is Shakespeare's, 'The fault is ... in ourselves ...'.

A dissolve brings us to the front door. Aptly, another superimposed title tells us that the psychoanalyst seeks 'to open the locked doors of 'the patient's mind and to drive out 'the devils of unreason ... from the human soul'. A second dissolve discloses a comfortable, **warm** drawing-room (note the potted fern on a mantelpiece) where some women at a table are playing cards.

It's an exemplary Hitchcock opening. In terms of subjective-technique, the transition from chilly outdoors to warm interior anticipates, notably, the start of **Torn Curtain**, where a similar progression virtually lands us in bed with the hero and heroine. That the same progression invites an analogy with (1) the audience's recent entry into the cinema, seeking entertainment, and (2) various Freudian notions (e.g. return to the womb), is hardly likely to have escaped Hitchcock's notice.

Even more notably, both a 'cold/warm' motif and a 'doors' motif anticipate **Marnie** (1964) - whose 'doors' references are used with particular ingenuity to project its heroine's shut-out condition and to mark

stages in her 'therapy'. But **Spellbound** is ingenious, too. Its many shots of thresholds and corridors echo the title of the book by the missing Dr Edwardes (whom Ballyntine, in his amnesiac state, impersonates), a book called 'The Labyrinth of the Guilt Complex'. In turn, the film posits an ultimate freedom, symbolised by what lies behind the last door of all: a radiant whiteness. Here, obviously, I'm referring to the celebrated shot of doors opening one after another, a shot representing 'first love'; but the radiant whiteness we glimpse there soon accrues any number of further associations.

Constance at one point says, 'We have the word "white" on our side.' Wisely, the filmmakers never disclose whether it's a chimera she's driving at. They merely encourage us to speculate. Certainly a 'religious' reading is **permitted** from the moment the film speaks of 'devils' being driven 'from the human soul'. Later, Brulov (Michael Chekhov) tells Ballyntine that the problem of the dream-analyst is to 'find out what the devil you are trying to say to yourself'. In Hitchcock's films, devils are often opposed to their traditional foes, angels. And vice versa. For example, at the start of **Foreign Correspondent**, the film is dedicated to 'those [eponymous] guardian angels', one of whom is promptly dispatched by his editor in New York to a 'bedevilled' Europe. In **Spellbound**, Constance is sceptical at first of poets who compare love to 'a symphony orchestra and a flight of angels', yet almost the final twist in the mystery surrounding Ballyntine will be associated with the ski-resort called Gabriel Valley (after the **Archangel** Gabriel). Notice the hinting at whiteness, the traditional colour of angels.

On the other hand, the very first image we're shown when we arrive inside Green Manors - the image of card-players - may give us pause. In Expressionism, which is another salient influence on **Spellbound**, all forms of gambling are 'escapist' and 'pessimistic'. Is life, then, just a lottery? Or, if Hitchcock's world permits a God, is He anything other than the Joycean one, 'aloof, paring His fingernails'? At the end of the film, Murchison will interpret the 'gambling-house' part of Ballyntine's dream, where people are seen playing with blank cards, as an attempt by the patient 'to **deny** it was a gambling-house' (my emphasis). He'll add that 'the dream gives the locale a double identity', i.e. both Green Manors and New York. In Expressionist terms, New York, with its Empire State Building (then the world's tallest), its Twenty-One Club and its several vast railway stations, has already been defined for us as both the hub of the world and a place of winners **and** losers (e.g. Constance and the drunk, respectively). Significantly, when Constance finally locates Ballyntine, it's by means of the hotel's card-index of its guests ...

5. Who wears the pants?

One of the patients we see playing cards in the drawing-room of Green Manors is Miss Carmichael (Rhonda Fleming). She belongs to the category of women Hitchcock dubbed 'Mediterranean', and whose sexuality (he would add, drily) is 'all on display'. She's about to confront her alter ego, Constance, who initially represents '**Nordic**' femininity at its most stifled, even frigid. We hear a nurse's voice tell her that 'Dr Petersen is ready for you', and she affects to apologise to the other card-players, adding that she's leaving 'a perfect hand - would have beaten the pants off you.' This incident, which reprises playing-card references in **Shadow of a Doubt** and **Lifeboat** (both 1943, and both featuring perfect hands), nevertheless manages to tell us a lot about Miss Carmichael herself - especially after we've heard her complain to Constance that 'psychoanalysis bores the pants off me'. (Like many Hitchcock characters, she seems given to repetition-compulsion.) No doubt, undressing everybody is her idea of the ultimate 'cure' for all ailments, **including** boredom. In the meantime, she isn't the only person in the film to resent giving up something 'perfect', and to show ambivalence or confusion about her/his gender identity or gender role ...

The nurse whispers to the attendant, Harry, assigned to bring Miss Carmichael to Constance, 'Watch her carefully - don't take your eyes off her.' (The reference to eyes is just one of several in the Green Manors scenes.) But Harry still lets himself be taken in! Outside Constance's door, Miss Carmichael pretends that she's going to kiss him, then scratches the back of his hand. Here, there's a foretaste of how, early in **Marnie**, Mark Rutland sees fit to liken the misandrist Marnie to a jaguarundi!

Moreover, you soon suspect that Constance herself is no less frigid than Marnie in the scenes before Mark 'tames' her. Miss Carmichael calls her 'Miss Frozen-puss'. Further, she wears glasses (like the repressed Lina at the start of **Suspicion**, 1941) and she smokes a cigarette in a long, i.e. 'phallic', holder. To another patient, Mr Garmes (Norman Lloyd), she'll say that she's very capable of opening her

own mail. With or without the implied symbolism (cf Lina's and Marnie's purses), we readily believe her - besides noting that she's protecting Garmes from a shiny, knife-like letter opener. If Miss Carmichael is evidently a man-hater (preferring to undress only women?), Garmes is a **self**-hater, who believes erroneously that he killed his father. Clearly, these two patients represent, in an extreme form, aspects of Constance and Ballyntine respectively.

Of course, Hitchcock and Hecht treat it all very lightly at first. Hence the script gives Constance's colleague, the 'amorous' Dr Fleurot, plenty of opportunity to mock her bookishness and her lack of 'inside information' about love. But in an exchange that recalls Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas in Lubitsch's **Ninotchka** (1939), she rejects his advances out of hand: 'You sense only your own desires and pulsations - I assure you mine in no way resemble them.'

In these early scenes, Constance's room is like a railway station. (I use that image advisedly - it suggests her as-yet lack of deep commitment to another person.) Someone else who comes to her door is the about-to-retire head of Green Manors, Murchison. He 'marches in' unannounced or, rather, self-announced - a neat touch, this, imitated by Kenneth Branagh's **Dead Again** (1991), whose own villain makes a similar first-entrance. The effect is doubtless subliminal, but it leaves us feeling that the character hasn't been vouched for. (By contrast, when we later meet Brulov, he has been well-heralded by the admiring Constance.) Afterwards, we can congratulate ourselves in the very words Murchison at one point uses of Ballyntine: 'I felt something wrong from the moment our man appeared.'[25]

Murchison has come to say that his successor, Dr Edwardes, is due at any moment. But he assures Constance - who seems relieved - that he himself won't be leaving straight away. In one of Hitchcock's most-used lines of the 1940s (cf **Rebecca** and **The Paradine Case**), he tells her that he'll 'hover around for a while - like an old mother hen'. Earlier, I noted Brulov's fight to maintain his virility. In this, he again anticipates his counterpart in **Torn Curtain**, Lindt, whom we hear impatiently mock his aging colleagues for their 'cluck-clucking'! But now we can see that in **Spellbound** the matter extends across the board. The hangdog patient Garmes is unmanned by his guilt-complex, and so, incipiently, is Ballyntine. Likewise, if Miss Carmichael is confused about which sex wears the pants, the excessively bookish, i.e. intellectual, Constance is also in danger of not developing **her** femininity.

Before I draw parallels with some situations in other Hitchcock films, and elsewhere, there's a concealed aspect of this scene that needs mentioning. Murchison is 'in love' with Constance, and she, probably unconsciously, with him. (In the novel, the pair do indeed make love after he has exploited a momentary terror on her part to press his mouth on hers: cf Mark Rutland's seduction of Marnie during a thunderstorm.)[26] In other words, given that Murchison is the villainous father-figure, what we have here is a situation of 'incest' between a possessive 'father' and his 'daughter', such as Theodore Price discusses at length in 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992). That situation may tell us why Green Manors, despite its vital-sounding name, can be no more revivifying for now than Muir Woods in **Vertigo** (see 'MacGuffin' 11). Deep down, something is terribly wrong - or 'unnatural'.[27] Even Edwardes's murder was perhaps only a symptom. Likewise, it's symptomatic when Fleurot tells Constance that her work is 'brilliant but lifeless - there's no intuition in it'.

Now, in 'MacGuffin' 12, I noted how both Manderley in **Rebecca** and Hindley Hall in **The Paradine Case** have been 'blighted' and their present occupants 'desexed'. It's a literally classic situation, present also in such Hitchcock films as **Jamaica Inn** (whose Sir Humphrey Pengallen is yet another character concerned for his virility) and **Vertigo** (whose murderous father-figure, Gavin Elster, devastates several lives). Two films by other directors that depict roughly comparable situations are Robert Wiene's **The Cabinet of Dr Caligari** (1919) and Alain Resnais's **Last Year at Marienbad** (1961). Arguably, Luis Bunuel's **The Exterminating Angel** (1962) is a third.

But further, you can find analogues in fairy tale (e.g. 'Sleeping Beauty'), legend (e.g. the Arthurian account of the Dolorous Stroke), poetry (e.g. 'The Waste Land') and drama (e.g. 'Hamlet' - whose 'Oedipal' explications, by Freud and Dr Ernest Jones, are famous) ... Hence, coming back to the aptly-named **Spellbound**, we may sense how it shows us another case of the time being 'out of joint'. Yet there's an important difference. In order to set matters right, the filmmakers have empowered not a Hamlet or an Oedipus, exactly, but psychoanalysis. And love.

6. Who rules?

Not forgetting to keep the audience at film-centre, the film shows Constance watching through a window as the car carrying 'Dr Edwardes' pulls up outside: immediately afterwards, there's what is obviously a subjective-shot - which we naturally take to be Constance's point of view. In fact, Hitchcock may be giving us the view from the staffroom downstairs, for the next shot shows several of Constance's colleagues **also** watching through a window. Such a 'seamless' transition maintains the audience's level of involvement for the key moment when 'Edwardes'/Ballyntine, enters the staffroom.[28] Also, it makes a further subliminal statement or two (e.g. about Constance's aloofness, not yet abandoned).

Hard on Ballyntine's heels, Murchison appears at the staffroom door. Now begins one of the great 'bluffing' scenes in movies. Murchison professes to be both pleased to see Ballyntine and surprised at his youthfulness. Actually, he has seen him twice before: once at the Twenty-One Club in New York, where Ballyntine had been dining with the real Edwardes, and once in Gabriel Valley, where Ballyntine and Edwardes had been skiing when Murchison followed them there and shot Edwardes. Why he didn't also shoot Ballyntine while he was about it is never established. True, the dream-sequence will suggest that Murchison was masked at the time, and therefore not identifiable, but he could hardly have been masked when he confronted Edwardes in New York. And he certainly couldn't have known beforehand that Ballyntine would not remember either of these events! Nor could he have known that Ballyntine, a doctor, would assume the dead man's identity, even going so far as to take up Edwardes's appointment as head of Green Manors. When I said that this is one of the great 'bluffing' scenes in movies, I was allowing the filmmakers their share.

The main point is, Murchison's show of cheerfulness when greeting Ballyntine in the staffroom must conceal the real feelings of a deeply frustrated and frightened man. Of course, the audience as yet knows nothing of this. Only later, in hindsight, does the film's mythic- or dream-level, if you will, assert itself. Then, Murchison's fear of being supplanted - of having to give up his own 'perfect hand' as patriarch of Green Manors - appears central. And we see how the film in these early scenes has started to weave a very rich tapestry indeed.

In a way, both Edwardes and Ballyntine must seem to Murchison to resemble the tribal sons envisaged by Freud in 'Totem and Taboo' (1914). In a kind of 'Oedipal' fantasy, Freud there describes how the sons lie in wait for the chance to kill the father-leader. Then again, the film seems to hark back to Sir James Frazer's 'The Golden Bough' (1890) itself - the latter was clearly an influence on Freud's thinking.[29] When Murchison apologises to Ballyntine because he doesn't 'know the formal words for an abdication', you think of the famous opening passage in Frazer's work, which describes the anxiety felt by the aging 'King of the Wood'. It tells how, in a sacred grove outside Rome,

> grew a certain tree round which at any time of day, and probably far into the night, a grim figure might be seen to prowl. ... He was a priest and a murderer, and the man for whom he looked was sooner or later to murder him and hold the priesthood in his stead. ... The post which he held by this precarious tenure carried with it the title of king; but surely no crowned head ever lay uneasier, or was visited by more evil dreams, than his.[30]

The King of the Wood was the incarnation of the spirit of vegetation, and the reputed source of natural abundance and fertility; if his vital energies were allowed to decline, those of Nature itself would decline with them.[31]

Given all this, it may be useful to add that the Francis Beeding novel includes at least two parody-scenes of fertility ritual: a haymaking celebration by the Château Landry inmates, and episodes involving human and animal sacrifice at an altar in a wood.[32] These scenes parallel how the novel has its satanic Dr Murchison wear crosses on the soles of his feet in order to mock the crucifixion (see Truffaut's 'Hitchcock'). In any case, now we can see just why Green Manors at present remains something of a 'waste land'. Its custodian has grown weak, and keeps his position only by evil and cunning. True, the inmates do seem to be flourishing after a fashion - like ferns in a hothouse - but another of the film's subliminal messages is that their welfare is being put at hazard.

7. Transferences

Miss Carmichael had thrown a book at Constance, but matters really start to escalate when Garmes attacks Dr Fleurot and tries to cut his own throat. Ironically, this happens soon after the newly love-smitten Constance and Ballyntine have been out exploring the countryside. It looks as if what Fleurot calls the 'icepack' on Constance's head may have begun to melt, but only to release new perils. Such a pattern will repeat itself several times in the film: as Hitchcock once said in a different context, 'even the word "love" can be made to sound sinister'.[33] In this instance, a clue to what's happening may be found in how Garmes is **Ballyntine**'s alter ego ...

Characteristically, the outdoors sequence begins on a light note. Ballyntine, quoting Groucho Marx, has just told Constance that she's suffering from 'mogo on the gogo',[34] and has prescribed fresh air. But Hitchcock is careful hereabouts to keep matters within bounds: what we see of Vermont's fields and groves lacks charm (something that worried producer David Selznick).[35] There's even a moment when the couple must negotiate an unromantic tangle of barbed wire. Such direction on Hitchcock's part accords with (1) the dampening 'waste land' metaphor, yet (2) the couple's comical over-estimation of the view, as well as (3) the film's succession of barbed or pronged objects, and (4) the **full-blown** love scene and its dramatic interruption that follow almost immediately.

That love scene is the one where Constance comes upstairs at night, sees a light under Ballyntine's door, and enters his room. She'll repeat the trip at the end of the film, only then the room's occupant will be Murchison. Given the often Freudian symbolism of staircases (see article on **Suspicion** in 'MacGuffin' 7), and the matter of Constance's 'love' for Murchison, these two scenes are pivotal. (So, too, is a third staircase-related episode, in Brulov's house, which I'll discuss later.) For added measure, the present scene includes the 'opening-doors' shot - accompanied by Rozsa's notoriously trembling violins. However, the shot has scarcely ended before Ballyntine recoils from the sight of dark lines on Constance's white negligee, and we hear the same eerie motif that during the credits had accompanied the image of wind-blown leaves. His reaction carries an early hint of how the couple's very relationship will blow both hot and cold; in effect, it marks the onset of what psychiatrists call 'the transference'.[36] Freud had shown how a subject's attitudes to parental figures are revived during the analyst-patient relationship, which is noted for its 'instinctual ambivalence'. That's to say, there's a transference onto the analyst of both affectionate and hostile feelings, closely linked to the 'positive' and 'negative' components of the Oedipus complex.[37]

Complicating matters further, the dark lines that make Ballyntine so anxious will be shown later in the film to remind him of his younger brother's death at an age when both boys, emerging from the 'Oedipal' phase, would have recently experienced intense 'sibling rivalry'.

Next, immediately after Ballyntine's strange reaction, the telephone starts ringing shrilly. He answers it, to hear that Garmes has run amok and is in surgery. In effect, Garmes's guilt-feelings have led him to behave in a way that the look on Ballyntine's face has just suggested that, sooner or later, **he** might do. The view dissolves to an operating theatre.

Here there's another 'white radiance' like the one we glimpsed behind the opening doors. When Ballyntine sees Garmes, he starts babbling about how 'it's dark' in the corridor and how 'you can't keep people in cells'. Yet what he says merely asserts his new glimpse of freedom. Simultaneously, the intense whiteness contains for him a further reminder of death: that of Edwardes in the snow. This oxymoron - prospect of freedom and reminder of death - sufficiently explains his collapsing in a faint right there in the operating theatre. Whether his fainting is also due to how he can't face having to operate on Garmes because, deep down, he's a homosexual - as Theodore Price has suggested - seems to me dubious (like Price's contention that Maxim in **Rebecca** is not just impotent but gay - see 'MacGuffin' 12). On the other hand, from what's already been said above, you can't dismiss the possibility out of hand.

For the film's audience, and perhaps Ballyntine, the operating theatre may carry further reminders: e.g. of the time when we were born, when all our anxieties began. Certainly the scene at Gabriel Valley will represent a form of 'rebirthing'. Before that, at Brulov's house, Ballyntine will undergo a symbolic anaesthesia, such as Garmes has just experienced. It will be followed by Ballyntine's dream, representing yet another birth/rebirth ...

But let's not fail to notice the sheer drama of all this. The way in which the film piles incident upon incident, such as in the hectic few moments that elapse between the kissing ('opening-doors') scene and the operating-theatre scene, makes for classic Hitchcock - and classic Rozsa, despite those violins! To a 1945 viewer, in particular, watching the film and responding to its power must have felt rather like being subject to post-hypnotic suggestion! It's fascinating to imagine the excitement of the original audiences who saw the film at New York's huge Radio City Music Hall. And let's not forget that World War II had just ended, releasing its own swirling store of emotion, which Hitchcock's film taps (e.g. its reference to how Ballyntine had been shot down over Rome; its general optimism).

8. Submission

Decamping from Green Manors, Ballyntine and Constance end up at Brulov's house in suburban Rochester. By this time, the police know that Ballyntine is an impostor and that the real Edwardes has disappeared. Though the couple pretend to be newly-married, Brulov quickly guesses the truth - that they're on the run - but doesn't let on at first.[38] He invites them to stay with him.

Awaking towards dawn, Ballyntine goes into the bathroom to shave, but becomes disturbed by the general whiteness and by the sight of dark lines in a mug of shaving lather. Clutching an open razor, he returns to the bedroom where he stares at the parallel lines on the white coverlet of Constance's bed, just below her head. By now, Rozsa's music is throbbing; the same passage will recur during the ski-run scene at Gabriel Valley. Both times, we may infer that a threatening memory is very close.

Suddenly, as the music continues, Ballyntine turns and goes out into the hallway, where he starts to descend the stairs. As he reaches the landing, halfway down, a close-up emphasises the razor still in his hand. For extra emphasis - of its long, narrow shape - the razor is shown against a rounded stair-knob.

Downstairs, Brulov is working at his desk. When Ballyntine appears, he makes another of his instant appraisals and realises his danger, but again doesn't let on. Instead, he feigns chumminess while insisting that his guest join him for a glass of milk and crackers. Surreptitiously, he drugs the milk. Then, in a striking subjective-shot, Ballyntine drains the glass of its white contents, and is soon asleep - dreaming.

So what's going on here? First, it seems to me that these stairs have only a very general 'Freudian' ambience. Even the stair-knob may be interpreted as either 'male' or 'female' (or both or neither), depending on which part of the human anatomy you care to liken it to. (Cf some of my comments on the dream-sequence, below.) And I think that only the most rabid Freudian interpreter would insist that a male person coming down a staircase represents, say, 'sadism' or anything else of a sexual nature (unless, of course, there are further contextual pointers to that effect). In an interview with some film students, Hitchcock was once asked about his tendency to include staircases in his films. Was it a case of symbolism? He replied that he thought it fell 'more into the area of the visual, really'.[39] Let's leave it at that, for now.

But the next point I want to make **is** fairly precise. The staircase episode and its outcome effectively reverse the content of the scene from **Torn Curtain** I described earlier, in which the younger man tricks the older of his knowledge. Here, it's the older man who tricks the younger. However, when Ballyntine afterwards tells Brulov his dream, it's because the older man has persuaded him of the real advantage he'll gain by doing so.

I see a further link with **Torn Curtain**. I once described how that film's young hero, Armstrong, is symbolically 'reborn' in a long threefold process of 'submission-containment-liberation' (see 'MacGuffin' 8). I think Ballyntine in **Spellbound** undergoes a similar process, and that his inward journey - a vital part of the film's design - begins with his forced **submission** to Brulov, after which he abandons his notion that 'Freud is hooey' and stops running away from himself.

Which may bring us to the scene's **specific** symbols: namely, the razor and the glass of milk. It's striking, even startling, that 'masculinity' is here subdued by 'femininity'. And yet, everything fits! The would-be still 'virile' psychiatrist and 'good' father-figure, Brulov, performs a symbolic (as well

as pragmatic) act that saves the day for all concerned, and without his losing face. For a parallel, think of Lisa Fremont at the end of **Rear Window**, where, once she sees that Jefferies is asleep, puts down 'Beyond the High Himalayas', with its 'masculine' title, and resumes reading her preferred 'Harper's Bazaar'. In her wisdom, she has learnt how to have her cake and eat it ...

As for Ballyntine, he has hardly yet even begun to find wisdom. In order to do that, he must abandon a certain 'Oedipal' fixation - involving a narrowly-conceived wish to be 'perfect' - and submit to his 'castration'.[40] Naturally, this involves some 'feminisation'. Yet it's precisely now that his inward journey begins, i.e. with his dream. In **Torn Curtain**, likewise, from the moment Armstrong pauses at the centre of the tiled mandala in the Berlin Museum, he starts to incorporate into his life hitherto-excluded experiences: e.g. of the arts, others' suffering, Nature (see 'MacGuffin' 8).

Mind you, Hitchcock well knows that the process we're now discussing must always remain incomplete and partial, and that there will be backsliding. The astute Brulov ('one of the biggest brains that is in psychiatry') almost certainly knows it, too. I find him admirable and yet, in a pessimistic sense, very human. He appears to have major faults, not least a vein of paranoia such as he might be called on to treat in some of his patients! He also knows how to grumble! While preparing the crackers and milk for the razor-clutching Ballyntine, he keeps up a spiel about how in old age 'everything becomes just the opposite' of what it was, and how nobody is ever satisfied. Though this sounds vaguely Schopenhauerian, especially the last part, as a piece of sentiment it's also **very** human. And let's notice the potential bearing of his remarks on aspects of gender-identity. Crucially, in his case, he's capable of both restraining his more 'masculine' aggressive impulses and drawing on his 'feminine' side.[41] Nevertheless, as I say, he's far from being 'perfect'.

Now, the film puts its audience at the centre of these matters, too, when it propels us with Ballyntine down the staircase, and we, like him, then literally swallow what Brulov offers, i.e. submit to what I've variously described as a symbolic 'anaesthesia' or 'castration'. Note that the screen is once again flooded with whiteness. It's a moment that makes good use of cinema's capacity to be non-specific. In a sense, its sheer power is the main idea. On waking, Ballyntine is the more ready to acknowledge Brulov as a sort of 'wise old man' figure - the fact that Brulov calls **him** 'wise guy' is a sales pitch, employing a form of reverse psychology! However, the film is careful to stress that what follows is only 'a shortcut'.

9. The dream

Ballyntine isn't the only person in the house who dreams on this particular night. Brulov, too, recounts a dream he has had - though it consists simply of his being served 'real coffee' by Constance! There's a running gag in the Rochester scenes involving Brulov's coffee-fetish, which is one of his lesser 'faults'. (Cf Hitchcock's 1944 **Bon Voyage**, whose Scottish airman is always hungry.) I must say that Andrew Britton seems to me to be absurdly hard on Brulov. For instance, he uses the matter of the coffee to support his view that Brulov 'takes over' Constance.[42] Whereas, I'd prefer to say that Brulov becomes increasingly - and admirably - detached about important things.

Now to Ballyntine's dream, which we both hear recounted by him to Brulov and see enacted on the screen. As the filmmakers planned it, it was to consist of four parts. Sadly, one of these was deleted by Selznick during final 'editing'.[43] What I'll do here, drawing on James Bigwood's research, is describe the missing part in its context within the dream as a whole. For the sake of clarity, I'll put square brackets round all quotes and descriptions concerning the deletions. The dream was to be made up as follows: '1. The Gambling Sequence, 2. Two men on a Roof, [3. The Ballroom Sequence,] 4. The Downhill-Uphill Sequence.' As Bigwood says, 'Three of these sequences are easily matchable to corresponding scenes in the finished film.'[44]

Here, for reference, is Ballyntine's narration for all four parts:

> 'It seemed to be a gambling-house but there weren't any walls, just a lot of curtains with eyes painted on them. A man was walking around with a large pair of scissors cutting all the drapes in half. And then a girl came in with hardly anything on and started walking around the gambling-room kissing everybody. She came to my table first. I was sitting there playing cards with a man who

> had a beard. I was dealing to him and I turned up the seven of clubs. He said, "that makes twenty-one, I win." But when he turned up his cards, they were blank. Just then the proprietor came in and accused him of cheating. The proprietor yelled, "This is my place and if I catch you cheating again, I'll fix you." ... He was leaning over the sloping roof of a high building. It was the man with the beard. I yelled at him to watch out. Then he went over - slowly - with his feet in the air. And then I saw the proprietor again - the man in the mask. He was hiding behind a tall chimney and he had a small wheel in his hand. I saw him drop the wheel on the roof. ... [I don't know how I got there, but I was in a ballroom. The dancers were all dressed in white suits and pretending to dance, but not moving. There was an orchestra dressed in white fur hats. And Dr Brulov was leading it. I was dancing with Constance, and she had a dance card and asked me to write my name on it. I refused, then grabbed her and we started dancing - rather wildly. We danced out of the ballroom, and I kissed her. The dance card kept getting bigger. It was full of names and addresses. And Constance turned into a statue.] ... Suddenly I was running. Then I heard something beating over my head. It was a great pair of wings. The wings chased me and almost caught up with me when I came to the bottom of the hill. I must have escaped. I don't remember. That's all there was. I woke up and saw Dr Brulov.'[45]

When Ballyntine finishes his account, Constance, who has been taking notes, comes and offers him coffee - almost as if to reward him and acknowledge that he has successfully performed a rite of passage (birth/rebirth?).

Of course, together they have still to do the really hard work of interpreting the dream. At first, just about all that Constance and Brulov come up with is how the beating wings at the end suggest a location, perhaps Angel Valley. Then Ballyntine helps them out - it was actually Gabriel Valley ...

Now, it was masterly of the filmmakers to spread the explanation of the dream over the entire last third of the picture. Even so, much goes unsaid. My exegesis can conveniently start with 'eye-symbolism'.

The sequence begins with a forward tracking movement. There's a dissolve from Ballyntine to a shot of several star-like points of light which, in turn, become a succession of realistic, though disembodied, eyes; only next do we arrive in the gambling-house with its **grotesque**, staring eyes painted on the drapes.[46] As the camera continues to track, we notice two more sources of 'eyes'. On the right, Ballyntine is playing cards with the bearded man; we observe the curious fact that the room's tables and chairs don't have the customary wooden legs but, instead, women's legs in high heels. And on each table are metronomes with swaying cutout eyes. Behind Ballyntine's table, on a pedestal, is what appears to be a lamp surmounted by a 'knob'. Further back again, revealed when the man with the scissors cuts the drapes at the end of the room, is another disembodied eye that seems to hover above the horizon.

Well, Freud tells us that every dream 'is the fulfilment of a wish'.[47] That's certainly the case here, inasmuch that the gambling-house - which could almost be a brothel - represents the world as a part of Ballyntine might wish it to be. Note that we arrive within its flimsy walls by means of a 'cosmic' journey, leaving the stars behind, no doubt both because they don't concern us (as the film began by emphasising) and because they're beyond human understanding and intervention anyway. Then we pass through an 'outer' world whose realistic eyes may remind us of the film's depiction of New York with its prying house-detectives, bell-boys and railway ticket-inspectors. Those realistic eyes do, in fact, look quite masculine. Only next do we enter the gambling-room. **Its** eyes are painted on labia-like drapes and look feminine. Moreover, as symbols, they fairly obviously represent the female sexual organ: hence the 'male' scissors cutting them à la the episode with the razor in Dali/Bunuel's **Un Chien Andalou** (1929).

Equally 'sexual' would have been some of the symbolism intended for the dream's ballroom episode: e.g. a sack of coal suspended from the ceiling.[48] But let's stay with 'eyes' for the moment. If you examine Freud's 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (1900) and some of his subsequent writings, such as "The Uncanny" (1919), you find that he makes a distinction which film scholars (e.g. Margaret Horwitz, David Sterritt) haven't always sufficiently remembered.[49] Eyes, considered more or less objectively, are potential female symbols, as you might expect. Thus in 'The Interpretation of Dreams', having drawn the classic distinction between symbolic objects that are long and stiff - invariably male - and symbolic objects that are hollow - invariably female - Freud adds:

> The genitals can also be represented in dreams by other parts of the body: the male organ by a hand or a foot and the female genital orifice by the mouth or an ear or even an eye.[50]

Yet eyes considered more or less **subjectively** often figure in dream-symbolism as male, as when Freud tells us

> The blinding in the legend of Oedipus, as well as elsewhere, stands for castration.[51]

The latter meaning, 'castration', seems to be present in the **Spellbound** dream at one and the same time as the other meaning. That's to say, the man with the scissors is both performing symbolic sexual acts (on females) and venting his displeasure (on males). But then, why not? Our very language has a phrase that can be used in like manner. And the film itself, remember, gives the eyes painted on the drapes a specific 'identity' when Murchison says that they represent the guards at Green Manors. Moreover, we'll find that the business with the scissors has other possible meanings again ...

All the card-players in the gambling-room are men. Naturally, as they sit at its tables, their legs brush against the voluptuously 'female' table-legs. The swaying eyes on the metronomes - an old idea of Man Ray's -[52] suggest copulation, or masturbation. Now, none of these details conflicts with Freud, who in fact wrote of gambling in real life that it's a form of sexual compensation, or sublimation.[53] Later, another psychiatrist, Ralph Greenson, elaborated the same idea:

> The gambler masochistically enjoys his fear of losing and continues it as long as possible, because when he leaves the table or racecourse to take up his ordinary life some really intolerable fear awaits him; the smaller fear of losing his money is by comparison a pleasure. The mock struggle is a sublimation of the real struggle.[54]

Is this relevant to **Spellbound**? I think so, inasmuch that we've already begun to notice how Ballyntine's relations with Constance arouse in him ambivalent feelings of an ultimately 'Oedipal' kind. But the dream itself tells us that he's running away from something. Most specifically, the ballroom episode indicates that he dreads the marriage-bond, very much like Jefferies - with his 'Oedipal' hang-ups - in **Rear Window**. And again, more generally, I think we may even see the gambling-room episode as implying Hitchcock's 'Schopenhauerian' comment on the film's audience, whose motivation for entering the cinema is to escape boredom with its attendant anxieties and fears ...[55]

Next, a word about the lamp surmounted by what looks like a knob (or orb), that stands on a pedestal alongside Ballyntine's table. The knob has its 'prototypes' in some earlier scenes: e.g. on the gate-posts at Green Manors, and on the stair-posts at Brulov's house. My feeling about it rather matches what has been said above about eye-symbolism. Everything considered, I think its main emblematic function here is to represent a dominant 'masculinity' (or 'patriarchy') - though I wouldn't put it past either Dali or the filmmakers to attribute a secondary, 'female' meaning to it. (Cf my discussion, in 'MacGuffin' 12, of Hitchcock's fascination with things that may become their opposites.) Some reinforcement for the interpretation I've just given comes from an image employed in the final part of the dream, soon to be mentioned.[56]

A wish-fulfilment aspect continues with the entrance of the scantily-dressed girl who comes first to Ballyntine's table - though, note, she kisses the bearded man first of all. Symbolically, she's many things, including a waitress (at the Twenty-One Club) and a staff-member and/or patient (at Green Manors). Ballyntine will later say that she looked 'a little like Constance' even though she's played by Rhonda Fleming, whom we saw earlier as Miss Carmichael, and in fact doesn't **look** like her alter ego at all! As for the man who goes around cutting the drapes, he's played by the actor Norman Lloyd, who had earlier played Mr Garmes, Ballyntine's alter ego. The fact that Garmes had attacked Dr Fleurot and then tried to cut his own throat suggests further meanings of the dream's scissors: e.g. that they're an instrument of would-be 'escape' - yet after the scissors have cut through the eyes painted on the drapes, all that's revealed is another, solitary and stern-looking, eye peering in from outside ...

The card game, of course, harks back to the film's opening scene at Green Manors. But when the bearded man says to Ballyntine, 'that makes twenty-one, I win', he's effectively mentioning a further locale, the Twenty-One Club, where Edwardes and Murchison had quarrelled. (Ballyntine has just dealt a card whose suit is 'clubs'.) In 'The Interpretation of Dreams', Freud writes: 'A spoken remark in a dream is not infrequently ... an allusion to an occasion on which the remark in question was made.'[57]

But, once again, the matter isn't so simple. By being first to reach 'twenty-one' (in the card game of that name, also known as blackjack), the bearded man may seem to be asserting his 'maturity' and 'wisdom'. Yet, next minute, he seems, with his blank cards, to be saying just as forcefully that he's 'above' or 'apart' from all that. No wonder that the proprietor accuses him of cheating! Further, even in his appearance, with his impressive beard and dinner jacket, he's visibly more 'perfect' than his partner, Ballyntine, who is just clean-shaven and wears an ordinary suit.

Sorting all this out, we see that the bearded man represents the person whom Brulov earlier referred to - in Ballyntine's hearing - as the 'impossible' Dr Edwardes! Brulov had once quarrelled with him in Boston. And now here he is in the dream, not only making Ballyntine feel inferior but also drawing down on himself the wrath of the masked proprietor, i.e. Murchison. Clearly, the dream is ambivalent about him, presenting him as wise and authoritative, yet distant and infuriating. In effect, he represents Ballyntine's (and our) impression of all the more polarised aspects of the film's several psychiatrists, including even Brulov and Constance. At the same time, given that he's almost the ultimate in 'Oedipal' father-figures, setting himself up as 'God', it's very significant that the film aligns against him not just its nominal villain, Murchison, but also Brulov and Ballyntine. Brulov's epithet, 'impossible', carries great resonance. For instance, it suggests how **anyone** may feel 'castrated' when confronted with absolute 'perfection' or, for that matter, the Absolute itself. (At such times, mere anxiety may become 'cosmic anguish' - which we prefer to avoid at all costs. As Hitchcock once told Huw Wheldon of the BBC, 'reality is something none of us can stand, at any time'.)

As I say, the masked proprietor represents Murchison, whose particular quarrel with Edwardes had concerned his fear of being supplanted as head of Green Manors. (We have indeed seen Murchison wearing a mask, in the operating-theatre scene.) That matter comes to a head in the next part of the dream. Its locale is essentially Gabriel Valley, for the sloping roof refers to the ski-run there. Then again, the roof implies how this is the proprietor's house, i.e. Green Manors, while for Ballyntine the slope itself has both a particular and a general meaning, yet to be revealed. Helpfully, Dali has added roots - but not leaves - to the roof's tall chimney, indicating its metaphoric meaning of 'tree'. Near it, the proprietor drops the small wheel, i.e. a revolver. So much for his acceptance of a natural cycle of events. Incidentally, when the bearded man falls from the roof, with his feet in the air, we see that he's still wearing skis.

[A still photograph from the deleted 'ballroom' part of the dream accompanies James Bigwood's article. That still may well remind you of some of the tableaus of formally-dressed couples in **Last Year at Marienbad**. Most of the dream's static couples are dressed in white, but Ballyntine is again wearing the ordinary grey suit he wore in the gambling-room. High above the dance floor, the white-hatted Brulov conducts an orchestra whose members wear identical hats to his, of a pronounced 'Russian' kind. Perhaps there's a reference here to America's wartime ally, the Soviet Union, as well as to Brulov's Russian-sounding name.[58] The scene also has its own 'card' reference, here suggesting Ballyntine's fear of marriage and its commitments - but not of sex **per se**: note that he draws Constance aside and kisses her. Next thing, though, she turns into a statue, i.e. seems to revert to her former frigid state. Or should we interpret the statue as really mirroring his own condition? After all, another characteristic of dreams is their basic egocentricity, or narcissism ...]

Understandably, the last part of the dream shows Ballyntine running away. Pursuing him in the sky is a winged figure that's at once harpy and angel, perhaps representing the two opposing images that he has had of Constance all along.[59] Meanwhile, in the background stands a huge pair of pliers. These may seem as innocuous as, initially, the crop-dusting plane in **North by Northwest** had seemed - but don't be fooled. In fact, they're potentially castrating. (Selznick thought them 'phallic',[60] but he's someone else guilty of not remembering to distinguish between 'objective' and 'subjective', or, rather, between something seen and something experienced.) A glance at their outline shows them to be the complement of the gambling-room lamp with its 'knob'. They're designed to grip or crush such a shape ...

It's noteworthy that the storyboard describes this last part of the dream as the 'Downhill-Uphill Sequence'. Along with the film's staircase scenes and its Gabriel Valley sequence, it may remind us that **Spellbound** has almost as many ups and downs as **Downhill** (1927), **I Confess** (1952) and **Vertigo**.

10. Gabriel Valley

Like two critics interpreting a Hitchcock film, Constance and Brulov at first see in the dream only the particular meaning they're seeking. When their patient reacts to the sight of toboggan tracks in the snow outside Brulov's window, both of them rush to consult Constance's notes:

> Brulov: ... Hm. The sloping roof - that means only a mountain-side.
>
> Constance (eagerly): They were skiing. And the father-image, the bearded man, is Dr Edwardes. It's very simple. Edwardes plunged over a precipice while skiing.

The script steers clear at this stage of identifying the masked man - it wants to save its climax for later. Brulov does start to wonder aloud about who the man might be, but is brushed aside by Constance. She's sure that the next thing to do is to go to Gabriel Valley with Ballyntine.

In Hitchcock's **Aventure Malgache** (1944), a moment of ironic good fortune prompts a character to call on the Archangel Gabriel to take note. (The moment might be seen as requesting consideration for France's Marshal Pétain.) And in **Psycho**, shortly before Marion Crane is killed in a gleaming white bathroom, the camera lingers on a painting showing Gabriel bringing two female figures into Heaven.[61] Gabriel's name, in fact, means 'man of God'. The archangel was sometimes regarded as the angel of death but more frequently as one of God's chief messengers. In 'Paradise Lost' (iv, 55), Milton makes him 'Chief of the angelic guards' placed over Paradise.

So, whatever ambiguities Hitchcock intended with his various uses of the archangel's name or image, in **Spellbound** there seems a definite shift in emphasis from that given in the novel. There, the scene of the crime is called the 'Gorge du Diable'.[62]

Having trudged to the top, Constance and Ballyntine begin to ski down the valley's snowy slope. As they gather speed, she urges him to try and remember what happened when he last came here, with Edwardes. The couple's mutual descent has sexual connotations. It both recalls the ski-symbolism of **Mr and Mrs Smith** (1942)[63] and anticipates the shot in **The Birds** of the swaying pair of lovebirds in the car. (In an earlier scene, Brulov has called the couple just that, 'lovebirds'.) Of course, the love-element here isn't the same as the 'symphony orchestra and a flight of angels' that Constance had once joked about. But then, that's rather the point - whatever 'heavenly' purpose is perhaps being served anyway.

Further, the descent across a snow-field towards a precipice and the prospect it represents, of a sudden sharp drop or 'fall', is symbolic of birth - a birth that is feared as the loss of 'Paradise'. Milton's contemporary Henry Vaughan wrote a poem 'The Retreate' about 'childish innocence, and the child's recollections of pre-natal glory'.[64] Anyone who reads that poem must surely be reminded of Hitchcock's imagery in **Spellbound** and **Psycho**. It begins:

> Happy those early dayes! when I
> Shin'd in my Angell-infancy.
> Before I understood this place
> Appointed for my second race,
> Or taught my soul to fancy ought
> But a white, Celestiall thought ...

Also, it seems likely that William Wordsworth had Vaughan's lines in mind when he wrote the famous passage in his 'Intimations of Immortality' (1807), beginning 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting', i.e. a forgetting - or amnesia - concerning 'God who is our home'. And, of course, the notion of infancy as a 'Paradise' corresponds to Freud's description of the 'unashamed period of childhood', which he defines as lasting until the end of the third year of life.[65] Crucially, he adds that 'we can regain this Paradise every night in our dreams ... irrespectively perhaps of their actual content'.

And again, I've noted before how a snow-field, specifically, provides a common 'lost paradise' image, suggestive of both a frozen garden and of the (soft, moist) interior of the womb.[66]

Accordingly, the situation seems to be this. What Ballyntine is about to confront at Gabriel Valley is a buried memory from the 'Oedipal', i.e. post-innocent, part of his childhood, a memory which has been much reactivated by recent events. As we'll see, that memory is analogous to birth itself, causing yet more ambiguity. Will Ballyntine mistake the two things, and imagine that he has regained a freedom, a 'Paradise', that is actually lost for ever? Will he think himself cleansed of anxiety and guilt - rather like Marion Crane in her shower - when the underlying factors can perhaps never be expunged?

Before I suggest answers to these very Hitchcockian questions, let's not forget that Ballyntine has, almost inadvertently, begun a 'rebirth' of a more trusty kind, from the moment that he entered on the 'submission-containment-liberation' journey I outlined earlier. At present, he's literally out in the cold, having left the womb behind - only he hasn't yet secured himself another comparable 'home'. Likewise, in Constance's case, she has no more than **begun** to get in touch with her inner, more 'feminine' self. But at least on the train to Gabriel Valley she had resolved to henceforth wear the 'very feminine clothes' she has always secretly loved.[67]

As their descent of the ski-slope gathers speed, and the precipice looms, Ballyntine yells to Constance that he **has** remembered something: namely, the time in his childhood when he had caused his younger brother's death. The two boys had been playing near some spiked railings, and when the older boy, on an impulse, had suddenly **slid down the coping on a steep wall**, his feet had propelled the younger boy onto the spikes. As Ballyntine finishes describing this ghastly incident - which we see in flashback, and which, in the matter of its downward slide, is analogous to the act of being born - he flings himself in front of Constance and the two of them fall in a heap at the very edge of the precipice. Exultantly, Ballyntine yells, 'I didn't kill my brother! It was an accident!'

But was it? There, decidedly, is the rub. But before I turn to **that** issue, again it seems only fair to say that Ballyntine's saving of Constance's life here is undoubtedly an act of atonement (for his brother's death), as well as a proof of his love (for Constance).

Another observation, in passing, is this. Did the time that Ballyntine baled out of a burning aeroplane over Rome help prepare him for this moment? Certainly, in both a metaphoric and an actual sense, it was what led to his present ordeal (or ordeals). Not only did it launch him on the series of 'rebirthings' that we've been tracing,[68] but it caused him to be invalided out of the Army and to put himself in the care of Edwardes, a brother physician.

Obviously, that last point is important. Ballyntine's relation to Edwardes had been not only that of patient to doctor, or son to father, but that of brother to brother. Accordingly, I can think of several possible scenarios whereby Edwardes's death would have made Ballyntine feel guilty. What's basic, though, is how Ballyntine himself spontaneously links Edwardes's death to that of his brother, notwithstanding that he then calls the latter death 'an accident'. In fact, we've heard those words before in a Hitchcock film, in **Rebecca**, where they're probably just as wishful. (There, they're used by Maxim's second wife to refer to Rebecca's death, which was almost certainly a case of murder, albeit a provoked one.)[69] In Hitchcock's world, as in Schopenhauer's and Freud's, there **are** no accidents. The death of Ballyntine's brother seems a clear case of 'sibling rivalry' - something which, being related to the 'Oedipal' wish to possess one or other parent exclusively, can be very fierce.[70] Deep down, children are not little angels, but little monsters ...

It's time to return to the matter of Murchison, the film's nominal villain. I think we can now see how the film posits a continuum, with Murchison at one end and Brulov a distance away towards the other. But what of Ballyntine, and Constance? Well, who can truly say? I fancy that the poets who wrote of our separation from 'God' were really describing what Kant and Schopenhauer, roughly their contemporaries, identified more rigorously as our separation from the 'noumenal'. In any event, there's a sense in which we all have to make our own (subjective) reality. Hence the title I've chosen for this article, and which I'll discuss shortly. For now, the point is that such a 'reality' is never absolute or fixed, and is always situated somewhere on the continuum I've just mentioned. But that continuum itself is only a phenomenal thing - it tells us nothing of the noumenal realm. The fact that not once, in all of Ballyntine's 'rebirthings' and encounters with the colour white, does he succeed in recalling his actual birth or his 'pre-natal glory', strongly suggests a metaphor for how knowledge of the noumenal world eludes us.[71]

However, just because 'Paradise' lies on the far side of an invisible barrier, perhaps connected with the child's 'Oedipal' guilts, or matters of language-formation, let's not use Freud or, say, Lacan to deprive that notion of its referential and human content. Certainly Hitchcock didn't! Murchison, of course, is a predecessor of both Brandon in **Rope** (1948) and Gavin Elster in **Vertigo**, whose respective evil acts spring from nothing else but egregious Will. To that extent, there's something in them of all of us, something that partakes of, precisely, the noumenal.[72]

Ballyntine, though, submits to his 'castration' - in effect, acknowledges that he can never be 'God' - and thereby begins his journey towards finding a measure of happiness in this world.[73] The happy occasion he can immediately look forward to even has its own association with whiteness ... But before it arrives, there will be further ordeals. He must still undergo (or continue) the 'containment' stage of his inward journey. That becomes apparent when the police arrest him after they find Edwardes's body, with a bullet in its back, at the foot of the precipice. They throw him in gaol.

11. 'There is lots of happiness in working hard ...'

Time passes. With Ballyntine still in gaol, Constance returns to Green Manors, where Murchison is back in charge. Brulov drops her off, having given her what comfort he could in her distress. She has said that she'll 'fight and fight' to get Ballyntine free; but now that all the available evidence points to his guilt, the situation seems a forlorn one. Brulov again tries to console her. He says:

> It is very sad to love and lose somebody. But in a while you will forget. And you will take up the threads of your life where you left off not so long ago. And you will work hard. There is lots of happiness in working hard - maybe the most.

He kisses her goodbye, and promises to write.

Later, Murchison, too, advises Constance to 'try and forget things better forgotten'. This prompts Andrew Britton to observe that psychiatry is a 'normalising' science that lends its support to patriarchy.[74] I would have thought that matters at this stage of the film had clearly passed beyond psychiatry, and that Britton's comment were beside the point. At any rate, I must take issue with him on his attitude to Brulov generally. In effect, Britton is critical of the old man because he **isn't** truly 'wise', or a Nietzschean 'Superman'. Himself sounding like a '60s student radical, Britton tells us that 'American ideology is founded quite explicitly on the notion of work as the sublimation of sexual drives; in [Benjamin] Franklin's words, "Industry and constant employment are great preservatives of the morals of a nation" ...'.[75] I find this comment unhelpful, if only because it seems to slight Brulov's intelligence. We've certainly seen how the film shows him to be less than all-knowing (like the rest of us); but what exactly Britton could have expected even a Superman to advise Constance when Ballyntine was gaoled, other than what we hear Brulov actually say, eludes me.[76] In any case, his words, which are beautifully tentative, represent only the film's (feigned) 'fallback position' - they are **not**, I think, either Brulov's or the film's attempt to endorse a general work ethic.

A couple of analogies here should help. First, after both Brulov and Murchison have enjoined Constance to 'forget' Ballyntine, the position the film has reached corresponds to that in **Notorious** (1946) where Devlin's boss, Prescott, reclining on a sofa and munching crackers, tells Devlin to go and see what's wrong with Alicia, 'if you want to'. The audience now senses that a romantic climax **will** surely follow.

And, second, **Spellbound** is something other than a Bette Davis 'woman's picture'. Brulov and Murchison may both, momentarily, sound like a venerable family doctor advising the dowdy heroine to cut her losses, but the thrust of a Hitchcock movie is much more 'libidinous'. It's in such a context that the matter of 'good' and 'bad' father-figures contributes a mythic- or dream-dimension as much as a study of 'real' psychiatrists. As I say, I think Britton's comments on Brulov are beside the point.

12. Empathy

There's a striking passage in 'The Interpretation of Dreams' in which Freud notes of Shakespeare that his plays from 'Hamlet' onwards show a 'distaste for sexuality'.[77] In the case of Hitchcock's films, you

would be hard-pressed to find anything less than a continuing fascination with such matters, at least until you arrived at some arguably sour passages in **Frenzy** (1972). When Constance confronts Murchison near the end of **Spellbound**, in the very room she had once so impetuously entered, when it had been Ballyntine's, she brings with her all the beauty and courage and keenness of mind that have become hers to command since that earlier time when the doors swung open. On this occasion, Murchison, unmasked at last, produces a revolver but doesn't shoot his accuser - not least because he, as a man, isn't as cold-blooded as that ...

Let's backtrack. The showdown scene is most artfully designed. It echoes, as well as the episode I've just mentioned, the scene at Brulov's house where he had virtually 'talked' Ballyntine out of using the cut-throat razor against him, and into drinking the drugged milk. Constance will effect a similar turning of the tables, and she, too, will do it by 'talking'. Other visual links with that scene are the respective large desks (an important prop in the novel, too)[78] and the adjacent stairs. Moreover, both the weapons involved are 'masculine': a razor, a revolver. But where Brulov had overcome his antagonist by employing the 'feminine' glass of milk, Constance is armed with just her notes on Ballyntine's dream - and with her intellect and nerve, traditionally 'male' traits. Brulov had shown his coolness when, talking non-stop, he had needed to brush past Ballyntine on his way to fetch the milk from the kitchen. 'We will drink to youth', he had said. Now Constance hears herself complimented on her 'agile young mind' - and finds herself gazing into the muzzle of a gun. With ice-cold nerves, she slowly rises, while showing an impressive empathy as she tells Murchison why he isn't going to shoot her:

> You are thinking you were not mentally responsible for that other crime in the snow. They will find extenuating circumstances in the state of your health. They will not execute you for the death of Dr Edwardes. You can still live, read, write, research, even if you are put away. ... You are thinking that now, Dr Murchison. If you shoot now, it is cold, deliberate murder.

Constance begins to walk towards the door. The gun, in the foreground, follows her.

Of course, Constance's words here are as much a case of 'suggestion' as of 'empathy' - but, as I say, are impressive. They even make some sense (though Andrew Britton thinks them just 'a lie'):[79] for one thing, Murchison's victim, Edwardes, must really have been an infuriating crank! And it seems obvious that Murchison **had** been suffering from a breakdown when he shot him. A modern US court might therefore well find 'extenuating circumstances' in the case - I can't speak for the situation in 1945, exactly, but would note that Dr May Romm served as 'technical advisor' on the film.[80]

Some other points. Constance's ice-cold nerve is far from being the same as her 'frigidity' at the start. We might better speak of her new-found 'intuition', something she had lacked. The way she enters into Murchison's mind shows a capacity for 'bisexual' empathy that only her brilliant mentor, Brulov, has shown before (and will show again). Rather than diminishing her femininity, it enhances it! It draws on her continuing love for both Ballyntine and Brulov, if perhaps not Murchison.

Interestingly, she holds out to Murchison the prospect of 'work' as consolation, just as Brulov had earlier done to her. But again we see plainly enough that what would be missing in that case would be love, freely and mutually reciprocated.

Constance leaves the room - the last-but-one of the film's many threshold moments. The gun in Murchison's hand now slowly swivels round until it's pointing directly into the camera. When Murchison pulls the trigger, and the screen is filled with a red flash (in the original prints, anyway), the near-rhyme with the subjective-shot of milk being drunk completes the linkage with the scene at Brulov's house.[81] There's also at least one other shot the red flash rhymes with: describing the flashback when Ballyntine's brother is killed, the screenplay mentions how 'the screen is splashed with a dark fluid that blots the scene out'.[82] Such a rhyme suggests a final laying of ghosts, roughly the equivalent of the climax of **Marnie**, where another bloody scene from childhood is exhumed one last time ...

13. 'Liberation'

At Gabriel Valley, Ballyntine had told Constance that she was going to look wonderful wearing white and with orange-blossom in her hair. The anticipated moment finally arrives, after Ballyntine is released

from gaol. In effect, his marriage marks the consummation of his new relative 'freedom' (after 'submission' and 'containment'). It also can't help but signify what Raymond Bellour calls the classic Hollywood ending, 'the formation of the couple'.

But now let's look closer. As our couple prepare to depart for their honeymoon - at an undisclosed destination - Brulov sees them off at the railway station. Appropriately, it's the last of the film's threshold scenes, played out before the same uniformed ticket-inspector who had figured in an earlier scene - and who may recall the 'Oedipal' ticket-inspector from **Suspicion** (see 'MacGuffin' 7). More on him in a moment.

Brulov embraces Constance and shakes hands warmly with Ballyntine. The screenplay notes of the two men, 'Their attitudes toward each other are now very friendly - no trace of restraint.' It could almost be the ending of **Young and Innocent**. Now Brulov repeats a remark of his from the Rochester sequence. 'And remember what I say,' he tells Ballyntine, 'any husband of Constance is a husband of mine, so to speak.' In other words, he's not so much losing a 'daughter' as gaining a 'son'.

Equally, though, the remark has 'bisexual' implications. But now we may appreciate what's involved. As events have shown, Brulov is no one-dimensional man. I'll refrain from detailing at this late stage something that has been implicit all along (at least, since my reference to inward journeys and the mandala in **Torn Curtain**): Jung's notion of the path that leads to 'individuation'. It's enough for me to reiterate that Brulov may not be 'perfect' (or 'perfected'), or even aspire that way, but that he **has** begun to master one of life's great skills, detachment. And that, like Ballyntine and Constance, he hasn't exactly stood still since the day that pair first landed in his house claiming to be newly-weds. What was implicit in the business with the symbolic glass of milk now receives its verbalisation in Brulov's remark. Only, more than ever, because detachment involves a sacrifice as well as a gain, he's like the blind, i.e. 'castrated', Philip Martin in **Saboteur**, a male mother - or wife! More nearly than before, he **is** a 'wise old man', a 'Teiresias' figure. And like the filmmakers themselves, who have settled for making their particular 'art', he hasn't lost - he has gained.[83]

Less is more. Is that the theme of **Spellbound**? Certainly, art itself, with its enclosing frames, provides a model. So, too, do artists. They fashion a subjective reality that's at once theirs and their audience's - and may touch the numinous. Another example is provided by the figure of 'the dandy', whose characteristics Hitchcock and Dali both emulated at times -[84] someone who goes his own, often outrageous, way in matters of personal style, etc., yet who may end by embodying the inner life of his time and place (or, at the very least, of dandies everywhere). Now, in so far as it's a general principle we're talking of, it's displayed for our edification and amusement at the end of **Spellbound**. I'm thinking of how Ballyntine and Constance make their own gesture of subjective freedom. Most couples who kiss outside railway stations do so because one of their number is going on a journey, and the other one is staying. But not these two! Once before, in front of the same bemused ticket-inspector, they had done it their way. Now, in happy defiance, they do it again. And why not? Having kissed, they pass through the barrier gate together.

Brulov had once said that 'there's nothing so nice as a new marriage. No psychoses yet. No aggressions. No guilt complexes.' But the plain fact is that no-one who's born into this world of restless Will - Hitchcock's world, our world - stays free of anxiety and anguish, guilt and doubt, for long. Decidedly not married couples, in Brulov's view! Coming back to **Spellbound**, its ending reminds me, firstly, of just such a movie as Raymond Bellour implied when he spoke of Hollywood's 'formation of the couple': a Howard Hawks comedy like **Man's Favourite Sport?** (1964). And yet, that film's ending manages to convey far more than Bellour's phrase can, especially when we hear John McGiver deliver his valediction on the film's newly-weds, whose dinghy is drifting out to sea, 'They're beyond help now.' Secondly, I'm reminded again of what is certainly one of the best of all films about 'space-time' anguish, **Last Year at Marienbad**. It ends with its new couple 'getting lost, forever, in the calm night ...'.

It's a sure bet that the calmness won't last long.[85]

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Notes

1. See Andrew Britton, "Hitchcock's **Spellbound:** Text and Counter-Text", in 'CineAction!', No. 3/4, Winter 1986, pp. 72-83; and James Bigwood, "Solving a **Spellbound** Puzzle", in 'American Cinematographer', Vol. 72, No. 6, June 1991, pp. 34-40. My thanks to Carol Abbott and Aysen Mustafa of the Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, for providing a copy of each of these articles.

2. Throughout this article, I've standardised the spelling of the Peck character's name as 'Ballyntine', which is how it's spelt in the published screenplay of the film included in Gassner & Nichols (eds), 'Best Film Plays - 1945', pp. 57-113.

3. Raymond Durgnat, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock' (1974), pp. 193-94.

4. Britton, p. 78.

5. 'Francis Beeding' (pseudonym), 'The House of Dr Edwardes' (1927), Chapter One.

6. A scene cut from the end of the film would have shown Tisdall finally coming to the Burgoyne house for a meal, thus 'substituting' him for the dead Mrs Burgoyne. Note that the film gives Tisdall no family of his own (cf Ballyntine in **Spellbound**). There's a similar 'incestuousness' about the endings of some early Dickens novels.

7. Cf Camille Paglia, 'Sexual Personae' (1991), pp. 45-46. Paglia notes, **inter alia**, that such a figure can also be found in the Romantic poetry of Wordsworth and Keats, and that T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' follows Apollinaire (who invented the term 'surrealism') in making Teiresias 'the witness and repository of modern sexual miseries'.

Actually, Philip Martin (Vaughan Glazer) is a figure modelled after the blind hermit in James Whale's **Frankenstein** (1931), which in turn built **its** character out of some details in Mary Shelley's original tale (1818). In 'MacGuffin' 4, I remarked on how Philip Martin calls policemen 'unimaginative', implying that he himself is something of a surrogate for the filmmakers. Likewise, I feel that when **Psycho** (1960) invokes Milton's sonnet known as 'On His Blindness', there's a contrast being drawn between the filmmakers' broadness of (inward) vision and the characters' narrow viewpoints (see 'MacGuffin' 4). I mention this because I further feel that Brulov in **Spellbound**, although he's not blind, shares with Philip Martin a certain surrogacy with the filmmakers, especially at the end.

It may also be pertinent to mention here what I noted in 'MacGuffin' 12, that Hitchcock, who was celibate for much of his life, once remarked that it was only his marriage to Alma that had stopped him 'going gay' ...

8. This is something I noted when I once read the unpublished studio screenplay (Paramount Pictures, 1955) by John Michael Hayes. My thanks to filmmaker Richard Franklin who loaned me his copy.

9. Also, in 'MacGuffin' 13, p. 12, I note the pertinence of Hitchcock's 'moving-around principle': his notion that a film's story should echo the very movement that goes into the making and projecting of movies.

10. See my remarks on Pascal Bonitzer's essay, "Hitchcockian Suspense", in 'MacGuffin' 10, pp. 11-12 (part of a review of 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan ...', edited by Slavoj Zizek).

11. For some similarities of Schopenhauer's concept of 'the Will' to Freud's concepts of 'the Unconscious' and 'libido', see Patrick Gardiner, 'Schopenhauer' (1967), pp. 176-77, and Bryan Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), pp. 216-17 and 283-85. The Francis Beeding novel, op. cit., Chapter Six, itself uses strikingly 'Schopenhauerian' images to describe the Unconscious, calling it 'blindly dynamic, ... insentient and with no knowledge of good and evil, the primitive will of the human creature to persist, to develop, to fulfil an unknown purpose, a darkness that stirred with primeval memories'. As for Carl Jung's use of the term 'libido', he meant by it simply 'psychic energy' in general. See Frieda Fordham, 'An Introduction to Jung's Psychology' (1966), p. 17.

12. Arthur Schopenhauer, 'The World as Will and Representation', Vol. II. Somewhat more elaborately, Salvador Dali wrote that 'Eroticism is the monarchical principle that cybernetically flows in the molecular structures of DNA' (quoted in Jacques Dopagne, 'Dali', 1974, Introduction).

13. Schopenhauer, Vol. I.

14. Magee, p. 220.

15. For a discussion of the primal scene in **Rear Window**, see Barbara Odabashian, "The Unspeakable Crime in Hitchcock's **Rear Window**", in the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', pp. 3-11. Odabashian calls the primal scene 'a perfect crime for the medium of film' (p.3). See also note 70 below. Note that Hitchcock himself once told a team of interviewers from 'Movie' (UK) that **Rear Window** is based on 'frustration'.

16. Schopenhauer, Vol. I.

17. Leonard J. Leff, 'Hitchcock and Selznick' (1988), p. 126.

18. Dopagne, Introduction.

19. Magee, p. 129.

20. Bigwood, p. 40.

21. As Hitchcock was aware, there's also a Chirico quality about the **Spellbound** dream. See 'MacGuffin' 9, p. 10. For the record, several of the details from the dream (e.g. lines drawn to infinity, tables with women's legs) recur in Dali's 1957 'The Woman with a Face of Rose'.

22. Beeding, Chapter One.

23. Britton, p. 79, refers to 'the constancy of woman' and invokes Chaucer's Constance in 'The Man of Law's Tale'.

On the film's theme of 'love', it's worth recalling that Hitchcock once remarked about audiences that it's the woman who usually makes the decision about what film to attend with her partner - and that he, Hitchcock, designed his films accordingly. When the homosexual narrator of Edmund White's 'A Boy's Own Story' (1983), which is set in the early 1950s, telephones his businessman father and mentions falling in 'love', the word startles his father. 'Instantly I recognised that in such a big, hardworking country [the USA] and in the vocabulary of such a sober man the word **love** took on a coy, neurasthenic ring. Women lived for love ...' (Chapter Six).

24. This is something I discussed in my review of Robert Kapsis's 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' for the 1993 'Hitchcock Annual', pp. 96-116. I found that even Brian De Palma is comparatively erratic in this matter. So, too, I might now add, is Kenneth Branagh, whose **Dead Again** I mention in the present article.

25. In the novel, Murchison on several occasions makes a sudden, unwelcome appearance in a doorway, or enters someone else's room in their absence.

26. Apparently, the matter of Murchison's more-than-platonic interest in Constance was stronger in one of the film's early drafts, and had the backing of the film's technical advisor, Dr May Romm. See Leff, p. 137. On Hitchcock's tendency to store up for future use 'unrealised' aspects of novels, etc., that he had adapted, I've commented before (e.g. 'MacGuffin' 14, p. 13). I think it very probable that the 'seduction' scene in **Marnie** was consciously 'borrowed' by Hitchcock from the **Spellbound** novel.

27. **Rear Window** even has a line, spoken by Lisa Fremont, 'There's something terribly wrong'.

28. 'Seamless transitions' of a slightly different kind - involving the camera's appearing to follow a character through a closed door - occur in **Stage Fright** (1950) and **The Wrong Man** (1957).

29. Robert B. Downs, 'Moulders of the Modern Mind' (1961), p. 333, lists among 'numerous writers who have drawn freely from' Frazer's work, the following: Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot ...

30. Sir James George Frazer/ Sabine MacCormack, 'The Illustrated Golden Bough' (1978), p. 22. The passage begins thus: 'Down to the decline of Rome a custom was observed at Nemi which seems to transport us at once from civilisation to savagery.'

31. H. Ringgren, "King", in 'Man, Myth and Magic' (1970ff), p. 1566.

32. Chapter Seven, and Chapters Four and Ten.

33. As I recall, he was talking about **The Birds** (1963).

34. I forget which (Marx Brothers) film the phrase comes from. In any event, Selznick had picked it up for his own use, and that's no doubt the source for Hitchcock and Hecht's inclusion of it in their script. See Leff, p. 161.

35. Ibid.

36. Mary Ann Doane, 'The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s' (1987), offers some rather perfunctory remarks about Hollywood's depiction of 'the transference'. She writes, for instance, that films of the period use 'psychoanalysis to validate socially constructed modes of sexual difference which are already in place - although potentially threatened by a wartime reorganisation' (p. 46). This generalisation shows a lack of appreciation for the 'physician, heal thyself' theme that runs subversively through both **Spellbound** and the Francis Beeding novel. By the same token, I don't deny that the surface optimism of Hitchcock's film is better suited to the very early days of Freud's (and Breuer's) investigations, as depicted in John Huston's **Freud** (1962), than to the sophisticated and, in some ways, disappointing situation that psychoanalysis had reached at the end of World War II.

37. Laplanche & Pontalis, 'The Language of Psychoanalysis' (1988), p. 458. See also p. 28.

38. Fleetingly, but significantly, Brulov's first reaction on being told that Constance and Ballyntine are married is to flash a look of anger at the younger man - who has 'usurped' his place in Constance's affections.

39. Hitchcock's remark was made at one of the classes run by the late Arthur Knight at the University of Southern California. A tape of the question-and-answer session was given to me by Richard Franklin.

40. The theme of the necessity to accept a symbolic castration runs through some of Raymond Bellour's 'Lacanian' analyses of Hitchcock's films, notably his 115-page article on **North by Northwest** in 'Communications', No. 23, 1975 (in French). Cf note 73 below, on the homosexual novelist Yukio Mishima, whose heroes find any form of 'castration' ignominious and inglorious.

41. When Brulov had attended a talk given by Dr Edwardes at a psychiatry convention in Boston, he had become so exasperated that, finally, he had got up and kicked over some chairs 'which nobody was sitting in', before walking out. The qualification about the chairs is important. Someone else in a Hitchcock film who learns to control his 'masculine' aggression is Mitch in **The Birds** - when Melanie restrains him from throwing a stone at some crows. The name of the game is 'survival'.

On the matter of things becoming their opposites, I'm strongly reminded of some observations of Jung. In his 'Collected Works', Vol. 7, he quotes Heraclitus on how 'sooner or later everything runs [i.e. turns] into its opposite'. Frieda Fordham notes that psychic opposites (e.g. consciousness and unconsciousness) 'have a regulating function ..., and when one extreme is reached libido passes over into its opposite. ... To Jung the regulatory function of the opposites is inherent in human nature and essential to an understanding of psychic functioning.' (Fordham, p. 18) Below, in the text, I discuss some possible implications of this for surrealism, and for Hitchcock's film.

42. Britton, p. 77.

43. Leff, p. 165.

44. Bigwood, p. 38.

45. Gassner & Nichols, pp. 99-101; Bigwood, p. 38.

46. There's a page of frame-stills from the **Spellbound** dream in Ronald Haver, 'David O. Selznick's Hollywood' (1980), p. 349 - twelve selected frames, twice as many as Truffaut's book gives the same sequence. Unfortunately, three of the frames have been jumbled.

47. 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (1900/1954), Chapter III - the phrase forms part of the chapter-title.

48. Leff, p. 157.

49. Margaret M. Horwitz, "**The Birds**: A Mother's Love", in 'Wide Angle', Vol. 5, No. 1, 1982, pp. 42-48, cites a passage in which Stephen Heath quotes Freud on the 'substitutive relation between the eye and the male organ ... in dreams and myths and phantasies', i.e. on the castration aspect of eye-symbolism. To be fair to Horwitz, she manages, by some tortuous logic, to suggest that eyes may be symbolically 'castrated' in the case of women also. (See her n. 10 on p. 48.) But she seems unaware of Freud's saying straight out that eyes can stand for the female sexual organ - which seems an obvious matter anyway. David Sterritt, "The Diabolic Imagination: Hitchcock, Bakhtin, and the Carnivalisation of Cinema", in the 1992 'Hitchcock Annual', p. 65, merely quotes Horwitz (quoting Heath quoting Freud!), i.e. he, too, seems unmindful of Freud's other emphasis. As for Heath, writing on "Difference", in 'Screen', No. 19, Autumn 1978, p. 87, he indeed notes that castration is only one 'emphasis' (his word) of eye-symbolism in Freud.

50. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 359.

51. Ibid, p. 398n. A similar point is made in "The Uncanny".

52. Bigwood, p. 39.

53. Alan Wykes, 'The Complete Illustrated Guide to Gambling' (1964), p. 16.

54. Quoted in Wykes, pp. 17-18.

55. In the 1940s, Hitchcock was quoted as saying: 'I aim to give the public good healthy mental shake-ups. Civilisation has become so screening and sheltering that we cannot experience sufficient thrills at first hand.' See Peter Noble, ed., 'BFI Index to the Work of Alfred Hitchcock' (1949).

56. On the symbolism of round objects in Hitchcock, cf the bar-bell carried by Major Lacey (Nigel Bruce), posing as a strongman, in the fancy-dress ball scene of **Rebecca**. As I've mentioned in a previous 'MacGuffin', the bar-bell's two round 'weights' prove to be hollow, without substance ...

57. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 304.

58. Actor Michael Chekhov, who was born in Petrograd, a nephew of the great Russian writer, 'had the schmaltz to portray Constance's surrogate father and the strength to represent her mentor' (Leff, p. 137).

59. Sydney arts lecturer, Catriona Moore, has written that though 'the Surrealists tackled the stifling stereotypes of Mary and Magdalene, angel and courtesan, that still plague Christian civilisation, ... in the process they invented some equally restrictive images of their own. Woman was man's mediator with nature and the unconscious; she was a child-woman or femme fatale, and the muse, source and inspiration of male desire.' (Review of Robert Short's 'Dada and Surrealism', in 'The Weekend Australian', 15-16 October, 1994.) On the whole, I think **Spellbound** shows an intelligent recognition that these things **are** just stereotypes. Cf note 36 above.

60. Cf Leff, p. 157: 'Hitchcock fought to retain some of the Dali imagery; the audience would follow the

action, not the objects, he told Selznick.' Leff seems in error when he adds that, 'fearing the wrath of the psychiatric community, Selznick yanked the gigantic phallic pliars'. Or was there another pair?

61. I take it to be Gabriel because, according to a recent radio programme, Gabriel was the only angel that could fly. Cf 'MacGuffin' 14, p. 11. (The same programme, broadcast on Australia's Radio National, quoted a staggering statistic from a recent issue of 'Time': today, two-thirds of all Americans believe in angels as real, corporeal beings.)

62. Beeding, Prologue.

63. When in use, and not entangled as in **Mr and Mrs Smith**, skis may contribute to the exhilarating feeling of **flying**, which Freud identified with 'general sexual excitement'. (Cf Britton, p. 79.) Perhaps this observation may also be relevant to the role played by staircases in **Spellbound**.

64. Entry on Henry Vaughan (1621-95), in Margaret Drabble, ed., 'The Oxford Companion to English Literature' (1985), p. 1023.

65. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 245.

66. See my article on **The Paradine Case** (1947) in 'MacGuffin' 12. The **coldness** of a snow-field, considered as a symbol, is what suggests the feeling of loss ...

67. The film does not, I think, equate a woman's femininity with her 'real self' - only with a vital dimension of that self. Once Constance falls in love, and no longer hides behind glasses and a dowdy doctor's-jacket, she emits vitality in **whatever** she wears. Wearing a neat, but not severe, suit, Ingrid Bergman may remind you of nothing so much as those radiant young women in blazers you see every four years on TV participating in the Olympic Games.

68. Another 'rebirthing', of course, occurs with Ballyntine's **falling** in love. It may be instructive, in this particular matter of imagery, to note a parallel in Charles Dickens's 'Our Mutual Friend' (1864), whose hero, John Harmon, must undergo a rebirth as 'John Rokesmith' and thereafter go around incognito for a time. (Does this plot sound familiar?) The crucial passage comes in Book the Second, Chapter 13, where Harmon is set upon by thugs and left for dead in a room above the Thames. For a while, Harmon just lies there, completely without a sense of self. '"There was no such thing as I, within my knowledge.'" His narration continues:

> 'It was only after a downward slide through something like a tube, and then a great noise and a sparkling and a crackling as of fires, that the consciousness came upon me, "This is John Harmon drowning! John Harmon, struggle for your life. John Harmon, call on Heaven and save yourself!" I think I cried it out aloud in a great agony, and then a heavy horrid unintelligible something vanished, and it was I who was struggling there alone in the water.'

'Our Mutual Friend', one of four Dickens novels that Hitchcock studied at school, offers several intriguing parallels to matters in Hitchcock's films, including **Spellbound** and **Vertigo** ...

69. See 'MacGuffin' 6.

70. There's an excellent brief survey of matters pertaining to the Oedipus complex, including sibling rivalry, in Charles Brenner, 'An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis' (1957), pp. 118-23. David Stafford-Clark, 'What Freud Really Said' (1967), p. 97, no more than mentions sibling rivalry; but he then adds some helpful remarks about the effect on the young child of witnessing - or hearing about - the primal scene. (Stafford-Clark, whom I quote at the head of this article, was 'technical advisor' on Huston's **Freud**.)

71. And yet, in those lines conspicuously alluded to in **Marnie**, when Mark mis-quotes Emerson, 'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,/ So near is God to man.'

72. Schopenhauer believed that Kant was wrong in thinking that we are absolutely cut off from Will (= the noumenal). On the contrary, thought Schopenhauer, Will flows through us, in our bodies. We can **feel** it.

That's one reason why Thornhill's 'I never felt more alive' in **North by Northwest** is significant. (I explore this idea, in relation to **Torn Curtain**, in 'MacGuffin' 8.) A trait of Hitchcock's villains, though, is that, in a way, they're **too** wilful, too concerned to **be** God - like Brandon in **Rope**. They end up cutting themselves off from the very thing they seek. That's why I can suggest in the text that the message of **Spellbound** is 'less is more'. (In Schopenhauer's view, which is certainly more Buddhist than Christian - notwithstanding Christ's 'eye of the needle' parable - if we could be nothing at all, we would be at one with the numinous. Consciously or not, Hitchcock in his films often seems to delight in teasing us with this existential paradox.)

Notes 73-85 will appear in 'MacGuffin' 16.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

The many and various sources of **Foreign Correspondent**; book reviews (e.g. 'In the Name of National Security'); the search for **The Mountain Eagle/Fear o' God/Der Bergadler**; Adrian Martin on **Lifepod**, et al.

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ODD SPOT: REPETITION STRAIN

In Hitchcock's thriller called **Spellbound** (1945), Gregory Peck plays an amnesiac who, it turns out, in childhood had accidentally killed his brother. He incurs many guilts and unsettling memories, one of which is triggered off when, on a train from New York, he observes the passing rail lines and remembers a moment of wartime violence near Rome. In a dream, he plays a losing hand of cards in a gambling-casino run by a crafty 'proprietor'.

In Robert Siodmak's **The Great Sinner** (1949), Peck plays a compulsive gambler who loses his money in a casino run by a wily 'proprietor'. In Nunnally Johnson's **The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit** (1956), Peck plays a New York executive who, gazing from his train window at the passing rails, guiltily remembers a moment of wartime violence near Rome in which he accidentally killed his buddy. And in Edward Dmytryk's thriller called **Mirage** (1965), Peck plays an amnesiac who is chased by criminals around New York.

What does this say about film producers' tendency to 'type-cast'?

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