Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

The MacGuffin

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EDITORIAL

Quite a short one. The reason for that has nothing to do with any lack of things to report. Read on, and you'll see. It's just that space is pressing as usual, and so we're going to rush out another 'MacGuffin' after this one to catch up.

Meanwhile, here's the gist of what's been happening. The reason that this issue is so late is that I've been trying to master both a computer and the Internet. This issue marks a transition to the computer-prepared publication that 'The MacGuffin' will be henceforth, all going well. Certainly we've already got our own site on the World Wide Web! Visit us soon, if you can, at this address: http://www.labyrinth.net.au/~muffin ... (And note that~. It's crucial! My apologies to the Alfred Hitchcock Home Page whose address also includes a tilde, for which I managed to substitute a hyphen last time.)

Some exciting news. 'MacGuffin' reader J. Lary Kuhns of Los Angeles was prompted by Jenny Hammerton's article on Hitchcock's 'lost' film, **The Mountain Eagle** (1926), in 'MacGuffin' 16, to look around him. While he didn't find a print of the film, he did unearth nearly thirty stills from it. They were lying unsuspected in an archive of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Lary reported his find at last month's Hitchcock Conference in Texas, and in our next issue we'll reprint his paper in which he has attempted to recreate the plot of the film in detail. (We'll also report on the Conference itself.)

In this issue, Philip Kemp, whose book on Sir Michael Balcon is forthcoming, contributes "Hitching Posts". Philip's article looks at films by six 'Hitchcock imitators' - Michael Powell, Stanley Donen, Brian De Palma, Claude Chabrol, Henri-Georges Clouzot, and Nicholas Roeg - and draws some interesting conclusions. The other long article this time analyses Hitchcock's last 'silent' film, **The Manxman** (1929). In particular, it puts the film - which Hitchcock himself afterwards thought 'very banal' - in a poetic and melodramatic tradition reaching back at least as far as Alfred Lord Tennyson's narrative-poem, 'Enoch Arden' (1864).

Tina Kaufman's 'Oz-report' is held over to the next issue. But Tina features this time as one of our four experts who have nominated their best films of 1995. See the next page.

To everyone, good viewing.

Ken

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Best Films of 1995

Most-mentioned films in the following lists are André Téchiné's **Les Roseaux Sauvages/Wild Reeds**, Boaz Yakin's **Fresh**, Nano Moretti's **Caro Diario/Dear Diary**, and Tim Burton's **Ed Wood**. Each film received three mentions out of a possible four. Thanks to our writers - all busy professionals - for again submitting lists this time. Without you ...

'Sunday Age' film critic Tom Ryan's list runs to exactly ten titles, as does Evan Williams's. (Evan writes on film for 'The Weekend Australian' and 'Quadrant'.) Let's start with those.

Tom's list (in order)

Smoke (Wayne Wang, Paul Auster, US)
Seven (David Fincher, US)
Nobody's Fool (Robert Benton, US)
The Bridges of Madison County (Clint Eastwood, US)
The City of Lost Children (Jeunet and Caro, France)
Babe (Chris Noonan, US)
Wild Reeds
The Madness of King George (Nicholas Hytner, UK)
Fresh (Boaz Yakin, US)
Vanya on 42nd Street

Evan's list (no particular order)

Wild Reeds (Andre Techine, France)
Vanya on 42nd Street (Louis Malle, US)
Ed Wood (Tim Burton, US)
Bullets Over Broadway (Woody Allen, US)
Little Women (Gillian Armstrong, US)
Carrington (Christopher Hampton, UK)
Caro Diario/Dear Diary (Nanni Moretti, Italy)
Le Colonel Chabert (Yves Angelo, France)
Apollo 13 (Ron Howard, US)
What Happened Was ... (Tom Noonan, US)

Next, Adrian Martin's list. Adrian is a film critic for the Melbourne 'Age'. His list includes some titles screened outside the mainstream, and at least one revival.

Adrian's list (in order)

1. La Naissance de l'amour/The Birth of Love
2. The Cloud-Capped Star (Ritwik Ghatak, 1960)
3. Caro Diario/Dear Diary
4. Underground (Emir Kusturica)
5. Ed Wood
6. U.S. Go Home (Claire Denis)
7. Latcho Drom (Tony Gatlif)
8. Crumb (Terry Zwigoff)
9. Terminal U.S.A. (Jon Moritsugu)
10. Les Roseaux Sauvages/Wild Reeds
11. The Big Bang (James Toback, 1990)
12. Fresh
13. El Espiritu de la Colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive (Victor Erice, 1973)
14. I Want to Go Home (Alain Resnais, 1989)
15. Like Air (Naomi Kawase)
16. Au Revoir/See You Later (Michael Snow, 1990)
17. All Good Things ... (feature-length finale of Star Trek: The Next Generation)

Finally, our columnist Tina Kaufman has sent us both her ten-best list of 1995 and two short lists of films that meant a lot to her (for one reason or another) ...

Tina's Top Ten Films (in alphabetical order):

The Bed You Sleep In (Jon Jost); **Burnt By the Sun** (Nikita Mikhalkov); **Caro Diario/Dear Diary**; **Clueless** (Amy Heckerling); **Crumb**; **Ed Wood**; **Fresh**; **Silences of the Palace** (Moufida Tlatli); **Underground**; **Under the Olive Trees** (Abbas Kiarostami).

'Three films that for me summed up the three Chinas':

Confucian Confusions, Edward Yang's urbane, witty comedy of Taiwanese yuppy angst; **Postman**, He Jianjun's sad, winter-toned tale of a Beijing postal delivery man who succumbs to interfering with the mail as his predecessor had done; and **Love in the Time of Twilight**, Tsui Hark's enchanting Hong Kong ghost movie that mixes time-travel, slapstick, monsters and romance in an increasingly frenetic tale that, arguably, has a lot of the charm of **Celine and Julie Go Boating**.

'Special pleasures'

The silent films screened in the MCA's 'Sublime Silents' program,[1] including Murnau's **Faust**, Garbo in

The Kiss, the Italian **Maciste in Hell**, and, most especially, Mizoguchi's **The Water Magician** accompanied by a **benshi**, the traditional performer who spoke and explained the lines of silent films - Midori Sawato's incredible vocal performance, though naturally it was in Japanese, added immeasurably to the experience; the weird, murky, sepia-toned dreamworld of **The Kingdom**; the delicate and intensely personal recording of her search for the father she'd hardly known by young Japanese documentarist Ni Tsutsumarete, in **Like Air** (at the Documentary Conference); and **The Story of Harry Dare**, a sweet and knockabout Australian film about a casual young Aboriginal father getting to know his son through shared detective work.

1. Editor's note. The MCA is the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.

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Hitching Posts

'When a director ... sets out to make a thriller or a suspense picture,' wrote François Truffaut, introducing his classic book-length interview with Hitchcock, 'you may be certain that in his heart of hearts he is hoping to live up to one of Hitchcock's masterpieces.'[1] And even if he (or she) isn't, you can be pretty sure that's what the producers - and the critics - are hoping for, given the freedom with which the term 'Hitchcockian' is slung around. (Even as I write, Taylor Hackford's routinely competent **Dolores Claiborne** is being touted as 'The best psychological thriller Hitchcock never made'.) There's only one way to make a thriller, would seem to be the implicit message, and if you ain't doing it Hitch's way, you ain't doing it right.

Of course that isn't so, and never was. **Pace** Truffaut, there are plenty of other ways: nothing very Hitchcockian, after all, about **The Usual Suspects**, strong front-runner for thriller of the year. Still, from the mid-30s onwards there's been no shortage of recognisably 'school of Hitchcock' movies - many of them, inevitably, sporting all the originality of a fake Rolex. But Hitchcockian elements have been adopted and creatively reworked by filmmakers as distinctive, and as diverse, as Roeg, Clouzot and Michael Powell, whose ventures into this field call in question the further implication of Truffaut's statement: that even if you do opt for the path of the Master, the best you can hope for is to 'live up to' him. That anyone should contrive to out-Hitch him at his own game is clearly unthinkable.

To check how far this assumption is justified - and since it would take a book just to list all the 'school of Hitch' movies, let alone analyse them - I've opted to concentrate on six films that seem to offer good scope for comparison. Two of them are French, two British and two American: in chronological order, **Contraband** (1940), **Les Diaboliques** (1955), **Charade** (1963), **Le Boucher**(1969), **Don't Look Now** (1973) and **Obsession** (1976). What's at once noticeable is that, different though they all are, the traits they have in common cut across national boundaries. Powell/Pressburger and Donen are the jokers; Chabrol shares with De Palma a mood of doomed romantic melancholy; and of Clouzot's film and Roeg's, it would be hard to say which is the scarier. Yet each takes Hitchcock as a jumping-off point and more than one of them sets out to do things that he wouldn't, or maybe couldn't, do.

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Michael Powell had watched Hitchcock at work (he was stills photographer on such Hitchcock silents as **Champagne** and **The Manxman**) and described him as 'the most inventive, mischievous, inspiring hobgoblin in movies ... the eternal Cockney barrowboy who knows it all'.[2] Powell was no Cockney, but there's a certain cocky knowingness - and a good deal of mischief - about **Contraband**. It was his second film with Emeric Pressburger; their first, **The Spy in Black** (1939), had teamed Conrad Veidt with Valerie Hobson. Both pairings had struck sparks off each other and at the box office; **Contraband** was a frankly opportunistic bid to repeat the formula. Veidt plays the skipper of a Danish freighter detained by British Contraband Control for inspection; Hobson is a contrary-minded passenger who jumps ship and heads for London. Pursuing her, Veidt discovers she's a British agent: there are stage-Nazis, punch-ups and shoot-outs in the blackout, and all ends with a clinch. It was, Powell noted, 'pure corn, but corn served up by professionals'.[3]

It was also a shameless grab-bag of Hitchcockian motifs, most of them lifted from the run of six Gaumont-British thrillers, from **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1934) to **The Lady Vanishes** (1938), that had

secured Hitchcock's international fame. The villains run a cinema as cover for their operation, just like Verloc in **Sabotage**; there's a stagy blackface act straight out of **Young and Innocent**; as in **The Lady Vanishes**, the plot hinges on a musical clue. Studied Hitchcockian quirkeries abound, like the showdown amidst a roomful of unsaleable busts of Neville Chamberlain, or the bowler-hatted little man planted stolidly between the sparring Veidt and Hobson on a bus, and the film even boasts its own MacGuffin, a cigarette paper listing the names of disguised German warships.

And throughout, **Contraband** slily apes Hitchcock's taste for setting up an erotic tension, spiced with kinkiness, between his lead actors. From their first clash when she refuses to wear a life-jacket (something of a bondage garment in itself) the exchanges between Veidt and Hobson quiver with hints of S/M games. 'Mrs Sörensen,' he growls, provoked by her wide-eyed insolence, 'have you ever been put in irons?' When they're tied up together by the heavies (shades of the handcuffed Donat and Carroll in **The 39 Steps**)[4] he works his way free, warning as he tugs at the ropes, 'I shall hurt you.' 'Go ahead,' she murmurs.

Where **Contraband** parts company with its models is in its documentary strain. Hitchcock, as befitted a director who scorned plausibility, had scant interest in documentary, but Powell is clearly fascinated no less by the workings of British Contraband Control than by the eerie world of London in the blackout. The blackout element works fine, heightening the fantasy mood of the London scenes (the film was retitles **Blackout** for its US release), but the bureaucratic comings and goings clog the action badly for the first twenty minutes. Also, Powell enjoyed eccentric actors, which Hitchcock scarcely did. (Witness Hitch's palpable unease with Alistair Sim and Joyce Grenfell in **Stage Fright** and his abdication in the face of Laughton's **Jamaica Inn** barnstorming.) Evidently much amused, Powell overindulges Hay Petrie in his double role, playing off the short fussy Petrie against Veidt's craggy, towering presence. It's fun, but it dissipates the tension.

By the mid-30s, Hitchcock had perfected his supreme trick: his ability to screw up the suspense, then grin in our faces - and **still** keep us on the edge of our seats. In his work from **The Man Who Knew Too Much** onwards, as Peter John Dyer put it, 'terror and levity rub shoulders'.[5] **Contraband** has plenty of levity, but not much terror. The blackout scenes point the way: expressionist high fantasy was where Powell/Pressburger's interests lay, and not until **The Small Back Room** would they prove that they too - in their own very un-Hitchcockian style - could be masters of suspense.

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Stanley Donen comes far closer to bringing off the terror/levity trick. Remarkably close, in fact, given that **Charade** was his first shot at the thriller genre. Unashamedly setting up an **hommage**, Donen kicks off with Saul Bass-style credits (a deft pastiche by Paul Binder) leading into an Alpine ski-slope scene that reworks the opening of **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (British version). And having cast Cary Grant, one of Hitchcock's two favourite male leads,[6] Donen plays mix-and-match with all four of Hitch's Grant films: **North by Northwest** mostly, but with chunks of **Suspicion**, **Notorious** and **To Catch a Thief** stirred in.

'What has long been disturbing in Hitchcock's films,' Andrew Sarris noted, ' - the perverse ironies, the unresolved ambiguities, the switched protagonists - now marks him as a pioneer in the modern idiom in which nothing is what it seems on the surface.'[7] Donen too captures this sense of pervasive unease, of a jokey facade stretched thin over betrayal and desolation. As often with Hitchcock (**Blackmail**, **Sabotage**, **Shadow of a Doubt**, etc.), the ostensible 'happy ending' dissolves on scrutiny into something more disturbing: the heroine (Audrey Hepburn at her most appealingly vulnerable) has merely passed from the arms of one compulsive liar to those of another. 'With Charles,' she muses on her failed marriage, 'everything is secrecy and lies.' But the same is true, doubled and in spades, of Grant, who switches names and personalities with alarming fluency, and her final glad cry as she falls into his embrace, 'Oh I love you, Adam Alex Peter Brian, whatever your name is!' prompts the thought: how many more of him are there, and just how lovable will they all be?

Where **Charade** scores over **Contraband** is in deftly running these bleaker intimations in tandem with its light-hearted elements, using humour to tighten the mood rather than defuse it. Like Hitchcock at his best, Donen tosses in small offkey details - the police inspector with his nail-scissors, the twitchy little villain subject to compulsive sneezing - that at once tease and disquiet us. He can match his

mentor for sadistic glee, as well. There's a ripe comedy-of-public-embarrassment scene involving Grant, an orange and an outraged buxom lady; two minutes later, Hepburn is 'put through it' as callously as any of Hitch's cool blondes, with James Coburn's folksily menacing Tex Penthollow cornering her in a phone booth to drop lighted matches down her front. Once again, the lead relationship is spiced with sadism, physical no less than psychological: Grant openly delights in keeping Hepburn scared out of her wits, and at one point threatens her with a spanking.[8]

For all its dark undertones, **Charade** is an exhilarating experience. There's a dancing lightness about the camerawork, a throwaway elegance in the handling of the actors, that reminds us Donen cut his teeth on Gene Kelly musicals. Could Hitchcock have directed a musical? The nearest he got to it was the 1933 Straussian confection **Waltzes from Vienna**, and his loathing for that dire assignment throbs through every frame. But it would be special pleading to claim that **Charade**, to any serious degree, ever transcends its reputation as 'the best comedy thriller Hitchcock never made'. Stylish, witty and accomplished, Donen's film could scarcely be bettered as an affectionate salute to the Master, but ultimately it exists wholly within Hitchcock's shadow.

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If **Charade** was unashamedly copying Hitchcock, no one thought the worse of Donen for it. The response to **Obsession**, though, dealt Brian De Palma's critical standing a blow from which it's yet to recover. Not only was this upstart movie brat ripping off the great Hitch, snarled the reviewers, but he was doing it ineptly; his film was slow, arty, pretentious, utterly lacking in Hitchcockian pace and bite. From now on, the dismissive term 'derivative' would hover over De Palma's head like a small travelling thundercloud.

Two decades on, though, the puzzling thing is how **Obsession** ever got taken for a 'Hitchcockian thriller' in the first place. True, it borrows the theme of **Vertigo** - a man haunted by the memory of a lost love who tries to remodel another woman into her image - but does so like a composer writing 'Variations on a Theme of'. Whatever he may have done subsequently, in **Obsession** De Palma is no more trying to be Hitchcock than Rachmaninov was trying to be Paganini. Part of the blame may lie with the Columbia publicists who, perhaps befuddled by the involvement of Bernard Herrmann, rambled on about 'crackling suspense'.[9] There's precious little of that in **Obsession**, but then on all the evidence there was hardly meant to be. Instead, the film floats in its own dreamlike, overheated melancholia. The contrast between the two films' main action set-pieces is indicative: Scottie (James Stewart) is traumatically present at Madeleine's death, while Michael (Cliff Robertson) simply watches from a distance as cops and crooks, equally inept, make a catastrophic botch-up of the kidnap/rescue.

The impression of a thriller perversely played out in slow-motion is enhanced by De Palma's timescale. Barring the odd flashback, Hitchcock never splits his films over time: most of them cover a few weeks, **Vertigo** a year or so. **Obsession** stretches over 16 years - partly a plot necessity, of course, to allow Michael's daughter time to grow up into her mother's double, but also a reflection of the film's languorous mood. San Francisco vs New Orleans; necrophilia vs incest; one could set up a whole string of cool/steamy opposites between Hitchcock's film and De Palma's. The contrast between the two Herrmann scores sums it up. Where **Vertigo**'s mode is high and remote, poised around flute, harp and vibraphone, **Obsession** is dominated by the dark, chthonic outpourings of the organ, edging it towards De Palma's home territory of the horror genre.

Obsession is an ill-starred film: even sympathetic critics seem to have trouble seeing it straight. In his book on De Palma, Michael Bliss describes the hero at the end as 'happy again after all those miserable years'.[10] The reading's hard to sustain, given Robertson's expression of anguish in his fiancee/daughter's embrace - the look of a man desperate to make love to the one woman who's utterly barred to him. Earlier on, there's what sounds like a plea for the film to be taken on its own terms, not just as ersatz Hitchcock. When Michael first meets his reincarnated love, she's restoring a fresco in the same Florentine church where he met his wife. She explains that another painting's been revealed under the one she's working on, posing a dilemma: 'Should they destroy a great painting to uncover what appears to be a crude first draft, or should they restore the original but never know for sure what lies beneath it?' There may be a covert reference here to Paul Schrader's original script, in which Michael goes to jail for killing his partner, his daughter is driven mad, and they meet again 25 years later, broken and desolate, after their respective releases. By all accounts it was Herrmann who talked De Palma and Schrader out of what would surely have been a still less Hitchcockian film.

* * *

As it stands, the least successful element in **Obsession** is the denouement; clumsy and undermotivated, it risks turning the film into a crass whodunit. Hitchcock famously disliked whodunits - 'Like a jigsaw or a crossword puzzle. No emotion' -[11] and it's a great strength of Chabrol's **Le Boucher** that right from the start it's clear who the killer is. Though Chabrol pitches a curve ball or two (such as the lost-and-found lighter) to keep us alert, we're never in much doubt that Popaul, the likable village butcher brutalised by his father and by 15 years in the Army, is behind the serial killings of local young women. The tension of **Le Boucher** doesn't lie in **who**, or even much in **why**, but in watching realisation seep into and corrode the central relationship - just as it does in the film's closest counterpart in the Hitchcock canon.

In the pioneering study of Hitchcock he wrote with Eric Rohmer, Chabrol identified as a key Hitchcockian theme the 'exchange of guilt'.[12] The theme's at its clearest in **Strangers on a Train** (source of Chabrol's cigarette-lighter motif) but it's also central to **Shadow of a Doubt** - set, like **Le Boucher**, in a small and vividly-evoked rural community.[13] And there are close affinities between Joseph Cotten's Uncle Charlie and Jean Yanne's Popaul, both bitter and misanthropic behind their affable facades. 'Do you know the world is a foul sty?' asks Charlie, echoed by Popaul's comment that the local people are a good lot, 'not like the shits you meet everywhere else'.[14] But while Charlie kills for sadistic pleasure and financial gain, Popaul (like Peter Lorre in Lang's **M**) kills in anguished compulsion, trapped in a mist of blood. 'I can't help myself,' he tells Helène, the schoolmistress (Stéphane Audran), 'it's like a nightmare.'

Where **Le Boucher** elaborates - and arguably improves on - its prototype is in its handling of the 'exchange of guilt'. In **Shadow** young Charlie (Teresa Wright) intuits her uncle's guilt but can't bring herself to denounce him. Her complicity lies in shared knowledge, no more. Helène is drawn in deeper. Her cool Parisian chic fascinates Popaul, who with touching awkwardness declares his attraction. She rejects him; she has had an unhappy affair and doesn't want to 'take any more risks'. At the climax he confronts her and confesses, knife in hand, then turns it on himself. Weeping, Helène drives him to the hospital; as his lifeblood leaks away he tells her, 'I would have liked to be with you always. ... When you were there, I didn't think about blood.' Had she been prepared to give herself, she might have saved him - and his victims.

Le Boucher delivers on suspense, all right: the sequence when Helène scurries desperately round the schoolhouse locking every door, only to realise that Popaul has still gained entry, scores high on the nailbiting scale. But Chabrol has the audacity to follow this climax with the long, tender, agonisingly slow death scene, all the more moving for its verbal formality: even at this extremity the two address each other as 'vous', and Popaul's dying cry is not 'Helène' but 'Mademoiselle Helène'. In the fatal stabbing of a flawed, remorseful hero there may be a side-glance at **Sabotage**, but nothing there nor in **Shadow of a Doubt** can match the complex, visceral emotions of **Le Boucher**'s final minutes.

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Given that Chabrol is widely considered a 'cold' director, **Le Boucher** is notable for the warmth and compassion of its regard. There's little of either, though, in the pitiless gaze of Henri-Georges Clouzot. In **Les Diaboliques**, observed a contemporary critic, everything is 'unwholesome, tacky, foul and tainted,'[15] and the sole character with any redeeming traits is precisely the one (played by Vera Clouzot, wife of the director) who gets destroyed. What gives the film its lasting fascination - it's just been re-released, and a Hollywood remake is on the way - is the satisfaction Clouzot so patently derives from his sordid world and the creatures who crawl about in it. Hitchcock's often been accused of misanthropy, but Clouzot makes him look like both Cheeryble brothers [characters in Dickens's 'Nicholas Nickleby' - ed.!] rolled into one.

Clouzot himself acknowledged his affinities with Hitchcock. 'We have preoccupations in common - notably a taste for certain physically violent elements.' Source material in common, too - **Les Diaboliques** is adapted from a novel by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, whose 'D'entre les morts' (From the Dead) furnished the plot of **Vertigo**. As a title, 'From the Dead' would have fitted **Les Diaboliques** just as well. Michel, the sadistic head of a private school near Paris, tyrannises both his wife and his mistress. Making common cause, they murder him. But the body vanishes, and there are intimations that

Michel's still around. Finally he resurrects, horrifyingly, causing his wife's weak heart to give out - just as he and his mistress had planned it.

The cruel spiderweb of Clouzot's plot links it to **Vertigo**, though in its depiction of a petty, malicious suburban world the film recalls a lesser-known Hitchcock movie, the sardonic 1932 comedy **Rich and Strange**. But in mood and structure **Les Diaboliques** anticipates **Psycho**, not only for its steadily mounting sense of half-glimpsed horror, but for the way the strings of the action are pulled by a person - Michel, Mrs Bates - who's at once alive and dead. Both films keep their secrets to the last, with no **Vertigo**-style mid-way revelation; indeed Clouzot's final appeal to his audience not to give away the twist may well have inspired Hitchcock's publicity coup of banning late-comers from showings of **Psycho**.

According to Roy Armes, it's Clouzot's 'lack of humour' that 'differentiates him most strongly from his only serious rival as master of the thriller genre - Alfred Hitchcock'.[17] The point's disputable. Clouzot's humour is certainly of a very different brand to Hitchcock's, with not a trace of playfulness. Yet if there's little levity, there's a sardonic smile detectable behind several scenes - as when, to satisfy Michel's penny-pinching regime, boys and staff alike are dished up rotted fish for lunch. The incident's all the more pointed for its setting: the snarly ambiance of the school dining-room is exactly captured. It's through such richness of detail that Clouzot, a master at creating atmosphere, builds his effects; compare the opening scenes of **Le Salaire de la peur** (one of the greatest of all suspense films, though utterly un-Hitchcockian) where the dust and sweat and sour smell of defeat are so vivid we can taste them. Hitchcock, like the sketch artist he used to be, can fill in a background with a few bold strokes - fast, economical and quite sufficient for his purpose. But Clouzot gives us a whole shabby world, compelling in its harsh moral construction.

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Don't Look Now also creates its own all-pervading atmosphere, though Nicholas Roeg's style is very different from Clouzot's and Hitchcock's. His fractured, complex editing technique switches us back and forward, hinting at links and correspondences that may exists only in his characters' minds - or in ours. In his own way, while seeming to leave us scope to make our own connections, Roeg teases and manipulates his audience no less than Hitchcock, tantalising us (along with John Baxter, the bereaved father played by Donald Sutherland) with glimpses and half-grasped images to lure us into the film's emotional and physical labyrinth. **Don't Look Now** deftly juggles ideas of perception, of vision and blindness, reflection and prevision. Yet at the same time, for all its ludic virtuosity, the film taps into deep emotions - deeper perhaps than Hitchcock generally cares to go. Hitch gives us the scream of terror, sure enough, but rarely the howl of grief.

Like **Les Diaboliques**, **Don't Look Now** connects with Hitchcock via its source material, being drawn (as were **Jamaica Inn**, **Rebecca** and **The Birds**) from a tale by Daphne du Maurier. Though its theme - the influence over the living of a dead person who returns in malign guise - links it with **Rebecca** (and with **Vertigo** and **Psycho**), it shares with **The Birds** a location in du Maurier's favourite territory, the almost-supernatural - stories where things happen on the borderline, nearly but not quite explicable in rational terms. We're never sure how far Baxter has foreseen, or even unknowingly willed, his own death, any more than we're sure whether Melanie (Tippi Hedren) in some way attracts the birds' attacks.

Where **Don't Look Now** differs from **The Birds** - and, I'd venture to say, from most other Hitchcock films - is in swinging us through a far wider trajectory of emotions. Roeg's film doesn't lack humour (the gloomy, black-bearded hotel manager could almost be, as Neil Sinyard suggests, 'a forerunner of John Cleese's Basil Fawlty')[18] nor sex: the bedroom scene between Sutherland and Julie Christie is deservedly famous for its frank sensuality. As for tension, the climactic sequence in which Baxter tracks the small, red-hooded figure he takes for his dead daughter through the haunted back alleys of dank, wintry Venice matches any in the history of cinema.

Yet it's worth pausing over that sequence, since what it gives us goes beyond a mood of encroaching menace and the chilling moment when the figure turns to reveal a grotesque, ancient dwarf with cleaver upraised. Suspense and terror, yes, but also pity - not just for Baxter, but for his killer, whom we have heard sobbing piteously, and who comes towards him pathetically shaking her head as if to say 'Why are you making me do this?' There's a sense of the absurd, too: the last line of du Maurier's story is '"Oh God," he thought, "What a bloody silly way to die ..."', a notion brilliantly conveyed by Sutherland

without words. These and a score of other emotions, complex and contradictory, are packed into the scene, along with an intricate montage of visual and aural motifs - blood, bells, water, broken glass - from elsewhere in the film. In its richness and resonance, it's at once the most moving and the most satisfying conclusion to any of Roeg's works.

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Hitchcock was rightly proud of **Psycho**, noting that the audience was aroused not by a message or a great performance, but 'by pure film'.[19] This distilling art - the ability to create pure film, to evoke the concentrated essence of suspense or terror, nowhere more effectively than in **Psycho** - is Hitchcock's strength but maybe also his limitation. While his status as the Master of Suspense rests unchallenged, it's a status within a self-chosen, circumscribed field. His films operate with a high degree of technical complexity, but within a relatively narrow emotional range.

Buttoned-up, sober-suited, addicted to set routines, Hitchcock notoriously feared disorder. Making films, one suspects, was a means of controlling disorder, containing it safely within his ironic, multilayered artifices, his Piranesian prisons of the imagination. For it's the floppier, more disorderly emotions - grief, compassion, tenderness, even happiness - that rarely figure in his films. It could be argued that they don't figure much, or even really fit, in the suspense-thriller genre as a whole, where sharper sensations like fear and anger are at home. **Le Boucher** and **Don't Look Now**, though, offer evidence to the contrary.

No filmmaker, needless to say, can emulate Hitchcock in everything, and anyone who tries to ends up, like Donen, making at best a witty facsimile of the Master's work. But Chabrol and Roeg show it's possible to make 'Hitchcockian thrillers' that not only live up to the key qualities of their models, but also move into areas beyond Hitchcock's chosen range. And then, of course, there are those intriguingly hybrid films that meld Hitchcockian elements with conventions derived from other genres and other filmmakers altogether: Mankiewicz's **Five Fingers** (Hitchcock meets Lubitsch), or Katherine Bigelow's remarkable new film **Strange Days** (Hitchcock/Hawks/Ridley Scott). But to explore that field would need another article - at least.

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Notes

1. François Truffaut, 'Hitchcock', London 1968, pp. 18-19

2. Michael Powell, 'A Life in Movies', London 1986, p. 183

3. Powell, p. 339

4. Charles Laughton's wicked squire in **Jamaica Inn** also derives pleasure from binding and gagging the heroine, 'in a bondage ... which is by far the most romantically expressed emotion in the film'. (Raymond Durgnat, 'The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock', London 1974, p. 165)

5. Peter John Dyer, "Young and Innocent", 'Sight and Sound', Spring 1961, p. 82

6. The other was James Stewart; both he and Grant starred in four Hitchcock films each. Donen follows Hitch in using Grant's screen persona to reassure us that, no matter what perils supervene, there'll be a happy ending.

7. Andrew Sarris, "The Director's Game", 'Film Culture', Summer 1961, p. 76

8. There may be a sly dig here at Grant's personal tastes. His fourth wife, Dyan Cannon, divorcing him in 1968 on grounds of cruelty, testified that he liked to spank her.

9. Columbia press handout, undated.

10. Michael Bliss, 'Brian De Palma', Metuchen NJ/London 1983, p. 48

11. Truffaut, p. 60

12. Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol, 'Hitchcock', Paris 1957, pp. 78, 110-112

13. Chabrol went further than Hitchcock in evoking spirit of place by casting all but three of his roles from the people of the Perigord village of Trémolat where the film was shot.

14. 'Ils sont bons, les gens du Bourras, à côté des ordures qu'on rencontre partout.' English-subtitled prints of **Le Boucher** emasculate this line to 'The people are nice here, much nicer than elsewhere.'

15. 'Tout y est malsain, poisseux, vil ou taré.' Gilbert Salachas, 'Télécinê' no. 237, quoted in Philippe Pilard, 'Henri-Georges Clouzot', Paris 1969, p. 155

16. José-Louis Bocquet and Marc Godin, 'Henri-Georges Clouzot cinéaste', Sèvres 1993, p. 89. The killing of Michel in **Les Diaboliques** is graphically messy and long-drawn-out. Hitchcock may have recalled it when he came to the death of the East German agent, Gromek, in **Torn Curtain**.

17. Roy Armes, 'French Cinema since 1946', London/New Jersey 1966, p. 78

18. Neil Sinyard, 'The Films of Nicholas Roeg', London 1991, p. 49

19. Truffaut, p. 233

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Silent Document: Hitchcock's 'The Manxman' (1929)

Hitchcock, as befitted a director who scorned plausibility, had scant interest in documentary.

- Philip Kemp

'But what is the Manx poet saying, sir? "I have no will but Thine, O God." That's me, sir, truth enough.'

- Pete, in 'The Manxman' (the novel)[1]

'Pete, we too have suffered.'

- Kate, in **The Manxman** (film)

[S]everal men ... were asked to describe an elephant in the dark. One, touching his trunk, said 'this animal is like a water pipe'; another, touching his ear, said 'this animal is like a fan'; a third, touching his legs, described the animal as a pillar.

- Erich Fromm, 'The Art of Loving'[2]

The whole picture

Elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin', we print Philip Kemp's exemplary "Hitching Posts". Philip's main criticism of Hitchcock's films, after allowing for their 'high degree of technical complexity', is that they operate 'within a relatively narrow emotional range'. In particular, they lack many of 'the floppier, more disorderly emotions - grief, compassion, tenderness, even happiness'. Perhaps you'll agree with me that the point deserves to be made, yet needs qualifying.

For a start, how far does an absence of floppier emotions matter? Shouldn't we be gratified that emotion of **some** kind, a most palpable kind, was always Hitchcock's stock-in-trade, and that the results were so consistently entertaining? Besides, even if other directors' films are often 'warmer' or more 'optimistic' than Hitchcock's, can any of them be said to give 'the whole picture'? Contrariwise, don't Hitchcock's films show a greater amount of the whole picture than is often thought?

Take **Marnie** (1964). In my view, only Robin Wood[3] has come close in print to giving us a true measure of its 'masterpiece' status. Other commentators, like Ropert Kapsis,[4] when they're not repulsed (it may seem) by how the main character is just an uptight commercial secretary, tend to dismiss both the screenplay and the direction as shoddy. By implication, the film can have few of the finer emotions, nor even much technical complexity. And that's nonsense! For a quite small intimation of the technical complexity of **Marnie**, see my article on **Spellbound** in 'MacGuffin' 15. As for the film's subject, I think that's both unusual and important: the subject is surely loneliness. More broadly, it's about suffering. The film examines what it means to be alone in the universe, and it tells us finally that that's what we all are. At the end of Philip Kemp's "Hitching Posts" article, he mentions Joseph Mankiewicz's **Five Fingers** (1952). Well, I suspect **Marnie** borrowed its suspenseful cleaning-lady scene from that film, and yet it easily accommodates the material to a vision and purpose of its own, which is certainly **not** lacking either compassion or tenderness. After all, the cleaning lady in **Marnie** is a surrogate for Marnie's mother, even Marnie herself.

Again, I congratulate Philip on his article's scope and good sense, two things that often seem to be missing from **academic** Hitchcock interpretation! Yet I think he pays a price for those qualities. A practising British critic, a very good one, he's still for all that basically an 'empiricist', one who tends to set a collection of enduring half-truths above new insight. Philip says that by the 1930s 'Hitchcock had perfected his supreme trick', and he quotes erstwhile 'Sight & Sound' writer, Peter John Dyer, on how that trick consisted of making '"terror and levity rub shoulders"'. Okay, I agree that's a neat phrase to describe the style of Hitchcock's Gaumont thrillers. And indeed the same terror-levity trick had been mastered by Hitchcock's predecessor, Charles Dickens (1812-70), whose boldly melodramatic novels often mix a child's and an adult's perspectives to quite startling and/or comic effect. Only, in neither artist's case, does that trick more than begin to define his genius.

Put the matter this way. Frankly, when I nowadays watch a Hitchcock film, I no longer feel either terror or much levity! Rather, I try to appreciate what I've already called the films' vision, and how its various parts work together. In other words, I enjoy seeing how the **many** melodramatic and stylistic devices of which Hitchcock was capable all serve that vision. A device that I might even rate above Hitchcock's conspicuous wit and capacity for being outrageous is simply his attention to detail. Who was it that defined genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains?[5] Anyway, I feel it's significant that in **Shadow of a Doubt** (1942) Hitchcock makes his dandified villain, Uncle Charlie, boast of his attention to '**all** the little details'!

Further, I think we **know** that Hitchcock designed his films to one day be appreciated in just this way, for their comprehensiveness and accuracy. On the one hand, he strove to include everything needful. Hence for a long time one of his pet projects was to emulate Walter Ruttman's **Berlin** (1927), and film 24 hours in the life of a city.[6] In part-realisation of that goal, he eventually made **Frenzy** (1972). And of **Rear Window** (1954), he told Truffaut that its impact would have been much less without the representative cross-section of characters we see living in the apartments opposite Jeff's.[7] Equally, Hitchcock nearly always paid close attention to matters of verisimilitude, including the smallest details. Once, he went so far as to say that he would like to make documentaries.[8] So it's interesting to note a report in the 1995-96 'Hitchcock Annual', in which author and screenwriter Evan Hunter reminisces about the time he worked with Hitchcock on **The Birds** (1963):

> He was meticulous about the circumstances in the script. There are holes you could drive Mack trucks through in some thrillers. He said in my films I'd like to think that if you'd reel it back you'd say, 'Oh, yeah, there it is.' Nowadays of course we can do that through video replay.[9]

In sum, in the rest of this article on **The Manxman**, I want to test two of Philip Kemp's claims: first, that Hitchcock's films operate 'within a relatively narrow emotional range' and, second, that Hitchcock 'scorned plausibility' and therefore 'had scant interest in documentary'.

Ecumenical

The Manxman, Hitchcock's last silent film, is based on Hall Caine's best-selling novel (1894), which in turn clearly derives its plot from Tennyson's narrative-poem 'Enoch Arden' (1864). All three works are melodramatic. I don't mean that as a criticism. Of course, there **were** bad melodramas, and indeed the Hall Caine novel strikes me as too solemn and verbose to be considered a superior work; yet, as a popular form, melodrama at its best has always had much to be said for it. Moreover, the cinema owes it a huge debt. That's a likely reason why several excellent studies of melodrama have appeared in recent years. For example, you can read a spirited short defence of the form in the 1973 monograph, 'Melodrama', by James L. Smith.

Professor Russell Merritt cites Smith's work, and related ones such as Peter Brooks's 'The Melodramatic Imagination' (1976), in a helpful article he contributed in 1983 to 'Wide Angle'. The article, called "Melodrama: Postmortem for a Phantom Genre",[10] suggests why in the 19th century both the novel and the theatre drew on real-life matters. Such matters were seen to be instructive. Novels might, in the words of Mary McCarthy, give '"explanations of the way institutions and industries work, how art is collected, political office is bought"', while stage plays 'were valued' (says Merritt) 'for detailed verisimilitude in decor, dialect, quaint customs and other matters of local colour'.[11] Well, Hall Caine's 'The Manxman' provides most of those things, at times (for a modern reader) excessively and tiresomely. By the same token, I must say that the novel's attempt to be comprehensive in something **more** than matters of detail is impressive. In the way its story, which is set on the Isle of Man, spans several generations of descendants of Old Deemster Christian of Ballawhaine, it may remind you of some of the novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). There's a similar earnest purpose and temporal sweep.

Hitchcock's film-version reduces the story's time-scale but keeps its poetic spirit. The credits are superimposed on a shot of waves breaking against a particularly jagged rock. Likewise, Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' begins:

> Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm ...

Then follows in the film what is a **typical** Hitchcock documentary passage (cf early sequences in **The Lodger**, **The Ring**, **Champagne**, **Blackmail**, **Topaz** and **Frenzy**). The Manx herring fleet is arriving back

safely in the port of Peel. Pete Quilliam (Carl Brisson), a fisherman, waves from his boat to his buddy, the lawyer Philip Christian (Malcolm Keen), who is standing on the quay. Pete and other members of the crew lower and furl a sail. As the shot dissolves, he leaps over the sail, now wrapped around its spar. In the next shot, the boat has tied up, and Pete is hurling fish onto the quay with his bare hands. In the foreground, another fisherman is already cutting up and filleting the catch.

Here, and in a couple of later sequences, there's an evocation of the same sort of isolated fishing town - Bodega Bay in Northern California - that Hitchcock featured in **The Birds**. Equally, the look and feel of this opening sequence may remind you that 1929 was the very year that John Grierson coined the term 'documentary' to describe his two-reeler about Britain's herring fleet, **Drifters**. And I don't think it detracts from the parallel I'm making to note that Hitchcock reportedly shot only two scenes of his film on the Isle of Man itself.[12] Rather, we've come to the crux of the matter. I'd begin by saying that Hitchcock's melodramatic films indeed embrace a kind of documentary, but a kind conceived on a vaster scale than Grierson's: they're 'documentaries' about, firstly, the film audience, and then, finally, about what Tennyson in 'Enoch Arden' calls in ecumenical terms

> That, which being everywhere
> Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone ...

That is, they're about the workings of what the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) called, more mundanely, the world's Will.[13]

Then I'd add this. Given that Hitchcock's concern as a filmmaker was to be comprehensive, it follows that the films themselves are concerned with all levels of reality, and work accordingly. Just one of those levels is the straight factual one traditionally assigned to documentary. It's even **imperative** of Hitchcock's films that they begin to work at that level. Thus their various courtroom scenes would be weakened without a veracity of detail. Consider the climax of **The Manxman**, which I'll discuss later, showing Phil presiding in his new appointment as Deemster, i.e. Judge, of the Manx Court: that's a detail fully as localised as the cassocked priests seen walking the streets of Quebec City in the 1952 **I Confess**.[14] Or think of the exact replication of the main courtroom of London's Old Bailey, even down to scratches on its woodwork, for the filming of **The Paradine Case** (1947).[15]

I can focus what I've just said by mentioning two more details taken from the start of **The Manxman**. That the film will be about something very like what Schopenhauer called Will is immediately indicated by the credits-shot of breaking waves. I've discussed the sea-symbolism of Hitchcock's films elsewhere (e.g. in 'MacGuffin' 15). Such symbolism palpably concerns more than either just 'Eros' or 'Fate' alone. Also, notice that as soon as the credits end, they're followed by a title-card: 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' That passage, from Mark 8:36, as quoted in Hall Caine's novel,[16] asks us to consider what it is that **drives** the story's characters, including the girl Kate (Anny Ondra) with whom both Pete and Phil fall in love ....

The second of the details I mentioned introduces the sequence of the fishing fleet returning to port. It could come straight from a documentary. On a ship's sail in the foreground can be seen the triskele (three-legged) emblem of the Isle of Man. Such a detail matches the London Coat-of-Arms that, postcard-fashion, overlies a corner of the aerial view of the Thames that opens **Frenzy**.

But equally, Hitchcock uses such a detail in both films to launch a major irony. In **Frenzy**, the Coat-of-Arms accompanies an 'official', tourist's-eye view of London, which the film immediately subverts. Likewise, in **The Manxman**, it isn't long before we learn that not everything on the Isle of Man is as 'innocent' as it had first seemed. Professor Maurice Yacowar ('Hitchcock's British Films', 1977) says Hitchcock uses the triskele to represent the perennial nature of the film's 'triangle' story, where Pete is 'body', Phil 'mind', and Kate 'soul'.[17] I'll suggest a slightly different reading, but without denying at all Hitchcock's fundamental intention to be comprehensive ...

A certain kind of melodrama

Now, some more background. Essentially, **The Manxman** ends on Kate's line, 'We too have suffered', much as Hitchcock's first film, **The Pleasure Garden** (1925), ends soon after someone says, 'We've both suffered ...'. So I take it that these two films support Schopenhauer's view that suffering is the inevitable outcome of striving, of Will.[18] Further, I take suffering to be a key theme of most of the other,

rather old-fashioned, melodramas that Hitchcock filmed during his career: e.g. **Downhill**, **Easy Virtue**, **The Paradine Case**, **Under Capricorn**, **I Confess**, **Marnie.**[19] And again, the element of suffering in all of these films is only made more piquant by being combined with a constraint on one or several of the main characters to be silent. It hardly matters that the reasons for such silence differ from film to film. In **Easy Virtue** (1927), when the heroine marries for a second time, she brings with her a background clouded by scandal, of which she has been a (supposedly) innocent victim. Nonetheless, it's this background of which she can't speak that soon proves to be her - and her new marriage's - undoing.

Well, Peter Brooks has noted both melodrama's characteristic desire to 'say all' and its trope of 'muteness' in which 'Virtue, expulsed, eclipsed, apparently fallen, cannot effectively articulate the cause of the right'.[20] That's essentially what I'm talking about here. To illustrate, let's first take 'Enoch Arden'. Enoch, a fisherman, marries a local girl, Annie, but poverty forces him to go abroad for a time as a merchantman. (In **The Manxman**, Pete doesn't actually get to marry Kate before he, too, has to sail off in quest of his fortune.) Soon Annie falls in love with Philip, Enoch's friend who had been his rival for Annie's hand. When news comes that Enoch is dead, Annie and Philip marry. But Enoch has survived. Years later, he returns without anyone recognising him. When he sees the happiness of Annie and Philip and their children, **he resolves to say nothing**. He takes a job as a cooper and carpenter in the port, and lives by his faith. Only on his deathbed does he confide his secret to Miriam, the local innkeeper, who conveys a last blessing to Annie and Philip.

The Manxman has a somewhat different second half to the above, but is otherwise the same story. Pete returns in time to marry Kate, without knowing that she's carrying Phil's child. So the constraint to be silent is shifted to Kate and Phil. That helps to create a more dramatic situation than Tennyson's, which in turn leads to the film's courtroom climax and its aftermath.

Actually, both Tennyson's poem and Hall Caine's novel were immensely popular, and both were filmed more than once. D.W. Griffith made two versions of 'Enoch Arden', in 1910 and 1911 respectively. The first silent version of 'The Manxman' was directed in 1916 by George Loane Tucker. There's another slant to all of this. Apart from outright film versions of the poem (itself similar to one called 'Outward Bound' written in 1858 by Adelaide Proctor, whose work was admired by Dickens),[21] there have been innumerable filmed **variants** of the story. Many of these were transposed to wartime. One I watched recently on TV was Irving Pichel's **Tomorrow is Forever** (1945). Leslie Halliwell's 'Filmgoer's Companion' lists a select dozen or so others.

The main point here concerns the nature of (one kind of) melodrama. In it, as I've said, suffering and 'muteness' overlap. Even when some characters seem to attain happiness, this entails the likely **un**happiness of others - which may remind us of Schopenhauer's distinction between flawed 'temporal justice' and an ideal 'eternal justice'. (See my readings of **The Paradine Case** and **Vertigo** in 'MacGuffin' 12.) By no means are such melodramas confined to the 'Enoch Arden' story. Though I've not been able to track down the 1902 play on which Hitchcock based **I Confess**, 'Nos Deux Consciences', by 'Paul Anthelme' (nom-de-plume of Paul Bourde), what's unmistakable is how its plot comes from the same fin-de-siècle era in which Hall Caine wrote his greatest successes. One of those, a novel called 'The Christian' (1905), tells of the love of the worldly Manxwoman Glory Quale for a young clergyman, John Storm, who renounces their love when he takes his vows. Note the resemblance to **I Confess** and, in broad terms, to Robert Hichens's oft-filmed novel, 'The Garden of Allah' (1904), which is a romance set in North Africa about a wealthy English spinster and a man who has fled the religious life ... Hichens of course was the author of 'The Paradine Case' (1933), eventually filmed by Hitchcock. I'm simply suggesting that all of these works may have in common both the theme of suffering and a distinction between what is worldly and what is finally ineffable. So that when a constraint to muteness operates in several of them, it tends to posit its own 'ultimate' consolation - as in the lines I quoted earlier from Tennyson ('That, which being everywhere ...').

Now, as time went on, it's fairly obvious that the authors/auteurs of such works ran the risk of their plots seeming merely corny. In Hitchcock's case, I think he typically solved the problem in two ways. First, as in **The Paradine Case** and **I Confess**, he made the main character flawed or compromised, or otherwise diverted our attention back to the worldly arena. Besides, that worldly arena is where the most elaborate drama is played out. In **The Paradine Case**, not only is Keane (Gregory Peck) appointed to defend the coldly fascinating Mrs Paradine (Alida Valli) against a charge of murder, at London's famous Old Bailey, but then he - who's supposedly happily married - falls deeply in love with his client. No

doubt that's what Hitchcock would call 'a hefty plot'.[22] Second, he often brought to his subject-matter an incisiveness which transformed it from a mere (moral or spiritual) tract into something that could intimate the working of the noumenal (other-worldly) **beneath** the phenomenal (worldly). As the French authors Boileau and Narcejac so brilliantly foresaw, he would end up making **Vertigo** (1958).[23]

It will be helpful to consider a few more melodramas where the trope of muteness is particularly emphasised. Alexandre Bisson's 'Madame X' (1909) is a true warhorse of the stage, not to mention the play's many successful film-versions.[24] It tells of a society woman who, the victim of a scandal, must leave her family and live incognito, becoming ever more lonely and degraded. But her troubles don't end there. One day she finds herself being blackmailed by a rogue who knows of her past. Goaded by him, she kills him. Then comes the time-hallowed courtroom climax. What's memorable about that is how the accused woman is defended by a rising young barrister who, ignorant of the fact, is her son! Of course, **she can't reveal her true identity to him**. When the trial exonerates her, she promptly dies in the young man's arms.

It's not a greatly edifying story, you probably think, yet once again it was a crowd-pleaser. Here I'll note that the courtroom climax of these several melodramas corresponds to another of the stock situations and/or tropes listed by Peter Brooks: namely, the tribunal scene.[25] I take that category to include equivalent scenes set in a church or a theatre. (**I Confess** has all three!) Well, another work that dates from about the turn of the century is a novel by Maxwell Gray, aptly titled 'The Silence of Dean Maitland'. A stage adaptation of it proved popular in Australia, and later inspired two film versions (1914, 1934). The story concerns a clergyman's feeling of guilt that he'd once allowed his best friend to take the blame for a crime he himself had committed. Finally, when the friend is released from prison twenty years later, a broken man, he comes one day to Dean Maitland's very church. The contrite dean is so moved that he confesses his guilt to the congregation, then falls dead. At least two of the story's motifs - the suffering in unspoken guilt, and the betrayal (by one party) of a friendship or other close tie - recur in Hitchcock's work: e.g. in **Downhill, The Manxman, Under Capricorn, I Confess.**

In turn, I'm reminded of the plot of Maurice Elvey's **In a Monastery Garden** (1931), starring such Hitchcockian actors as John Stuart, Alan Napier and Frank Pettingell. It's a film I've not actually seen but greatly want to, for reasons I'll give below. Here's its plot.[26] Michael and Paul Perrier are two English brothers who, on a visit to Italy, both fall in love with the same girl, Nina. The problem is that she's engaged to a worthless count. Then, after the count is murdered, Michael is arrested and imprisoned. This gives Paul an opportunity to woo Nina, impressing her with musical compositions he has stolen from Michael but now passes off as his own. These compositions acquire a reputation as works of genius. As a result, not only does Paul get Nina for himself but he also gains great fame. Meanwhile, Michael has been exonerated of the murder. From prison he goes to a monastery. Years later, when Paul and Nina visit him there, and Paul confesses his deceit, Michael is content that things stay the way they are. **He'll keep silent.**

One more stock ingredient of melodrama listed by Peter Brooks is the 'enclosed garden'.[27] He adds that melodrama's 'space of claustration' may include monasteries and convents. Clearly there's an overlap with what I've called in previous 'MacGuffins' (e.g. 'MacGuffin' 12) the iconography of the Lost Paradise. That iconography typically employs images of either an enclosed garden or a variant of it, such as an island or a snowfield or even a desert. Both Hitchcock's **The Pleasure Garden** and Robert Hichens's desert-set 'The Garden of Allah' are Lost Paradise works. So too, as we'll see, is **The Manxman**, with its island setting ...

But there's another Hitchcock-related matter that helps explain why I'd like to see **In a Monastery Garden**. The 'Variety' review of the film refers to 'its haunting melodies', and I take these to be the ones I heard as a child on an old 78 rpm record that belonged to my father. They were haunting indeed. The record's title-melody was hugely popular in its day, not least with Hitchcock.[28] Accordingly, I often speculate how far the mission scenes in **Vertigo** may be indebted to Maurice Elvey's 1931 film and its music.[29]

'No blame'

To return to **The Manxman**, then, it's curious to note that Hitchcock in later years felt no special fondness for it, indeed telling Truffaut that 'it was a very banal picture' which simply respected the novel's reputation and its tradition. True, there's not much healthy levity in it![30] Perhaps that's

why Hitchcock gave himself no credit for knowing and understanding the melodramatic tradition in the first place, nor for the fine job he and his collaborators did just adapting Hall Caine's book. Eliot Stannard's screenplay was a model of compression, yet it still worked in its own right. For example, the resulting film is full of meaningful business, as well as scene after scene written with feeling. For my part, I admire the picture deeply.

After Pete steps ashore in the opening scene, a couple of proleptic moments follow. (That isn't to say that a 'documentary' element is abandoned.) In the first such moment, a grinning Pete grasps the outstretched hand of Phil, who's wearing a suit. A title notes that the two friends 'met as boys and grew up as brothers'. Phil laughingly wipes any 'fishiness' back onto Pete's sweater ...

Next, another title: 'Still the staunchest friends, they fought side by side for the cause of the lowly fisherfolk.' Phil has drawn up a petition on the fishermen's behalf to the island's Governor. Steam trawlers (presumably British) have been encroaching into local waters. No doubt that's the perennial way of the world and its Will. But in view of how Phil will soon 'poach' Kate from Pete, we should note the irony of the verb 'fought' in that title. As the fishermen head for a meeting in the local pub, called the 'Manx Fairy', a long-shot shows two boys trading blows outside. In ensuing close-shots of the pub's precinct, the boys are still fighting. More than just local colour, that piece of business implies how there are fights **and** fights. And some fights may be, or become, less 'innocent' than others ...

Inside the pub, which is run by old Caesar Cregeen (Randle Ayrton), the local colour continues. Despite his name, the ear-ringed Caesar actually looks more Romany than Roman.[31] What's definite is that he's the film's presiding patriarch. He's the father of Kate, who works at the pub's bar and for whom we immediately see both Pete and Phil show a keen regard. Caesar is ambitious for Kate, and so will discourage the penniless Pete's attentions to her while welcoming Phil's. But first the story focuses on the signing of the petition. Among the signatories gathered at the bar is an old, white-bearded fellow who may remind you of his approximate counterparts in Ealing comedies like **The Titfield Thunderbolt** (1952). Those are also films that feature local colour, and pit old ways against new.

On the other hand, Hitchcock's films typically seek to be comprehensive in a way that the Ealing films don't. Thus the 'Lost Paradise' theme in **The Manxman** is knowingly introduced. Kate, Pete and Phil had grown up close friends in what had indeed been a garden. We glimpse that garden in the scene of Kate and Phil's first tryst (during Pete's absence abroad) in a locale which the novel calls Sulby Glen.[32] Cameraman Jack Cox photographs the leafy scene in radiant sunlight. You may think of **The Trouble With Harry** (1956), probably the closest Hitchcock came to making a 'Paradise Regained' film. (Yet that's also the film of his most like an Ealing comedy.)[33] Also, here anticipating a couple of scenes in **I Confess**, the film implies that there's something fantastical about the setting. Kate, in a little girl's dress, waves disingenuously to the approaching Phil. Soon they'll become, as the novel puts it, 'like other children of the garden of Eden, driven out and stripped naked'.[34]

Soon, too, that turn of events will give piquancy to the recurring shot of a lighthouse, the film's most emblematic image apart from the credits-shot of breaking waves - to which it obviously relates. After the fishermen have gone home from the Manx Fairy, the film cuts to a close-up of the lighthouse tower with its beam sweeping the harbour. As the novel never mentions a lighthouse, we can deduce that Hitchcock had his own good reasons for showing it. Most immediately, the shot announces the coming of night: next we see Pete and Phil still lingering at the Manx Fairy's bar, while in the adjoining parlour, behind a latticed window, Caesar, Kate and 'Grannie' sit around. Kate is helping her father count the day's takings. The realism of these details is heightened by more fine cinematography and careful attention to lighting.

But further, the lighthouse-shot has its symbolic and dramatic functions. It will recur at various turning-points in the story, the first of which is about to happen. One of the shot's functions is to enjoin the characters to take care. Equally, as calamities sometimes arise whatever safeguards are taken, that too is implied. The lighthouse beam, compared with the surrounding night, is so puny! Nearly thirty years after this film, Hitchcock made his **most** documentary-like movie, **The Wrong Man** (1957). It begins by establishing 'Manny' Balestrero's snug, routine-based existence amidst the whir and bustle of New York City. The constant roar of trains, both underground and on railway overpasses, is stressed. Hence, in the scene where Manny comes home one night and, in the silent house, we hear the bedside clock give a mere tinkle, it's easy to sense a calamity coming ...

Perhaps the first time we feel the approach of calamity in **The Manxman** is when Pete, in the Manx Fairy that night, can't face having to ask the formidable Caesar for Kate's hand; so he prevails on his lawyer friend, Phil, to 'plead' for him. What Pete doesn't see is that Phil fancies Kate as much as he does. Phil complies with his buddy's request, but Caesar wrathfully orders Pete out anyway. Then Pete has another idea. As the lighthouse beam again sweeps past, he tells Phil that he'll go abroad and make his fortune, provided Kate will agree to wait for him. Impetuously, he heads for Kate's lighted first-floor window and throws up pebbles to attract her attention. When Kate answers the summons (then modestly retreats back inside for a moment to fetch a shawl), Pete climbs on Phil's shoulders the better to talk to her. Thus Phil is able to overhear everything that is said - **yet himself stays silent** even when Kate, after hesitating, tells Pete that she'll do as he asks. All this time, the lighthouse beam keeps sweeping by. It even seems to be moving faster now. That may **not** be plausible, exactly, yet the achieved effect is perfectly right, matching our quickened feelings.

What do these scenes tell us? Let's start by noticing that the various characters all **suffer** from ambitiousness. In other words, their situation matches the unhappy human condition so often described in Schopenhauer (not to mention Buddhist teaching). Caesar is a former miller who, after marrying 'Grannie', acquired the Manx Fairy from her side of the family. Now he wants Kate, too, to rise in the world: clearly he'd like Phil to be her husband. But Pete, the honest fisherman, though **he**'s rebuked by Caesar for being poor (no thanks to those British trawlers) suddenly finds that he has his own ambition, involving going abroad and making his fortune. And Kate, who seems to fancy Phil at least as much as Pete - surely another sign of ambitiousness - commits herself to the latter, then instantly has second thoughts **about which she keeps silent**. As for Phil, we'll soon learn that he's driven to seek high office by an ambitious aunt and by memories of his father's fate. (Thomas Christian's career had been blighted after he'd 'married beneath him'.)

Further, there's an implication that whereas Phil's unworldly father had married for love, Caesar's marriage was prompted by more venal motives. Certainly 'Grannie', Caesar's wife, hardly epitomises conjugal joy. She's a frail-looking creature whose nickname seems revealing. Yet you can't say that 'true love' would have forestalled the calamity now fast approaching. After all, it's clear that Pete loves Kate - there's 'no-one else' - yet it's also clear that such love can be blind to adult realities.

Again, the film doesn't hide the fact that its characters are flawed. An instance of this is its emphasis on Pete's inability to ask Caesar directly for Kate's hand. By the same token, it allows the characters their reasons. A subjective close-up of Caesar glowering at Pete/us would surely quail the stoutest of hearts. So, if I may quote the 'I Ching' (the ancient Chinese book of wisdom), there can be 'no blame'.[35] Even Caesar's ambitiousness for the lovely Kate is laudable, considered in his own worldly terms.

Such superior melodrama as I take this to be hardly deserves Hitchcock's tag, 'banal'. Alongside Yacowar's body-mind-soul conception of the film, I'd put the passage from Erich Fromm's 'The Art of Loving' that I've quoted at the head of this article. Fromm uses the parable of the three men asked to describe an elephant in the dark to illustrate his concept of paradoxical, non-Aristotelian logic.[36] He then links use of the implied 'holistic' thought to 'the **tolerance** which we find in Indian and Chinese religious development'.[37] In sum, I think that **good** melodrama, the kind towards which Hitchcock's desire to make comprehensive statements so often led him,[38] here receives an early try-out in his work.

Entrapment

When Philip Kemp says that Hitchcock 'had scant interest in documentary', I assume he means that Hitchcock wasn't interested in using detail in his films just for its own sake. Which is quite true. Everything had to serve some intended effect. Subjectivity rather than objectivity is what these films are about. As I say, they're documentaries about the audience. Hitchcock's approach is exactly in keeping with Kant and Schopenhauer's understanding that we're all bound in subjectivity anyway. And one of the truly satisfying things about Hitchcock's movies is that they never strive for false objectivity, or to impart phoney sentiment, or to deliver abstract messages. Their comprehensiveness is deeply instinctive, based on something fundamental.[39] What these films do deliver is an audience-centred **experience** which Hitchcock himself compared to a roller-coaster ride. In turn, I would liken that to Schopenhauer's notion of the Will which, he said, we **experience** within our individual bodies though it's really everywhere and in everything.[40]

Let's now consider the moment in **The Manxman** that tells us that Pete, contrary to reports, is alive, that he has indeed made his fortune, and that he's about to return home. It's all conveyed with a shot or two of him grinning at the camera, plus an insert of the note he has written to Phil. The wide-shot of Pete includes - this shown through a latticed window behind him - a file of native workers bearing brimming (coffee?) baskets on their shoulders. No doubt that shot constitutes an image of colonial capitalism at its most exploitative. But notice further that these several shots are doubly subjective. First, Pete's grin and his stance - his back to the natives - tells us of his success and, simultaneously, of how naïve or questionable it may be. Second, his grin represents an attitude of the **filmmakers**, in as much as they've here played a trick on us: the note Pete writes to Phil begins, 'They said I had been killed but I wasn't ...', and his grin **direct to the camera** signals that the joke is indeed on us.

Nor is that all that these shots do. The wide-view showing the native workers is clearly more succinct for Hitchcock's purpose than separate documentary footage would have been. Still, the shot isn't **anti**-documentary. More importantly, because part of the shot is framed by that lattice window (an echo of the film frame), its content acquires **extra** meaning, a more 'holistic' meaning. Shots through latticed windows recur throughout the film. Rather than just anticipating 'the interest in voyeurism in [Hitchcock's] later work' (as Geoff Andrew, another British 'empiricist' critic, says),[41] the shots seem to me to emphasise the specific themes I've mentioned: the fragmentation of the whole picture by individual viewpoints (cf the parable of the elephant in the dark) and the suffering-in-silence motif. For a start, those native workers in some far-flung corner of Africa are themselves a part of the overall picture, albeit a largely forgotten part.

Earlier, the scene in which Phil approached Caesar on Pete's behalf had also featured a lattice window. Pete, forced to look on at what was happening behind it, had felt momentarily excluded from control of his own future.[42] Later, we'll watch Kate, trapped into marrying Pete, peering out forlornly through the lattice window of their cottage. She's like a bird trapped in a cage.[43] Altogether, the film is reminding us that few of us control our own lives. A correlative of this is its emphasis on fate. An early sequence is especially crucial here. After talking with his aunt, Phil resolves to break off his growing intimacy with Kate (Pete is still away). He sets out, full of resolve, for the Manx Fairy. Arriving, he encounters a hubbub. A telegram has just come saying that Pete is dead. Caesar looks disconcerted, even guilty, at the news; but when Phil comes upon Kate, in a dramatic cut to close-up, her first words to him are, 'Phil, we're free!' In fact, of course, **Phil** is now trapped - in spite of his resolve.

Still more ironically, Kate herself isn't free, nor was she ever. Not even before 'the wider world' entered the picture, as it did at least as early - or late - as the advent of those British trawlers. There was always Will and its dictates. Hitchcock films the build-up to this scene in a manner identical to that he uses in **I Confess** where Father Logan (Montgomery Clift) comes on Ruth Grandfort (Anne Baxter) in a street humming with the news that the blackmailer Vilette has been murdered. Ruth, who's as single-minded as Kate, breathes the same words, 'We're free!' Whatever exactly she means - she's a married woman - it's certain that both her and Logan's main troubles are only just beginning. You think too of the adulterous Nicole Devereaux's smug words to Jacques Granville in **Topaz** (1969), as she kisses him, 'I'm a free woman!' In all of these cases, what seems clear is that Hitchcock's 'pessimistic' intent is to show how freedom, in or out of morality, just doesn't exist.

<u>A couple of 'pedestrian' sequences that aren't</u>

I shan't dwell on the two scenes set in Caesar's mill. Their symbolism is straightforward, including the moment Yacowar notes when Kate beckons Phil towards her and he hesitates, aware of what may follow.[44] A dangerous-looking coil of rope lies on the floor in front of him, and you think of some later Hitchcock heroes' reluctance to face marriage (cf in particular the dream-symbolism of **Spellbound**, discussed in 'MacGuffin' 15). Also, the wedding-breakfast scene in **The Manxman** makes for an interesting comparison with the one in Chabrol's **Le Boucher** (1969), about which Robin Wood notes that Chabrol was 'very concerned to capture, not just the appearance, but the spirit of village life'.[45] I don't think Hitchcock's scene is disgraced by the comparison.

Two remarkable sequences that I **would** like to dwell on have much in common. Both contain their share of 'documentary' detail yet are decidedly more than that. In the first, Kate sets out for an assignation with Phil. She's excited, and the sequence begins intimately by showing her readying herself before a small mirror in her bedroom. Then she starts down the narrow stairs above the Manx Fairy's bar, through

which she must pass. Nonchalantly, she strolls past its few daytime patrons and lets herself into the street. Outside, the picturesque fishing town is going about its business, and she begins to hurry. Soon she's climbing the grassy cliff above the town, where gulls wheel overhead. Next, a long-shot in silhouette shows her crossing a dip between two hills; a small bank of cloud seems to bid fair weather. Then in a succession of seven shots, she sees Phil waiting for her in a cove on the beach, he sees her and waves, and she descends the cliff and runs to him: all seven shots are framed by rock formations of the cliff. Though the sand in the cove is waterlogged and strewn with pools, she retains her momentum until she's in Phil's arms. What's ironic is that those rocks may remind us of the credits-sequence and the jagged rock there; and they definitely present a near-total contrast to the idyllic Sulby Glen scene ...

In its way, this wordless sequence is as eloquent as Marion Crane's headlong flight towards the Bates Motel in **Psycho**, or the wordless sequence in **Vertigo** in which 'Scottie' trails Madeleine across town to his own front door - which is a shameless, sexy red (in a film whose predominant colour is green). In each case, a 'hopeful' trajectory presages calamity. Underlying that trajectory is an impulsive, self-centred urge, though being a 'natural' one it's hardly very reprehensible. I'd add that precisely in that ambiguity is much that is poignant about Hitchcock's filmmaking.[46]

A second **Manxman** sequence also shows a character traversing a part of the island. It's the sequence where Pete heads home on foot after a day's work, and it represents an early example of Hitchcockian suspense. At home, Kate, now married to Pete, has summoned Phil to the cottage for a clandestine meeting, and has just told him that she's carrying his child. In a panic, the pair debate whether to tell Pete 'everything'. Kate thinks they must, but Phil is against it ('No - not now! Think of the shame.') At this point, the film cuts to Pete coming along the shore, where he waves to a man seated on a boat. Behind them, the sky is clear. Back home, Kate and Phil are arguing. Next, Pete is shown passing a row of cottages and greeting an old lady seated in the doorway of one of them. The sky is still cloudless, and the picturesque view has a timeless quality. The film cuts back to the cottage where the same argument as before is repeated. Now Pete arrives outside, and peers in a window. From his point of view, we can see the back of a man, i.e. Phil, who is standing very close to Kate and might even be kissing her. Pete noticeably hurries to the cottage doorway, but as soon as he recognises Phil his anxious face unclouds, and he greets his buddy with outstretched hand. (That gesture provides an ironic echo of their handclasp in the opening sequence). Then he kisses Kate and again shakes Phil's hand.

In 'Lost Paradise' terms, what this sequence does is show Pete still living in a **fool**'s paradise. The sequence prepares us for what comes next: when Kate tells Pete that she's pregnant, he instantly assumes that he's the father - no thought that the father might be his trusted buddy. So all that picturesqueness I mentioned, that quasi-documentary detail, has its point. Further, I'm reminded of the way Pete in the novel unwittingly characterises himself as almost a **holy** fool - see the passage from the novel quoted at the head of this article - which in turn reminds me again of something Erich Fromm said. Commenting on the **tolerance**, mentioned earlier, found in Indian and Chinese religious development, he wrote: 'If the right thought is not the ultimate truth, and not [of itself] the way to salvation, there is no reason to fight others, whose thinking has arrived at different formulations.'[47] That's surely true, and before the film is over Pete must learn that, though he's been wronged, his own 'innocence' isn't absolute or the whole story. I'll come to the courtroom showdown in a moment.[48]

<u>And another, both rich and strange</u>

Kate's suicide attempt, after she has told Pete that the recently-born baby isn't his (but not who the real father is), makes for one more fine sequence that starts out with a character walking. But now Kate no longer hurries. It's night again, and again the lighthouse beam sweeps the harbour-side. Kate moves almost trance-like through the town's narrow streets, beautifully photographed in pools of light and darkness. I suspect that these few shots were inspired by a passage in the novel describing a journey made by Pete to the town of Douglas (capital of the Isle of Man) in search of Kate, who has disappeared:

> Pete rambled through the narrow thoroughfares ... until he came to the sea front. It was now full tide of busy night ... every open window had its dark heads with the light behind ...[49]

Equally, you may feel an anticipation of some sequences in **I Confess**, including the one in which Father Logan wanders the streets of Quebec City, uncertain whether to give himself up to the police who suspect him of Vilette's murder.

Kate comes finally to the harbour-side, where boats are moored in a darkness broken only fitfully by the lighthouse beam sweeping past. At the sea wall she stops and slowly tilts her head upwards to inspect a ship's mast. There can be no mistaking: the moment exactly anticipates the one in **Vertigo** just before Madeleine runs up the bell-tower to her apparent death. Next, a startling close-up shows us Kate's composed, beautiful face, her blonds hair caught by the light, and some strands billowing to one side: you think of a religious painting by Botticelli - or of Marion Crane's transfigured, upturned face, surmounted by a halo-like shower-nozzle, moments before she dies in **Psycho**.

Yet strangely there's another famous Renaissance painting that the scene as a whole reminds me of. The association is a subjective one, and I'm mentioning it mainly to show how, when we stop some films at key points, we really do find incredible richness. The painting is Giorgione's 'Tempesta' (1504), the one with the mysterious broken column, a turbulent stream, and a flash of lightning. On the left, a man, whose breeches bulge impressively in front (!), stands holding a staff and watching a half-naked woman across the way, where she's suckling a baby. According to Sir Kenneth Clark, nobody has ever known what the painting represents![50] Well, I guess that lets me venture my own interpretation: namely, that the man has suddenly understood the omnipresence of Will, whose chief agent is sexuality, and how he and the woman (whose child is surely his) form a small part of its perennial process. The broken column on a pedestal - it looks to me more like **two** broken columns - is the symbol of that process and the couple's part in it. Likewise, a town in the background, with its towers and domes, represents the world's stage on which the man and the woman together play a brief role.

You may see why I think of the harbour-side scene in **The Manxman**, in which Kate attempts suicide after Pete has refused to give up the baby. She has just felt herself **estranged**, morally and actually, from the world (here represented by the town of Peel behind her), and so prepares to quit it for good. The turbulent black water at the bottom of the frame, occasionally lit up by the lighthouse beam - which, unlike Giorgione's flash of lightning, grants no sudden epiphany (at least to Kate) - stands for death. But it also stands for the larger process, i.e. Will. (Cf the waves behind the credits.) From a shot of the swirling water after Kate has plunged into it, the film lap-dissolves to an ink well, into which Phil, newly-appointed Deemster, dips his pen ...

Actually, Hitchcock was probably inspired to treat the moment this way by having read a passage early in Hall Caine's novel. Visiting the countryside with Phil one day, Kate becomes entranced by what she calls '[t]he fairy's dubb', i.e. 'a little round pool, **black as ink**, lying quiet and apparently motionless under a noisy place where ... the stream ran into the dark' (my emphasis).[51] The novel makes frequent reference to matters of superstition and the supernatural (something which the film in turn picks up on: e.g. when it shows **an upturned horseshoe** under Kate's window at the **Manx Fairy**). On this occasion, Kate kneels on the edge of the pool and ruffles its surface with a willow branch, while she recites an incantation:

> Willow bough, willow bough, which of the four,
> Sink, circle, or swim, or come floating ashore?
> Which is the fortune you keep for my life,
> Old maid or young mistress or widow or wife?

Obviously, that verse may in turn have inspired Hitchcock's symbolic use of the lighthouse, as in the scene I've just mentioned in parenthesis where Pete begs Kate to wait for him, and the beam lights up the horseshoe on the wall. Perhaps, too, it was even the inspiration for some Hitchcock scenes to come, such as Doris Day's 'Que Sera Sera' song in the 1956 **The Man Who Knew Too Much** ...[52]

The courtroom

If what Philip Kemp calls 'the floppier, more disorderly emotions' seldom figure in Hitchcock's work, I suspect that's because, sadly, they're just offshoots of more basic drives: for instance, Schopenhauer thought of happiness as just suspended willing. In other words, in concerning themselves with 'the total picture', both Hitchcock and Schopenhauer saw that what figure **most** prominently in it are things like suffering and selfishness and blindness - though as **The Birds** emphasises, the consolation of human warmth is also vital. Further, let's not forget Hitchcock's 'saving grace' of humour. Probably humour is not the main strength of either your average documentary nor of the films made by Hitchcock's imitators, yet it was always a major feature of his own work. It was essentially a humour of character and situation, and thus another factor helping to keep his audience at film-centre. Take the scene in **The Manxman** where

Pete waits anxiously to learn whether, as he thinks, he has become a father. He's playing draughts with Phil and not noticing what moves he should make. Then, hearing screams from upstairs, he abandons the game and collapses on his knees into a chair. To this point, the scene is fairly routine, though we may note, firstly, that already it's typical of Hitchcock that he doesn't spare reminding us of a character's suffering (here, primarily Kate's), and, secondly, that Pete is played by actor Carl Brisson who in Hitchcock's previous picture, **The Ring**, had played a tough professional boxer! (And Pete himself is a seasoned fisherman!) Also, there's the irony that throughout the scene **Phil** can only watch and **suffer in silence.** To cap off that irony, Hitchcock introduces the doctor. As he comes down the stairs, we see that he looks like Donald Crisp from some nice Hollywood family picture! Then, on entering the room, he first takes Phil to be the father ...

But now I come to the film's courtroom climax, full of what I want to call incipient homely detail. Homely detail had been a feature of the scenes set in Pete and Kate's cottage, where it was detectable in everything from the cheery furnishings and settings to Pete's bare-chested arrival at the breakfast table. (Not only had Carl Brisson played a boxer in **The Ring** but clearly he was something of a hunk - no doubt the inspiration for this particular episode.) By contrast, the courtroom sequence begins on a formal note, with the business of a serious-looking Phil dipping his pen in the ink well and writing in the Deemster's large book. Further, the various occupants of the courtroom - barristers, attendants, members of the public - are all very properly dressed for a day in court. Yet most of them, the regulars, already seem **at home** here as they wait for proceedings to begin. When a cowled woman, like a penitent, is brought before the Deemster, charged with attempted suicide, you can sense a measure of 'familial' pity extended to her by those present. Sunlight streams through a window, and in long-shot the courtroom resembles the interior of a church. But a (Manx?) coat-of-arms is prominently emblazoned high up on one wall ...

The woman is Kate. Shocked, but recovering himself quickly, Deemster Christian is about to speak, but Kate puts a finger to her lips. At this point, Pete bursts in, followed by Caesar and 'Grannie'. So now the scene contains a mix of genuinely familial and more formal ingredients: in effect, ones of an actual family and the wider community, respectively. The film will soon show that there's an inevitable disjunction between the two, and that if it's futile to try to keep some matters in the family, so to speak, it may be equally futile to expect perfect justice or magnanimity of society. Not surprisingly, Pete doesn't straight away grasp such distinctions. He's uncertain about how to address his old friend, the Deemster, and when he starts to speak on Kate's behalf, in one breath he says: 'I'll take her back, sir. Please let her go, Philip.' What he doesn't yet know is that he's addressing the very person perhaps most responsible for what's happened.

Then, when the Deemster rules that Kate should indeed return to her husband - but she refuses - an impasse occurs. It's broken by Caesar, whose name once again may remind us of his worldliness. Unlike Professor Yacowar, though, I don't regard Caesar as a mere hypocrite (because of the store he sets on money, for example).[53] **Caesar, too, sees part of the truth.** For some time, he has begun to realise what has happened between his daughter and Phil. Now he speaks out. Pointing accusingly at Phil, he announces: 'There before you is [Kate's] betrayer, the Deemster himself.' Turning to Pete, he asks: 'Can't you see, Pete - can't you see?'

Phil makes up his mind at last. He tells the court, who have come along expecting only to admire this man who has succeeded so soon to a position **that runs in his family**, that Caesar speaks truly. He adds: 'I am not fit to sit in judgment on my fellows, I who have sinned against God and man.' Here the film's symbolic setting again asserts itself. In effect, and as so often in the past, the Family of Man has proved flawed, a vain ideal.

During the scene, Kate has been attended by a kindly-looking social worker - another example of what I mean by incipient homely detail.[54] Now the ambience changes, as Pete finally comprehends. At first, he stands thunderstruck beside one of the courtroom's pillars. (The symbolism here seems to relate to his excessive trust in his own and the world's righteousness: cf the passage from the novel I've already mentioned in which he says, 'I have no will but Thine ...'.) Then, for the first time in the film, he momentarily shows anger, and grabs at Phil. But Kate intervenes. She speaks the film's last line: 'Pete, we too have suffered.'

Knowing too little

There's a coda. Returning one last time to the cottage, Kate and Phil take leave of Pete before

departing with their baby. Through the latticed panes of the window, hostile neighbours - mostly women - look on. They don't understand ... In their incomprehension of the whole picture, they're like everyone else in the film. In a way, they also anticipate certain characters in later Hitchcock movies: e.g. such characters as Emma Newton (Patricia Collinge) as we see her near the end of **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) - where she actually murmurs, 'I just don't understand it' - and Manny Balestrero at the end of **The Wrong Man** (see my article, "The Man Who Knew Too Little", in 'MacGuffin' 6). Moreover, by photographing them like this, through the lattice window, the film effectively makes these lookers-on surrogates for us, the audience, who are watching them looking on ... And the Pirandellian point?[55] Simply, I think, that if we try to deny that we're part of 'the total picture' we only make ourselves more, rather than less, complicit in the world's suffering, whose ultimate cause is Will itself. As I said in 'MacGuffin' 17, the typical Hitchcock ending tells us, 'Now, after all you've seen here, it's back to you'. **The Manxman** provides an early instance of what I mean.

A line of women jeers at Kate and Phil as they leave. The next shot is of the cottage, in long-shot now, under a gloomy sky. The women are gone, and in their place is a flock of geese. Inevitably, you think of Fritz Lang's **Fury** (1936) with its inter-cutting of gossipy women and cackling hens. Above all, though, the shot is a reminder of how life is a vale of darkness and tears.

Cut to the herring fleet back at sea. Pete is at the prow of his boat, staring vacantly. This ending is scarcely more optimistic than the heavily ironic one of 'Enoch Arden':

> So past the strong heroic soul away.
> And when they buried him the little port
> Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

Probably Tennyson's lines prompted Hall Caine to give his novel its Biblical motto, 'What shall it profit a man?' That's also the nominal moral of Hitchcock's film. However, I think the film shows us that matters of soul aren't finally graspable in this world, where mere phenomenal knowledge holds sway. So it's fitting that Hitchcock should turn his film back over to us. He has given us a mirror, his own special kind of 'documentary', and we as individuals must make of it what we can.

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Notes

1. Sir Hall Caine, 'The Manxman: A Novel' (1894), Part VI, iv. By 'the Manx poet' Pete presumably means T(homas) E(dward) Brown (1830-97), born in the Isle of Man, whose collected poems were issued in 1900 and reprinted in 1952.

2. Erich Fromm, 'The Art of Loving' (Unwin paperback edition, 1962), p. 59.

3. Robin Wood, 'Hitchcock's Films Revisited' (1989), with a chapter on **Marnie**.

4. Robert E. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (1992). Chapter Four includes a discussion of Wood's reading of **Marnie**.

5. To answer my own question, the correct answer seems to be Jane Ellice Hopkins (1836-1904), though Carlyle's 'Frederick the Great' (Vol. 4) is another candidate!

6. See Hitchcock's interview with Truffaut - though note that I'm simply inferring an implied parallel with Ruttman's famous film.

7. Again, see Truffaut. Another representative cross-section of characters occurs in **Lifeboat** (1944). By the way, I'm aware of the charge that neither **Frenzy** nor **Rear Window** (nor **Lifeboat**) is in fact strictly accurate about the locale shown. But I hold the view that Hitchcock **knew** the facts and then simply calculated how far he might bend them for the sake of a greater verisimilitude. In the text, I deal with at least one such instance in **The Manxman**, involving that film's manipulation of its recurring image of a lighthouse.

8. This was in conversation with Leslie Perkoff, in "The censor and Sydney Street", 'World Film News' (London), 2/12, March 1939, pp. 4-5. Quoted in Jane E. Sloan, 'Alfred Hitchcock: The Definitive Filmography' (1995), p. 357 (item 128).

9. Charles L. P. Silet, "Writing for Hitch: An Interview With Evan Hunter", in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1995-96 edition, pp. 119-20.

10. Russell Merritt, "Melodrama: Postmortem for a Phantom Genre", in 'Wide Angle' 5/3 (1983), pp. 24-31.

11. Both these quotations will be found on p. 29 of the above. In the present text, I'll make observations on how Hitchcock's **The Manxman** exemplifies such items as I've cited here: e.g. how industries work, and local colour.

12. According to Michael Powell, who was Hitchcock's stills photographer on **The Manxman**, most of the shooting was done at Minehead in Somerset and in North Cornwall. John Russell Taylor says that some scenes were also shot at and around Polperro, on the **South** Cornwall coast. See Michael Powell, 'A Life in Movies' (1986), p. 191, and John Russell Taylor, 'Hitch' (1978), p. 94.

13. For new 'MacGuffin' readers, I'll note that Hitchcock-Schopenhauer parallels provide an ongoing motif in these pages. In broad, Schopenhauer's concept of Will as life-force, as that which drives or binds all worldly phenomena, seems to me something that goes to the heart of Hitchcock's films and gives them their 'vision' (as I call it in the text). Almost incidentally, I think the concept is a truism.

14. According to Theodore Price, in his 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (1992), p. 270, Quebec City by 1952 was the only place in North America where priests still wore the cassock.

15. This information comes from the Selznick Studio's publicity material for the film. See also my article on **The Paradine Case** in 'MacGuffin' 12.

16. Maurice Yacowar, 'Hitchcock's British Films' (1977), p. 287 (note 8), is wrong to say that this Biblical passage doesn't occur in the text of the novel, though it appears on the title page (in some editions). Late in the novel (VI, xiv), Phil muses that 'he had gained all that his little world could give; and what was the worth of it? What was the price he had paid for it?' Here he repeats to himself the passage from St Mark's Gospel.

17. Yacowar, p, 88.

18. That's a basic tent of Schopenhauer's philosophy. His essay, "On the Suffering of the World", is a rare work of literature, not least because it's patently true. I think Schopenhauer, like Hitchcock, was capable of a sane man's Weltschmertz. In 'MacGuffin' 8, I tried to show how a theme of universal suffering is central to Hitchcock's **Torn Curtain** (1966).

19. I think Theodore Price, op. cit., has pointed out the old-fashioned aspect of many of the stories Hitchcock adapted into films. I discussed this matter in my review of Price's book in 'MacGuffin' 12. Several of the stories, including 'The Manxman', are by homosexual authors. Cf note 21 below.

20. Quoted in Leland Poague, "Engendering **Vertigo**", in the 'Hitchcock Annual', 1994 edition, p. 27.

21. According to an item in 'The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English' (1994), p. 302, 'Enoch Arden' was based on a prose sketch written for Tennyson by his friend, the painter Thomas Woolner. The item adds that a similar theme appears in Elizabeth Gaskell's novel, 'Sylvia's Lovers' (1863), and in the poem by Adelaide Anne Procter I've mentioned in the text. For what it's worth, Tennyson is one more author said to have been homosexual (cf note 19 above). See Martin Greif, 'The Gay Book of Days' (1985), p. 153: and cf p. 86 where there's an amusing entry on Hall Caine.

22. Hitchcock told Donald Spoto that his aim as a director was to 'tell a good story and develop a hefty plot'. See caption under photo on the title-page of Spoto's 'The Art of Alfred Hitchcock' (Second Edition, 1992).

23. As I've said before (e.g. in 'MacGuffin' 11), Boileau and Narcejac's novel, 'D'Entre les Morts' (c.

1955), written with Hitchcock in mind to direct its film version, constitutes one of the most brilliant of all pieces of Hitchcock criticism.

24. 'Madame X' has lately received much attention from scholars. In Christian Viviani's "Who is Without Sin? The Maternal Melodrama in American Film, 1930-39", he qualifies the term 'warhorse' (also used by Halliwell) by saying that it applies just to **Anglo-Saxon** stages: the French theatre, where the play was first performed, has largely ignored it. (Viviani's essay, originally published in 'Les Cahiers de la Cinémathèque' 28, July 1979, is reprinted in Christine Gledhill, ed., 'Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film', 1987, pp. 83-99.) The play has had four film versions in English (two silent, two sound), plus at least one television production (1981). Also, its pathos made it appealing to Japanese audiences, and Mizoguchi's film, **Taki no Shiraito/The Water Magician** (1933) closely resembles it. (My thanks to Freda Freiberg for that information.)

25. Quoted in Poague, p. 27.

26. The information here is extracted from the film's review in 'Variety' at the time and a synopsis in Jay R. Nash and Stanley R. Ross (eds), 'The Motion Picture Guide', H-K: 1927-1983 (1986). My thanks to Carol Abbott, Research and Information, Australian Film Institute, Melbourne, for obtaining me the relevant material.

27. Quoted in Poague, p. 27.

28. Such, at least, is my inference from the scornful remark of Bernard Herrmann that Hitchcock, if 'left by himself, ... would play "In a Monastery Garden" behind all his pictures!' Herrmann's remark is quoted in Steven C. Smith, 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann' (1991), p. 32.

29. I'm aware, though, that for **Vertigo** Hitchcock particularly had in mind, firstly, paintings by Vermeer, and, secondly, the stage production he had seen in 1920 of James Barrie's 'Mary Rose', including its score that '"used very effectively a background sound effect ... of eerie music, angels singing and low moaning wind"'. This information comes from **Vertigo** notes, Hitchcock collection, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, cited in Smith, p. 220 and p. 391 (note 4).

30. For that very reason, it's all the more to my point here! Even so, I'll give an instance in the text of Hitchcock's humour as seen in **The Manxman**.

31. In the novel, Caesar is a zealous Methodist, much given to quoting the Bible. Hall Caine allows himself some fun at Caesar's expense when he has someone trick him into buying back his own ailing cow. Whereupon Pete tries to console Caesar by telling him, 'it'll be all set right at the Judgment'. (V, xiii.)

32. This episode is recounted in Caine, II, xxiii.

33. However, Deputy Sheriff Calvin Wiggs's hobby of restoring vintage motor-cars may constitute a nod by Hitchcock to another popular British comedy of the period, Henry Cornelius's Ealing-like **Genevieve** (1953). In any event, by the end of his own film Hitchcock has provided a subtle critique of the wishful Ealing ethos ...

34. Caine, II, v. Cf Tennyson's somewhat ironic description in 'Enoch Arden' of the island where Enoch is shipwrecked as 'this Eden of all plenteousness'.

35. By no means, though, is that injunction in the 'I Ching'/'Book of Changes' as bland as it may sound to Western ears. The text of this truly remarkable work fully recognises as important a right-minded attitude in human affairs ...

36. The parable of the elephant in the dark is widely known. I even saw it casually referred to on the Internet recently! The wide acceptance of it as meaningful seems to me only to confirm its significance.

37. Fromm, p. 59. On p. 55, 'paradoxical' logic is briefly defined as that 'which assumes that A and non-A do not exclude each other as predicates of X'. Fromm then notes its early manifestation in Chinese and Indian thinking and in the philosophy of Heraclitus.

38. Culminating, once again, in **Vertigo**. Cf 'MacGuffin' 17 on that film.

39. I'm even reminded of Nietzsche's distinction, in 'The Birth of Tragedy', between the 'Dionysian' artist attuned to 'the spirit of music' and the mere 'theoretical man', exemplified for Nietzsche by Socrates, with his complacent 'scientific' optimism! Having said that, I may as well cite this passage from the same work: 'The tremendous courage and wisdom of Kant and Schopenhauer carried off the most difficult victory: victory over the optimism that lurked within the essence of logic, which in turn forms the basis of our culture.' The passage is on p. 87 of the recent translation of 'The Birth of Tragedy' by Shaun Whiteside (Penguin Books, 1993).

40. This understanding of how the Will is, in a sense, knowable represents Schopenhauer's advancement on Kant who had simply said that the Thing-in-itself (= the Will, in Schopenhauer's view) is unknowable by definition. In 'MacGuffin' 8, I analysed **Torn Curtain** in the light of Schopenhauer's understanding (cf note 18 above).

41. Review by G. Andrew of **The Manxman** in J. Pym (ed.), 'Time Out Film Guide' (1955), p. 454. The same reviewer's entry on **Vertigo** (p. 784) is equally notional: 'Brilliant but despicably cynical view of human obsession and the tendency of those in love to try and manipulate each other.' As I say, such 'received' opinions are at best half-truths. Here, Judy's attempt **not** to manipulate 'Scottie' goes by the board.

42. Cf part of the Harlem hotel sequence in **Topaz** (1969).

43. Cf, for instance, **Marnie**, where Marnie is trapped into marriage with Mark Rutland.

44. Yacowar, p. 93.

45. Robin Wood, 'Claude Chabrol' (1970), p. 132.

46. The aftermath of this episode, in which impending calamity is signalled when the ship bringing Pete home sails into view, has been well-analysed by Charles Barr in 'MacGuffin' 6. Barr's article, "Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British Period" ('MacGuffin' 6, pp. 3-6) calls **The Manxman** 'one of the finest of all [Hitchcock's] films'. Cf also a similar moment in 'Enoch Arden'.

47. Fromm, p. 59.

48. At the end of the courtroom scene, Pete shapes to hit Phil. But Kate restrains him with a word. It's the pay-off to the 'fighting' motif introduced early in the film. On 'innocence', which is always relative, I think it's fair to say that Schopenhauer, Hall Caine and Hitchcock all held some notion of 'original sin'. (On Schopenhauer's and Hitchcock's understanding of it, see "San Francisco, Hitchcock, and Me", in 'MacGuffin' 1.)

49. Caine, V, vi.

50. Kenneth Clark, 'Civilisation' (1969), p. 115. Clark, though he notes the considerable range of Giorgione's subjects, ends up describing him as representative 'of the new pessimism - new, because without the comfort of religion - that was to be given final expression by Hamlet' (p. 116).

51. Caine, II, xxiii. This incident forms part of the Sulby Glen episode.

52. You think also of the scene in **Vertigo** where Madeleine/Judy stands on the shore of San Francisco Bay, plucking flowers from a posy and strewing them on the water below, before finally she leaps in herself ...

53. Cf Yacowar, p. 94 and p. 96. I think Yacowar is unjustly hard on Caesar, whom he calls 'the most malicious, craven, unattractive character in the film'.
54. Sloan, p. 74, significantly mistakes the social worker for Mrs Cregeen.

55. As I remarked apropos **Vertigo** in 'MacGuffin' 17, Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936), a Schopenhauerian, and one of the great dramatists/writers depicting themes of suffering and appearance-versus-reality, is an advocate of compassion ...

Notes for "Their Way: Hitchcock's 'Spellbound' (1945)" - carried over from 'MacGuffin' 15

73. Brandon in **Rope** and Gavin Elster in **Vertigo** represent, respectively, a would-be, but twisted, Nietzschean 'Superman' and a debased, mercantile Faust. Both pursue their own, perverted notions of **unbridled** power. (Mind you, Hitchcock thought that, ultimately, 'everything's perverted in a different way' - a highly Schopenhauerian idea.) One instructive text with which to study the 'castration' theme in Hitchcock's films is Yukio Mishima's 'The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea' (1966). Its young, self-described 'genius' (cf Brandon) thinks that a father is 'a reality-concealing machine', someone who betrays the 'glory' represented by the sea, and therefore is himself deserving of literal castration, or worse ...

74. Britton, p. 78.

75. Ibid.

76. 'Hurry up and get yourself another fella'? Surely not.

77. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', p. 265.

78. See Beeding, Chapter Eleven, for the scene between Murchison and Constance that most resembles their showdown in the film. Murchison's desk, as at some other points in the novel, here plays an integral part.

79. Britton, p. 77.

80. May Romm was one of Los Angeles's top psychiatrists, whose patients included David Selznick. See Leff, pp. 115-16. As for the matter of Dr Edwardes, the novel, Chapter Six, notes that he 'had set his face against the method of Freud' ...

81. What could be more 'Schopenhauerian' than these subjective-shots which keep reminding us that the ultimate knowable reality is referable to us, is in our own heads? Cf **The Birds**, where a frightened mother addresses the camera and says she thinks **we** are 'evil - the cause of all this'. Of course, unknowingly, and yet quite properly, she is also addressing Will itself, the Will that flows though each of us, the blind Will that causes all suffering. Both ways, the fault **is** 'in ourselves' - and the effect that Hitchcock achieves with such an accusation directed at the audience is the more unsettling for striking to the very core of a paradox, one whereby our **intellectual** separation from the Will which is in us merely compounds the alleged evil. (Here, Hitchcock approaches Kafka, shorn of the specific apparatus of the State. Cf some of my remarks on **The Wrong Man**, in 'MacGuffin' 6.)

82. This unpleasant-sounding moment is certainly not in prints of **Spellbound** shown on Australian TV.

83. A word about detachment. My yoga teacher, Shri Yogendra, emphasised to his students the importance of detachment. But I recognise that it's much more of a major goal in the East than in the West. Edmund White, Chapter Six, has a fascinating passage on Hinayana Buddhism and how an 'emptying out' or 'annihilation' is what the life-seeking Christian most dreads - whereas it's what the Buddhist would most earnestly crave 'if craving itself were not precisely what must be extirpated'. In Hitchcock's case, I think he used his art-cum-sublimation to both have his cake and eat it: cf my remarks in 'MacGuffin' 12, p.5, on how his (Buddha-like!) detachment was probably a powerful factor in freeing his 'negative capability'. A corollary of this observation is how the films themselves may be seen, very often, to both give the viewer more 'life' and yet, simultaneously, mock it. Thus **North by Northwest** ends with Eve Kendall's remark, 'Oh, Roger, this is silly!' and his reply, 'I know, but I'm sentimental' - where 'sentimental' may be read as a euphemism for 'libidinous' ...

84. Dopagne, in his Introduction, speaks of Dali as having been a child prodigy 'deprived of his real personality' - leading to 'his deep-seated exhibitionism, his dandyism, his urge for depersonalisation ...'. **Hitchcock**'s dandyism is described in Thomas Elsaesser's "The Dandy in Hitchcock", in 'MacGuffin' 14.

85. **Marienbad**, of course, acknowledges Hitchcock in an early scene where the director of **Spellbound** and **Vertigo** may be glimpsed as a cardboard effigy in the hotel's foyer. (Presumably a Hitchcock film was going to be shown to the guests.)

Notes for "Engendering the Truth about 'Vertigo'" - carried over from 'MacGuffin' 17

60. Ibid, p. 129. 61. Ibid. 62. Ibid, p. 145. 63. Ibid, p. 177. 64. Ibid, p. 178. 65. Ibid, p. 189. 66. Ibid, p. 192. 67. Ibid.

68. Ibid, pp. 198, 203. 69. Ibid, p. 196. 70. Ibid, p. 202. 71. Ibid. 72. Ibid. 73. Ibid, p. 203. 74. Ibid, p. 215. 75. Ibid, p. 217.

76. "Engendering ...", p. 37.

77. In a separate article, "Murder in a Small Town", in this issue of 'The MacGuffin', I comment about the admired British detective- and crime-story writer, A.B. Cox/'Francis Iles' (1893-1970), that one of his perennial subjects was the extreme rarity of a happy marriage. Hitchcock filmed Iles's 'Before the Fact' as **Suspicion** (1941), and directed a radio dramatisation of his 'Malice Aforethought' in 1945.

78. Jacobi, p. 124. **Mutatis mutandis** re **Vertigo**, of course. See also notes 80 and 81 below.

79. For **Vertigo**'s 'historical' context, in a fairly literal sense of the term, see Robert J. Corber, 'In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Postwar America' (1993), Chapter 5 - and my review of it in this 'MacGuffin'.

80. Simenon, p. 182. Is this 'Wagnerian' at all? Cf 'MacGuffin' 11.

81. This last matter seems to me to invite an analogy between the cinema experience (which, regardless of its particular content, always needs someone to switch the film projector on and off) and the indeterminate objectivity/subjectivity (that condition to which we're all subject!) of our experience generally. If that sounds 'vertiginous', just remember that only in 'the world of eternity' are 'all the opposites ... transcended'!

82. "Engendering ...", p. 43. 83. Ibid, p. 31.

84. Corber, p. 173, has a theory - discussed elsewhere in this 'MacGuffin' - that at the start of **Vertigo** Scottie 'simultaneously fears and desires ... relinquishing his duties as an officer of the law'. Poague could tell you that for much of **It's A Wonderful Life** Stewart is already playing a very discontented fellow indeed. But I think perhaps the best parallel to

draw concerning Scottie's situation in **Vertigo** is with that of John Robie (Cary Grant) in **To Catch a Thief** (1955) - someone else who was once good, indeed the best, in his chosen field, but who is afterwards forced to live in exile from his former haunts until circumstances summon him back for a second chance to prove himself and clear his name.

85. "Engendering ...", p. 44.

86. For more about a desire to escape (the restrictions and suffering in) the world, see 'MacGuffin' 11. There, I note such a theme in Poe - who was another mother-obsessed artist ...

87. Cf 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 10 (re an aspect of Cavell's discussion of **North by Northwest** in 'A Hitchcock Reader', 1986, co-edited by Leland Poague).

88. "Engendering ...", p. 50. 89. Ibid, p. 46.

90. Cavell, quoted by Poague in "Engendering ...", p. 21. Adrian Martin's 1993 article on **Notorious** (which I once enthused about to Poague in a leter), itself noted how that Hitchcock film of 1946 combined motifs described by Cavell and Rothman in relation to the genres of 'remarriage comedy' and 'the melodrama of the unknown woman'. See Martin, p. 17 (and cf note 14 above).

91. Poague writes: 'Though Cavell avows a specific loyalty to the transcendental romanticism of Emerson and Thoreau, it is his general claim that romanticism - as represented by such as Descartes and Kant and Rousseau and Nietzsche (in philosophy) and Shakespeare and Coleridge and Poe and Kleist (in literature) - fully anticipates the critique of culture undertaken more recently in the work of (in the names of) Marx and Freud, Lacan and Derrida.' ("Engendering ...", p. 19) Cf my own 'specific loyalty' to Schopenhauer (and to my training in yoga, incorporating elements of both East and West, under Shri Vijayadev Yogendra) which seems to me so relevant to a full appreciation of (the works of) Hitchcock and Dickens, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Freud and Jung, Lacan and (God help us) Slavoj Zizek. Re that last pairing, see my review of Zizek's 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)', in 'MacGuffin' 10, pp. 3-13.

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Recent 'MacGuffins' have featured **Vertigo** (number 17), **Foreign Corespondent** (16), **Spellbound** (15), Thomas Elsaesser on "The Dandy in Hitchcock" (14), **Young and Innocent** (13), **The Paradine Case** (12), **Vertigo** (11), **Notorious** (10), **The Lady Vanishes** (9), and **Torn Curtain** (8). These are the issues most recommended.

ODD SPOT: 'THE BIRDS' FOR REAL

According to an item on the Internet, only two Bodega Bay buildings used in Hitchcock's **The Birds** (1963) still stand: the old Potter Schoolhouse, which had been slated for demolition when Hitchcock came on it, and the farmhouse of the farmer who was pecked to death.

The other farmhouse, the home of the Brenners in the film, was rented by the filmmakers from a Rose Gaffney. It was actually just an old shack for which the film crew fabricated a facade and added out-buildings. Unfortunately these structures burnt down in the late '60s.

Bodega Bay is north of San Francisco. But the real-life genesis of Hitchcock's film, it appears, dates back to an incident in 1961 at the small coastal town of Rio del Mar, near Santa Cruz, south of San Francisco. After hordes of crazed birds had pecked eight people, smashed into houses and cars, and staggered around vomiting pieces of anchovy over lawns, the local newspaper received a call for clippings from Hitchcock, who was living in nearby Scotts Valley at the time. Apparently he'd just read Daphne du Maurier's short story 'The Birds' while researching possible material for the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series on TV ...

Footnote. Dr David Garrison, a marine biologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz, recently isolated a poisonous algae in the corpses of hundreds of dead birds that had become 'intoxicated' after gorging on algae-infected anchovies in nearby Monterey Bay in 1991. He points out that the 1961 incident at Rio del Mar occurred at the right time for such algae to have been 'blooming'.

For further information: (1) http://www.bodegabay.com/features/birds.html; (2) 'Fortean Times' (UK), October/November, 1995, p. 10.

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