Newsletter of the Film/Alfred Hitchcock Special Interest Group

# The MacGuffin

Issue No. 8 November 1992/February 1993 ISSN 1035-9001 $US5 £2.50

## LETTERS

(Sorry, everyone, about again skipping a publication date. And 'Radek Reviews' is held over. Meanwhile, we start this bumper issue, which includes a piece on composer Bernard Herrmann and another on Hitchcock's **Torn Curtain**, with the following thoughts from our readers. Good viewing - Ken.)

Christine Davis, Richmond, Victoria, Australia

One of the inexhaustible delights of Hitchcock is that he is such a movable feast; one's favourite Hitchcock constantly changes as one moves through life and films, valuing first one kind of style and representation and then another.

I have always been very fond of **Notorious** and still think it is a very classy film with beautiful depth to its images and very fine central performances. I'm also very fond of **Shadow of a Doubt** because Hitch's representation of small town life, while a parody, is full of warmth and charming detail in the characterisations. Joseph Cotten's Uncle Charlie remains my favourite Hitchcock villain with his handsome face and laconically brutal manner, especially in his famous speech at the dinner table on the just desserts of 'vain, silly women'. In these films Hitchcock and his material seem in perfect accord.

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Adrian Martin, Brighton, Victoria, Australia

I continue to enjoy 'The MacGuffin'. I have a particular fondness for the book reviews, which I think are simultaneously fair, scrupulous and necessarily critical. You have a good way of not just pinpointing the deficiencies of a method but also constructively suggesting what more could be spun out from the author's insights. I also had a lot of time for your discussion of **Suspicion** ['MacGuffin' 7] - which made a lot of sense of what has always been, to me, a frustratingly elliptical and somewhat puzzling Hitchcock movie.

(Editor's note. Adrian's letter supplied an answer to a question posed in these pages as long ago as our first issue. He suggests that the film cited in Chris Marker's **Sans Soleil/Sunless** as referring to the Muir Woods scene in Hitchcock's **Vertigo** is, appropriately, Alain Robbe-Grillet's **L'Immortelle**.)

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Kari Hanet, Head, Screen Studies, Australian Film, Television & Radio School, North Ryde, NSW, Australia

[Regarding] Hitchcock studies at AFTRS, we use his films in a variety of ways, for instance for courses in the use of music in film, for editing courses, and screen analysis classes dealing with various aspects of narrative construction.

(Editor's note. I thank Kari Hanet for this response to our call for information about how Hitchcock is being taught in academia - see also our past couple of issues. Incidentally, several of our readers will remember how Ms Hanet helped promote to English-speaking film scholars the innovative work on Hitchcock done by Frenchman Raymond Bellour, notably the latter's 115-page analysis of **North by Northwest**.)

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## NEWS

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

### A Dietrich legacy

A glorious ruby and diamond bracelet worn by Marlene Dietrich in the garden party scene of Hitchcock's **Stage Fright** (1950) was sold recently at a New York Sotheby's auction for over a million dollars. The bracelet, designed for Dietrich by writer Erich Maria Remarque in Paris in 1937, was her favourite piece of jewellery. She put it up for sale a year ago, shortly before she died in poverty, aged 90. The funds will go to her only daughter and family.

Meanwhile, the daughter, now 68, has published 'Marlene Dietrich', containing many revelations about her mother's endless suitors and admirers. For instance, we're told that Dietrich fell for her supporting actor on **Stage Fright**, Michael Wilding, after learning that he had 'a medical affliction that marshalled all of her protective powers. They became lovers quickly and remained so for quite a long time.'

And Donald Spoto's 'Dietrich' has also appeared, to some acclaim. Spoto spends several pages on **Stage Fright** ('a typically Hitchcockian reflection on romantic illusion') and reveals that Dietrich's contributions extended even to the screenplay. She suggested the film's first words - 'Johnny, you do love me, don't you? Say that you love me!' - and the audience hears her voice before it sees her (a great tease, Dietrich thought).

### Publications, new and forthcoming

At least three of the contributors to the recent inaugural issue of 'The Hitchcock Annual', published in the US, are writing books on The Master. Tom Cohen's book will be a study of language in Hitchcock. Professor Sidney Gottlieb is preparing a long examination of Hitchcock's early work and kissing-scenes throughout the director's films. David Sterritt's book on six Hitchcock films is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press. (Subscriptions to 'The Hitchcock Annual' cost $5 US for individuals or institutions, $6 US overseas. The impressive first issue has 169 pages, by the way. Write to: P.O. Box 540, Gambier, Ohio 43022.)

Meanwhile, several more Hitchcock books have appeared. Theodore Price's 'Hitchcock and Homosexuality' (Scarecrow Press, $49.50 US, hardcover only) focuses on four recurrent themes: the homosexuality theme, the father/daughter theme, the Jack the Ripper theme, and the influence of the netherworld-sex films of the Weimar era in Germany. Stefan Sharff's 'Alfred Hitchcock's High Vernacular' (Columbia University Press, $32.50 US, hardcover) analyses three Hitchcock films - though not always to the satisfaction of Leland Poague, who reviewed it for 'Film Quarterly'. And Robert E. Kapsis's 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (University of Chicago Press, $16.95 US, paperback) continues its author's methodical investigation of the complex ways in which artistic reputations are made and evaluated. (Brian De Palma and Clint Eastwood receive some attention towards the end of the book.)

Father Neil P. Hurley's 'The Soul in Suspense: Catholic/Jesuit Influences on Hitchcock' (Scarecrow Press) is due in April. It will demonstrate Hitchcock's covert preoccupation with spiritual themes, including conscience, guilt, crises as catalysts of character development, the salvation of nations, and an especial emphasis on the 'unjustly accused'. On what constitutes life's meaning here and hereafter the book evokes Paul Tillich's 'source of ultimate concern'.

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We mentioned last time that the British Film Institute are publishing 360 monographs on individual films - starting with the titles 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Double Indemnity', 'Went the Day Well?' and 'Stagecoach'. Two Hitchcock titles listed as forthcoming are 'Vertigo' by Tim Hunter and 'Blackmail' by Tom Ryall. US readers wanting more information should contact Customer Service, Indiana University Press, 601 N. Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47404-3797.

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Here's another recommendation. Just out, and containing some excellent serious writing on film and TV, is Vol. 5, No. 2 of 'Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture'. It's a special issue on "Film - Matters of Style", guest-edited by Adrian Martin. Individual copies cost $12.50 Australian for persons, $22.50 Australian for institutions. Overseas rates are in US dollars. Write to: Centre for Research in Culture & Communication, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA, 6150, Australia. ('The MacGuffin' hopes to review this special issue later.)

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The British Mensa Film SIG has been resurrected and publishes a newsletter, 'Zoetrope', whenever (a) there's sufficient material, and (b) editor Jane Pitt has time to throw it all together. (Know how you feel, Jane.) Our respective publications will swap material from time to time.

## Strange about 'Strangers'

The 1993 edition of Leonard Maltin's 'Movie & Video Guide' gives the standard British and US running time of **Strangers on a Train** (1951), 101 minutes. But Maltin's new entry for the film concludes as follows: 'British version of film, now shown on US cable TV, runs almost two minutes longer, [and] has a different ending and franker dialogue in the first scene where [Farley] Granger and [Robert] Walker meet.' One wonders if cable TV will now also restore some of the cuts which trimmed 16 minutes from the original 132 minutes of **The Paradine Case** (1947), i.e. before a party scene and other material went missing.

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## BOOK REVIEW

Smith, Steven C.: 'A Heart at Fire's Centre: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann' (University of California Press, 1991) - hardcover.

'Benny' Herrmann was born in New York in 1911, the eldest of three Jewish kids from the East Side. Though he soon learned 'tough guy' talk, his application of it afterwards seems often to have been downright crude. When he started attending music classes at New York University and at Juilliard, most of his teachers found him inexcusably abrasive. An exception was the head of the NYU music department, Australian composer Percy Grainger. A man of erratic temperament, Grainger gave classes in folk and ethnic music which alternated lucidity and jumbled mysticism. But Benny saw in him the independence of mind he himself was cultivating. When it turned out that the teacher and his pupil shared a love of Delius's music and Whitman's poetry, a friendship began which would affect the younger man, in particular, for the rest of his life.

However, after reading music and film journalist Steven Smith's fascinating Herrmann biography, I'd suggest that another even more influential figure - paradoxically, not named in the book - was already shaping Benny's destiny: Jean Jacques Rousseau. If ever anyone set out be a true child of the cantankerous Frenchman who advocated the primacy of an authentic inner life, it was Benny. Over the years, several of his acquaintances seem to have sensed some such connection. One day a youthful André Previn came into the MGM commissary and told several amused senior colleagues, 'I met the most amazing guy last night; I really think he should have been born in the eighteenth century'. Everyone immediately knew that he meant Benny.

The point I'm making is central to what follows, and bears elaborating. Benny exemplified what a recent writer has called 'the transcendental pretence', that once-dominant (and dominating) mode of Romantic thought that 'appeared as innocence and common sense but ... embodied a profound arrogance that ... prohibited mutual understanding, and belied human diversity'.[1] For the implications of this concerning Bernard Herrmann's music, just read on.

Smith has interviewed approximately 100 people who knew Benny, and he quotes many of them verbatim. The

book also gives succinct descriptions of each of the composer's principal pieces and scores. The general idea is that the man and the works should illuminate each other. In fact, emphasis falls on the latter, not just because the music has more lasting significance but because it's what Benny himself put first. For instance, he was a 'workaholic'. The day of his first marriage, to young CBS receptionist and later successful scriptwriter, Lucille Fletcher, he took an hour off at lunchtime for the ceremony, then returned to his own desk at CBS as if nothing had happened.

Incidentally, I think some reviewers of Smith's book, like Michael Chanan in 'Sight & Sound' (November 1991), who seem peeved by its lack of extended musical analysis (as distinct from succinct description), have missed the point. There are separate books and articles on Benny's film scores (notably by Graham Bruce and Royal Brown respectively), whereas Smith allows us, virtually for the first time, to understand the composer and the music **together**.

Back to what the book contains. More or less at random, I recall the following. Benny's boyhood friendship with future film director Abraham Polonsky (whom, sadly, he failed to lend his support at the time of the HUAC hearings). His CBS boss Norman Corwin expressing respect for Benny's professional standards but disappointment at his non-interest in political activity. Benny's prodigious reading except of what he called 'intellectual stuff' like philosophy and mathematics. His Anglophilia, even to the point of his joining an exclusive London club which he rarely visited. His enjoyment of his radio (later, film) work for Orson Welles, including his repeated droll quoting during a production of 'A Tale of Two Cities' of Berlioz's 'March to the Scaffold', and an equally droll minor-key use of 'The Bonnie Banks of Scotland' during 'The Thirty-nine Steps'. His inept singing voice. His irrational 1948 declaration that he'd 'never do a movie again' (this, after a disastrous appearance as a guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic and his divorce from Lucille, two events which plunged him into a self-described 'dark night of the soul'). A game which he and Alfred Hitchcock played while washing dishes at the director's house, in which the two men nominated what they'd like to have been outside of the movies: Benny's answer, 'an English publican', and Hitchcock's, 'a hanging judge'. Benny's refusal to score Kubrick's **Lolita** (1962) when told he'd have to include a brief melody by Kubrick's brother-in-law. How by the time a production was mounted in 1970 of Benny's overly glum musical, 'The King of Schnorrers' (lyrics by Diane Lampert, libretto by Shimon Wincelberg), none of its creators was on speaking terms. And one more instance of the composer's drollery: how for a scene in Larry Cohen's **It's Alive!** (1974), in which a Carnation milkman is bloodily murdered in the back of his delivery truck, Benny cued it as 'The Milkman Goeth' ...

Benny himself left us in 1975. The subject of death had long been a Romantic preoccupation of his, and of course he had often spun musical fantasies about it; especially so, in his work for Welles and Hitchcock. For some reason, his collaboration with those directors brought out the statistician in everyone. In 1985 Welles said that Herrmann's music was '50% responsible' for the artistic success of **Citizen Kane** (1941); Hitchcock had already conceded that '33% of the effect of **Psycho** [1960] was due to the music'; and Benny had said in 1975 that Hitchcock 'only finishes a picture 60%. I have to finish it for him.' (Until his death, Benny hoped to resume the collaboration with Hitchcock which had been ruptured by their falling out over the score for **Torn Curtain** in 1966. Sadly, Smith shows that such hope remained largely only on Benny's side.)

But whatever its exact measure, clearly we're talking about the work of a near-genius. I have to use that term because the only person in the book who doesn't qualify 'genius' when applying it to Benny is Burt Lancaster, whose first film as a director, **The Kentuckian** (1955), Benny scored. As we've seen, the composer himself admitted to self-doubts when his career faltered on more than one occasion. Perhaps as qualified as anyone to make a considered judgment in this matter is Elmer Bernstein, a Herrmann protégé. His verdict? Simply that Benny was 'the greatest ostinato writer who ever lived'. (Michael Chanan defines ostinato as 'a short repeated musical figure frequently found in accompaniments in classical music'.) In other words, what Benny lacked musically were certain conventional attributes, like the ability to write sustained melody and counterpoint; he could also be a lazy conductor and a careless judge of his own performances. On the other hand, he was a **great** screen composer and a fierce exponent of musical individualism, not necessarily his own. He championed the work of Charles Ives (1874-1954), with its use of atonality and frequent resort to American folk idioms, because he immediately recognised that here was a valid 'voice' asking to be heard. After Benny wrote an article in 1945 that thoughtfully analysed Ives's four symphonies, the older man responded, 'You instinctively sense the innate something beneath the music, up from which it comes'. You would have to award points to Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Romantic notions of genius, after that comment.

Importantly, such comments are still heard. Wagner authority Bryan Magee has written of the German composer that in Act I of 'The Valkyrie', 'for the first time in his work, [he] hit the gusher to the unconscious'.[2] My point is, this line of thinking returns us to what Professor Robert Solomon describes (and condemns) as 'the transcendental pretence':

> Fully developed, the transcendental pretence has two central components: first, the remarkable inner richness and expanse of the self, ultimately encompassing everything; and secondly, the consequent right to project from the subjective structures of one's own mind, and ascertain the nature of humanity as such.[3]

There's surely a clue here as to why Herrmann and others (like Grainger and Ives) were so comfortable with researching and borrowing from various musical folk idioms. The lonely genius might be more a man of the people than the rest of us. But equally, you can see why Benny was so well suited to score the 'expressionist' work of filmmakers like Welles, Brahm and Hitchcock. About the latter, Benny himself said that he and Hitchcock shared 'a great unanimity of ideas'.

Undoubtedly it's nice when your own intuitions sometimes seem confirmed. Running through Smith's book is a small motif involving Charles Dickens's ghost story, 'A Christmas Carol'. In 1930, on Christmas Eve, Benny was entranced as he listened to Abraham Polonsky's sister, Charlotte, read to him. As he later confided to his diary, 'I was carried away to a fog ridden London street and the room of old Scrooge ... an age which will never return save through our imagination and Dickens'. Probably Benny himself had chosen that particular tale as fitting the occasion, for even when still a boy he'd been captivated by evocations of bustling, foggy London in writers like Dickens and Conan Doyle. And naturally he was delighted when, in 1938, Orson Welles's Mercury Players decided to perform 'A Christmas Carol' on the radio with an ideally cast Lionel Barrymore. The best moments of the resulting score, says Smith, were the dark and oppressive bits, especially those concerning Marley's ghost and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come ... Sixteen years later, Benny got to do yet another adaptation of the tale, this time for television, with Frederic March playing Scrooge. However, what I find most significant here is that the lyrics of this musical version were written by playwright Maxwell Anderson, just two years before he and Benny collaborated on Hitchcock's **The Wrong Man** (1957) - which I've already described in 'MacGuffin' 6 as being in the vein of 'A Christmas Carol' and 'Bleak House' (also by Dickens), and full of ghostly watchers. Moreover, I was intrigued to read in Smith's book that someone else had noted part of the same parallel. A year after **The Wrong Man** came out, Benny sent Hitchcock a review from Australia (of all places) with the following passage underlined: 'The film is a certainty for our 10-best list for 1957 ... The gaunt sound-track ... is a series of plucked low notes from the musician's own double-bass, always in a rhythm to suggest footfalls of a ghost ...' (The exact source of the review isn't given but may be the estimable 'Film Journal', sadly long vanished.)

I cite the above motif from Smith's book both because it gives an insight into the nature of Benny's mental furniture and because it seems to support my intuition about how a certain 'English expressionism' operates in Hitchcock's 1957 film. Those ghostly footsteps say something about the unexamined **inner** life of the film's protagonist called Manny. In turn, they invite our further consideration of the transcendental pretence. If the latter **is** just a pretence, why is it that for some observers artists like Herrmann and Hitchcock really do seem to commune with an 'innate something' that is not the normal self, and what is its relation to notions of the Unconscious? Isn't there indeed room at this point for a trans-personal element to enter the picture?

I've several thoughts on this. First, I don't think it's sufficient explanation to say that Romantics are like children who haven't outgrown the cosy 'individualism' that Jacques Lacan calls the Imaginary (where anything may seem possible) in order to enter into the more restricted, 'socialised' world of mature adults (cf. Lacan's Symbolic) -[4] though that has to be part of the answer. In other words, that such people are merely fooling both themselves and their followers. Second, a masterwork like Hitchcock's and Herrmann's **Vertigo** (1958) contains its own profound questioning (notably, in the character of Scottie) of issues concerning both the transcendental pretence and notions of the self. Third, as Bryan Magee has shown, referring to Wagner (and Schopenhauer), this whole contentious area requires humility because it extends from measurable, phenomenal issues to unknowable, noumenal ones (cf. Kant's thing-in-itself and Lacan's Real).

Speaking of ghosts, then ... many modern philosophers and semiologists contend that there's no ultimate Self and no universal Unconscious - only an endless concatenation of binary opposites that allows the **illusion** of a self.[5] And perhaps any number of other illusions. Even so, let's not forget how notions of both a personal and a 'transcendental' self existed long before Rousseau (e.g. in Eastern thought) - they weren't just an eighteenth century invention. Also, you have to ask: apart from the conscious mind, what holds in suspension and helps keep track of all the binary opposites and/or their related concepts? I fancy that some belief in a (largely unconscious and even in some way a collective) Self may prove to be as insuppressible as speculation about what came before the 'Big Bang'. Of course, Kant's/Schopenhauer's idealist explanation of the mind and its 'categories' should probably remind us that all such speculation is futile. But - the important point here - I don't think that invalidates the **art** of a Herrmann or a Hitchcock.

Neither of those artists claimed to be a philosopher. Rather, their 'expressionist' concerns simply led them to a point where the phenomenal world comes up against the noumenal - whereupon they gave expression to the feelings of mystery and yearning such an encounter nearly always arouses. (Moreover, they did it better than most artists. Parallels drawn by Smith and others between **Vertigo** and Wagner's 'Tristan and Isolde' are surely justified, although it's still unclear to me whether such parallels were actually mooted during the making and scoring of the film.) These days you read psychoanalytic theories of music that refer to its evoking the sound of the mother's voice or of the womb, i.e. an Imaginary (or pre-Symbolic) time.[6] Such 'explanations' desist from confronting the noumenal realm, as they steadfastly say nothing about what 'inspires' one artist more than another. Somehow, you feel that they would have aroused nothing but the contempt of Benny Herrmann.

Just occasionally, Smith errs. I spotted the following. Larry Cohen's **It's Alive!** takes an exclamation mark - I put it back when I cited the film before. It's questionable whether a repetitiveness in the score of **Marnie** (1964) prevents it 'from ranking with Herrmann's best work for Hitchcock'; on the contrary, the repetition is most expressive and is linked to Marnie's own repetition-compulsion/death instinct (as briefly analysed in 'MacGuffin' 7).[7] What Smith calls 'the "madhouse" theme' in **Psycho** may indeed hark back to Herrmann's own 1935 'Sinfonietta for Strings' and forward to **Taxi Driver** (1976), as well as echoing the third movement of Bartók's 'Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta' (1936) - but the latter work is **not** alluded to in the **Psycho** novel: the Bartók music that Sam Loomis listens to there is the 'Concerto for Orchestra' (1943). As for Smith's claim that Hitchcock tried to **reduce** Herrmann's **Psycho** fee of $17,500, that contradicts Stephen Rebello's contention in 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' that 'so pleased was the parsimonious director by Herrmann's score that he did the unheard of: he nearly doubled the composer's salary - to $34,501'.

Anyway, the most important thing about 'A Heart at Fire's Centre' (the title comes from the English poet Stephen Spender) is that it gives you a clear picture of both a very gifted, if truculent, man and of his work. And, yes, of a man who still addresses you **through** that work with such directness that - like Rousseau, like Wagner - he seems to call in question how these so-called 'sociopaths' could really be the pretenders our age alleges. I can recommend this book to anyone.

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Notes

1. Robert C. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self' (1988), p. 1.

2. B. Magee, 'The Philosophy of Schopenhauer' (1983), p. 334.

3. Solomon, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

4. Steven Connor in his stimulating book 'Charles Dickens' (1985) sees Dickens's later novels as incorporating a tension between Imaginary and Symbolic outlooks. As a result of such tension, Connor suggests, Dickens had to become something of a 'deconstructionist' before his time.

5. Cf. Kaja Silverman: 'we cannot attribute to the unconscious a prelapsarian or "archaic" status; preconscious and unconscious develop through mutual tension, a tension which is introduced through language and which reflects the larger cultural order'. K. Silverman, 'The Subject of Semiotics' (1983), pp. 73-74.

6. For instance, see Claudia Gorbman, 'Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music' (1987), pp. 62-63. 'The mother's voice', Gorbman writes on p. 63, 'is central in constituting the auditory imaginary, before and also after the child's entry into the symbolic. From this - and even from earlier auditory perceptions and hallucinations - musical pleasure may be explained.' Well and good, although I note that this account of the source of music's appeal is relatively unsophisticated in that it doesn't bother to refer to any actual tension between Imaginary and Symbolic or preconscious and unconscious. Gorbman even proceeds to observe that music's 'freedom from linguistic signification and from representation of any kind' renders it able to provide 'easier access to the unconscious' (p. 63). Meanwhile, Schopenhauer's metaphysic of Will (the noumenal) and Representation (the phenomenal), and even his equation of music and Will (see article on **Torn Curtain** in this 'MacGuffin'), look to me to be quite as useful for understanding the art of a Herrmann or a Hitchcock as any single theory going. Frankly, I think Schopenhauer's ideas are superior in that respect.

7. What I should have done in the last 'MacGuffin', but overlooked, was to connect my comments on repetition and death in **Marnie** with my comments on similar matters in **Suspicion** (1941). Both films depict ladies clutching Freudian purses who make repeated efforts to free themselves from the fears that haunt them, but who perhaps never really succeed in their attempts. Note, by the way, that the children's rhyme in **Marnie** about 'the lady with the alligator purse' does indeed represent a child's emancipation from the fear of death, as I pointed out, but that such emancipation is only temporary. So it's perhaps no wonder that Marnie looks enviously/sadly (the look is ambiguous) at the children who sing the rhyme outside her mother's house, which she visits after each of her repeated robbery attempts. Those happily playing children are going to grow up.

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## COMING ATTRACTIONS

The sources of **Vertigo**; Adrian Martin on "'Poor Alex': A Reading of **Notorious**"; book reviews (e.g. 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films'); a new column from Australia; a list of contents for issues 5-8. Plus 'News', 'Radek Reviews', etc. Additional items always wanted.

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## Not An Editorial

Himself as everything! How does Mrs Fichte put up with it?

- Heinrich Heine

At least one reviewer has found William Rothman's book on Hitchcock ('Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze', 1982) to be absurdly arrogant.[1] But then, I sometimes think it's the logic of Hitchcock's films to practically invite such arrogance. Most obviously, **Vertigo** (1958) addresses itself to the notion that the universe has a key which will unlock all ultimate mysteries, even of life and death. And while common sense tells us that the notion is obviously Romantic, and can therefore be dismissed, it's perhaps more beguiling than we think. For instance, how purely scientific is the current work of US mathematician and cosmologist, Frank Tipler, who is reported to be using computers to simulate the Resurrection of the Dead?[2]

Then again, maybe 'romantic' - small 'r' - comes closer to describing **Vertigo**'s appeal, especially to males. In 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films: From **Rope** to **Vertigo**' (1991) a contributor notes that at Stanford University,

> located as it is in the heart of **Vertigo** country, it has become something of a running joke that virtually all visiting European male academics between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five will at

> some point during their stay express a furtive but burning wish to be taken to see either San Juan Bautista or the Mission Dolores. The proximity of these pilgrimage sites, it always turns out, was a primary reason for their interest in Stanford.[3]

Here's the point I wish to make. Whether your acknowledged main interest in **Vertigo** is philosophic or erotic or something else - perhaps a seemingly simple matter of suspense - your involvement is probably related to what's been called 'the transcendental pretence', and is therefore potentially arrogant. In other words, I'm suggesting that anyone who watches **Vertigo** comes to feel, almost from the credits sequence onwards, that ultimate meaning not only may exist but can be subjectively arrived at.

I can fairly quickly illustrate what I mean. The poet Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834) once penned the line, 'The dread watch-tower of the absolute self'. For comparison, here's how a recent book, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self' (1988) defines a crucial notion in much serious thinking after Descartes: 'the transcendental self was nothing less than God, the Absolute Self, the World Soul'.[4] That is, the transcendental self was the world within, and the transcendental pretence was the assumption that absolute meaning resides there. Accordingly, you can readily see how the church tower which figures so centrally in **Vertigo**, and which the character Scottie finally climbs, may be rather more than a phallic symbol. The tower does have a phallic meaning, but that, I suggest, is mainly because it **subsumes** a whole host of meanings that have been accruing since Scottie started trailing the mysterious Madeleine (later Judy) to parts of San Francisco, including to his own home near Coit Tower - which the screenplay indeed assigns a phallic significance.[5]

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Anyway, let the reader be warned. Your editor is more than likely another arrogant fellow who not only once made his own devout pilgrimage to San Juan Bautista and the Mission Dolores (see 'MacGuffin' 1) but now consistently alludes in these pages to ultimate meaning in various guises - by which I mean entities like Nirvana, Kant's thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer's Will. It's that arrogance (and the propaganda for the transcendental pretence it most likely embodies) that I want to address in the remainder of this article.

Take especially the whole matter of Schopenhauer. Why, if not from arrogance, do I keep riding that apparent hobby-horse of mine in public? In a newsletter about movies? True, our first issue did quote Professor Don Cupitt (BBC-TV) on how Schopenhauer's influence on literature and the cinema has been considerable. And I did remark on that occasion how I felt I had detected many parallels, of both temperament and thought, between Schopenhauer and Hitchcock. Naturally those parallels have taken time to explicate; in fact, there are several more of them featured in this issue.

But I'm not altogether going to deny the implied charge. For reasons going beyond any Schopenhauer-Hitchcock connection, I'm happy to give weight in these pages to a philosopher who figures prominently in the aforementioned book (by Professor Robert Solomon) designed to identify and expose the transcendental pretence. Something tells me that Schopenhauer still sees the world not only more incisively but more 'in broad' than most of us, and that includes most film critics.[6] I especially admire his insistence, tinged with compassion, on the primacy and pervasiveness of suffering, at all levels of the animal kingdom:

> A quick test of the assertion that enjoyment outweighs pain in this world, or that they are at any rate balanced, would be to compare the feelings of an animal eating another with those of the animal being eaten.[7]

It's typical of Schopenhauer to see that. Yet most of us, I'm afraid, tend to deny the fact of such suffering whenever we 'decently' can. As H. L. Mencken once wrote: 'The human mind always tries to expunge the intolerable from memory, just as it tries to conceal it while current.'[8]

But that raises my next point which - please note - brings us back to Hitchcock. For I think similar insights concerning suffering run through many of the director's best films, whether you cite the reverberations of Marion's line in **Psycho** about headaches being like resolutions ('you forget them as soon as they stop hurting'), or the likely avian motivation of **The Birds** (as indicated by the little lecture Hitchcock gives in that film's memorable trailer), or the suggestive 'zoological' motif in **Marnie** (including a reference to the aptly-called 'phatic bugs' which live and die in the shape of a flower to avoid detection

by predatory birds) ... Strangely, though, I've never seen such insights considered when critics have used Hitchcock's work as a basis for their surely lop-sided discussions of cinematic 'pleasure'.

What arrogance is here! I mean mine, of course. Not just because I seem to be snubbing some respected critics but because, perhaps even less forgivably, I appear to think that there's real human content out there and that movies by Hitchcock and others can skin our eyes to it. If that isn't exactly the transcendental pretence, isn't it something at least as old-fashioned? Whatever happened to post-modernism? To notions, both critical and aesthetic, that art is really a non-personal affair?[9]

Still, perhaps the matter's more simple. More like a case of our just trying to see each film in the way its director conceived it. In contrast, I think it's undeniable that **some** Hitchcockian criticism is blinkered or under-informed. As 'MacGuffin' 6 noted of **Rebecca** (1940), at the very moment some (feminist) critics are arguing the significance of camera positions and the like in the boathouse scene, the character Maxim (Laurence Olivier) may be literally getting away with murder. Right under those critics' noses.

Now, speaking of the **Rebecca** article,[10] I did rather leave one point hanging. That was the point about how Maxim and his second wife, the film's narrator whom the script calls 'I', end up 'living a lie **together**'. What I meant was that, in seeming to become fully her husband's partner and equal, 'I' starts to share his guilty secret; the 'lie' is the bland face they must show the world. Mind you, it's not exactly clear how much 'I' knows, for everything is shrouded in ambiguity.

For a start, Maxim does not actually admit to killing Rebecca. He tells 'I' an unlikely account of what had happened which nevertheless allows her to exclaim, almost joyfully, 'it was an accident!' In turn it's not clear how much wilful self-deceit on her part is involved in her acceptance of Maxim's account. (Are we perhaps just seeing more of the same childishness she's displayed all along?)[11] Further, there's considerable doubt about the truth of Maxim's version of Rebecca's character. According to him, she had led a thoroughly debauched and perverted life, even after they were married. On the other hand, what we know of his own character also raises doubt: consider, for instance, his notorious temper, his unbending pride, his sexual strictness (so unlike Rebecca's supposed concupiscence and not so very different from the sexual innocence of 'I').

Apart from all this ambiguity, I find the whole situation Schopenhauerian on at least three counts. First, providing deep background to what happens, is a conception of life as endless suffering. The crowning pitiless touch here is Rebecca's cancer; significantly, we learn of this in almost humbling fashion near the end of the film.[12] Then there's the film's picture of wedded life. While the world had seen Maxim's and Rebecca's marriage as made in Heaven, the reality had been what Maxim calls 'a rotten sham' whose partners blamed each other for their ceaseless mutual dissatisfaction and mutual hostility. Neither of them had apparently been prepared to see the slightest merit in the other's attitude. Maxim had regarded Rebecca as no less than 'the Devil', while presumably she had seen him as hopelessly idealistic and repressed. Equally, each partner had been blind to his or her own demerits ...

But if the first marriage had been a sham, what exactly is the second? I take the fact that both marriages are childless to be a sign both of Maxim's initial guilt and of the continuing element of self-deception. (In the novel, Maxim has indeed killed Rebecca, and I've argued before that the film strongly hints at the same thing; 'I' thereby becomes guilty after the fact.) Now we come to a second Schopenhauerian matter. To speak of self-deception is to be reminded again of how people are prone to deny not just their guilt but also their pain, thus rendering themselves unable to change the basic situation. (Maxim's suicide attempt at the start of the film suggests nothing so much as an aberrant fit of sleepwalking.) This state of affairs, alleviated to some extent by love and compassion, is essentially the perennial human condition. Or, as the film's famous line 'We can never go back to Manderley' implies, Paradise Lost. And most of it is the fruit of human wilfulness or ego.

Yet that last observation raises a third Schopenhauerian matter, even more ironic. For if everything that happens in the world is either the fruit of ego or, seen more broadly, of what Schopenhauer calls sheer blind Will, there's a sense in which 'I' in the film is perfectly right to speak of 'an accident'. Sexuality, temper, pride, self-deception - all these and much else constitute Will or its operations. And Will is at least as ungovernable or unaccountable as the waves that pound the coast near Manderley.

Speaking of which ... it's worth noting how the woman's body washed up at Edgecombe, and which Maxim falsely identifies as Rebecca's, provides the film with at least one image of arbitrary life-and-death worthy of **Vertigo**, which contains several such images.

* * *

So **Rebecca** marks a turning-point in Hitchcock's work, a true deepening of his filmic consciousness, which would stand him in good stead, creatively speaking, for the rest of his career. In particular, the film contains in its portrait of Maxim perhaps Hitchcock's first critique of the transcendental pretence. Consider this further observation by Professor Solomon:

> By about 1805 the self was no longer the mere individual human being, standing with others against a hostile world, but had become all-encompassing ... Even as it signalled a radical egalitarianism, and suggested a long-awaited global sensitivity, [the transcendental pretence] also justified unrestricted tolerance for paternalism and self-righteousness - 'the white philosopher's burden'.[13]

The aristocrat Maxim, who runs his estate with a paternal hand which is sterile - the film strongly implies -[14] is in some ways a dangerous person to know. And, yes, arrogant. Not that he's particularly conscious of the fact. For he's also a man of undoubted good intentions and a debonair manner. Of intelligence and charm.

But then, so is Scottie in **Vertigo**. And **Vertigo**, for all its initial inviting of its audience to share the hero's pursuit of a higher truth, becomes before the end the most devastating of Hitchcock's critiques of the transcendental pretence. Strangely enough, the fact of such a critique makes the film even more Schopenhauerian, not less.[15]

* * *

I'm aware of a seeming paradox here. But, in truth, there's no reason why a practitioner of the transcendental pretence, as Schopenhauer and Hitchcock may both have been, shouldn't sincerely criticise the effects of that pretence. And even doubt the validity of the notion itself. However, taking the latter course of action would certainly not be easy. To even raise the possibility might well seem self-destructive. Dare I suggest that, at some level, that's why Kant had to deem the thing-in-itself unknowable? Why Schopenhauer valued so highly the mediating effect of art? And that all of this is what **Vertigo** is ultimately about?[16]

Of course, I can't properly answer such questions. (In the case of Hitchcock, he protects himself as always by investing his film with the essential ambiguity of 'story-telling', and of images.) But at least I've now explained what's involved in saying that Maxim and 'I' end up 'living a lie together'. At the same time, it's become fairly clear that the feminist critics' charges against the paternalistic Maxim are justified - give or take the character's ambiguity. My principal disagreement with those critics is simply that they seldom show us the broader picture.

Now, I realise that those critics probably don't think such a broader picture is showable, short of embarking on some mammoth feat of deconstruction à la Roland Barthes ('S/Z'). But, as I say, I disagree. For one thing, I think there's a major 'pessimisic' tradition in the arts into which Hitchcock's work can be fitted. (Among the many practitioners in that tradition are Wagner, Conrad and Pirandello.) Related to it is expressionism, which is probably the artistic form most suited to convey both the essence and the appearance of things - what Schopenhauer called, respectively, Will and Representation.

Also, and finally, if there's one other thing 'The MacGuffin' has shown lately, it's this. When you're dealing with a director as sophisticated as Hitchcock, a critic should take more than usual care to first grasp the subtleties and allusions the filmmaker actually intended. Not just because otherwise you may find yourself tripped up. But also because too much emphasis on unintentional meanings and contradictions - again the influence of deconstruction - quickly turns texts into mere imitations of each other. And that has rarely been how audiences have experienced Hitchcock's films. They've always sensed the deeply-felt and witty presence of the man. And promptly forgiven him his arrogance.

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Notes

1. William D. Routt, review of Rothman's 'Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze', in 'Filmviews' 131, Melbourne, Autumn 1987, pp. 36-38.

2. Cf. a note to my article on **Suspicion** in 'MacGuffin' 7 (n.8, p. 20), about a newspaper article which had declared that 'human immortality is actually an item on the speculative scientific agenda these days'.

3. Katie Trumpener, "Fragments of the Mirror", in W. Raubicheck and W. Srebnick, 'Hitchcock's Rereleased Films' (1991), p. 188, n. 9.

4. Robert C. Solomon, 'Continental Philosophy Since 1750' (1988), p. 4.

5. The unpublished studio screenplay (Paramount Pictures, 1957) calls Coit Tower 'that remarkable symbol'.

6. Some of Schopenhauer's points in his essay "On Thinking For Yourself" apply as much to film viewers, I suspect, as to readers.

7. A. Schopenhauer, "On the Suffering of the World".

8. Cited in Oliver Sacks, 'Awakenings' (1982), p. 288, n. 8. Even a fine TV programme like 'The Civil War' can barely remind us of the immensity of the phenomenon of suffering as perceived by Schopenhauer. It's all around, and within, us.

9. The notion of a film's - personal - 'tone' applies here. I recall that Robin Wood has somewhere raised that very point in relation to Raymond Bellour's discussion of the 'paternal' professor in **North by Northwest** (1959): Bellour never once pauses to acknowledge the film's implicit criticism of the professor's cynical use of people. I would also mention Professor John Carey's 'The Intellectuals and the Masses' (1992), which criticises the dehumanised view of literature propagated by Derrida et al.

10. It was actually my review of David Bordwell's book, 'Making Meaning', in 'MacGuffin' 6.

11. In particular, there's the moment when, fearful of being chastised by the dreaded Mrs Danvers, 'I' hides the pieces of a broken china Cupid in the back of a drawer.

12. No doubt Mrs Danvers would put a more retributive, almost Old Testament meaning on this final affliction of her beloved Rebecca. Anything than face her own contribution to the world's evil. But she doesn't have that trait to herself in the film.

13. Solomon, op. cit., pp. 4 and 6.

14. This point has been well-covered in recent 'MacGuffins'. For instance, I've mentioned before how Maxim describes his accountant and estate manager, Frank Crawley, as being like 'an old mother hen'. Further implications of sterility are conveyed by the character of Mrs Danvers, who so terrorises 'I' and who, significantly enough, lords it over the domestic staff; and by the initial view 'I' has of Manderley through the car rainshield, which makes the building appear 'spellbound'.

15. The whole ethical side of Schopenhauer's philosophy amounts to a critique of unregenerate human nature, including therefore the effects on the individual and on others of any 'pretence', transcendental or otherwise. Mind you, in view of the point I make at the end of the next paragraph (in the text), and in the next note (n. 16, below), it's worth recalling that even Schopenhauer consoled himself from time to time with a reminder of how 'it's no more necessary for a philosopher to be a saint than it is for a saint to be a philosopher'.

16. Hitchcock once told a BBC interviewer that 'reality is something none of us can stand, at any time'.

## BLOOPERS

There were about the usual number of misspellings and related slips in 'MacGuffin' 7. I'm no Latin scholar, so although the character Johnnie in **Suspicion** should have been called a **puer aeternus** (incidentally, a Jungian term), he got dubbed something slightly different. Nor, apparently, am I much good at French, and the Grande Corniche in **To Catch a Thief** had the feminine 'e' missing from its first word.

Now for the big one. I claimed that the neon profile of Hitchcock seen momentarily through a window in **Rope** was the original of the director's caricature-image that became so familiar to viewers of his '50s and '60s TV shows. In fact, John Russell Taylor, in his official biography, 'Hitch, points out that Hitchcock started doing the caricature of himself back in the '20s (p. 230). Mea culpa - and I trust that's spelt correctly.

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## Submission, containment, liberation: Hitchcock's 'Torn Curtain' (1966)

Michael tried to determine what his own attitude would be if this were America; would he be more willing to risk his life for fellow Americans than for foreigners?
Probably, he thought. Undoubtedly Russians thought more of Russians than they did of East Germans or Poles; it was hopelessly built into the human frame, and too damned bad, but what were you going to do?

- Richard Wormser, 'Torn Curtain' (based on a screenplay by Brian Moore): the bus sequence[1]

For the world is Hell, and men are on the one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it.

- Arthur Schopenhauer, "On the Suffering of the World"[2]

In **Buddhism** the world arises as a consequence of an inexplicable clouding of the heavenly clarity of ... Nirvana after a long period of quietude. Its origin is thus ... fundamentally to be understood in a moral sense, notwithstanding the case has an exact analogy in the ... origin of the sun in an inexplicable primeval streak of mist.

- Ibid

**Torn Curtain** begins as follows. The screen swirls with grey mist. Electronic rumblings are heard. Out of the mist emerges a spurt of flame. The screen divides,[3] so that the flame burns sun-like on the left and, on the right, a succession of faces is seen as if through the mist.[4] The main-titles music starts up - a lurching yet urgent theme of horns and xylophones. The flame and the faces fade. The grey mist still swirls. The view dissolves - and the music segues - to the start of the film proper. We see a grey ship proceeding through a grey and misty Norwegian fjord ...

Two hours later the film ends on a downbeat note with another grey image, an image of the two principals (Paul Newman, Julie Andrews) huddled for warmth beneath a blanket. Now, given that none of the faces during the credits sequence shows much sign of happiness, and that several show actual suffering, you would expect the film proper to be downbeat, too. And that's how it is. With perhaps one notable exception, all the film's characters seem joyless. Accordingly, an interpretation of the credits sequence might have it that it starts by showing the birth of a universe, then proceeds to represent what both Buddhism and Hinduism (and some early Greek faiths) call the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time. Note the idea of recurrence implicit in the image of the wheel - and a possible counterpart in the film's recurring use of grey.

The exceptional character I mentioned who appears happier than everyone else is Professor Gustav Lindt (Ludwig Donath), a self-described 'genius'. Specifically, he's an aging nuclear physicist who clearly enjoys - in two senses - a unique status on the staff at the University of Leipzig in East Germany. A key

scene has him instructing his young opposite number from the US, the apparent defector Professor Michael Armstrong (Paul Newman), in some recondite aspects of missile propulsion. 'Learn!' he insists, with almost God-like authority. (Little does he know that Armstrong has actually come to steal one of his secrets.)[5] But then, Hitchcock's geniuses are invariably exceptional. The artist in **The Trouble With Harry** (1956) lives happily in backwater New England and couldn't care less about what city-people think of his work.[6] He goes ahead regardless and paints his colourful canvases, one of which depicts, as he says, 'the beginning of the world'.

* * *

More elaborate interpretations of the credits sequence may grow out of the one I've given. Allowing that the faces on screen-right represent 'sorrowful' human life, what story do they tell? Here's what we actually see: a couple making love; a watching eye; a succession of male and female faces, either contorted or impassively observing; finally, the distressed face of Sarah Sherman (the Julie Andrews character) plummeting away from us. In broad terms, the answer to my question about what story these faces tell could be given as one of Will (life-force) and Representation (appearance) - here note two inseparable concepts of Arthur Schopenhauer, which I think provide the key to the film. The left of screen depicts singular Will, symbolised by the sun; the right of screen depicts life's variegated Representation, the human condition. Fittingly, composer John Addison's main-titles theme begins only when the faces start appearing. The full significance of this becomes more overt later when the same galumphing music recurs during the bus sequence, a sequence which again emphasises human diversity.

In less broad terms, those faces invite a further Schopenhauerian reading. For what we see (after the initial love-making, which somehow seems to cause what follows) are 'tormented souls' (the increasingly desperate, contorted faces) and 'devils' (the impassive watchers). Implicit in this concept is how members of both groups will soon enough find themselves swapping places. In short, what we see is a depiction of Hell on Earth.

That leaves the image of a darting eye. The image is at once ambiguous and, I think, over-determined. It might be thought of as both a literal sign of life and as implying a destructive force. It finds its reciprocal image at the end of the sequence, in the shot of a woman apparently falling to her death.

By the same token, that ambiguous eye anticipates how in the film proper there are just two - opposed - close-ups of eyes. The first such shot shows Michael's eye when he is being examined by a doctor in the Leipzig University clinic. His ministering angel is, in fact, the worthy Dr Koska (Gisela Fischer), a member of the escape organisation known as 'Pi', whose husband has already died for the cause.[7] Thus, by association, what we see is a 'good' eye, a symbol of hope. In contrast, the second close-up is of a 'bad' eye: it belongs to the vindictive ballerina (Tamara Toumanova) who is playing a creature from Hell in a performance of Tchaikovsky's 'Francesca da Rimini'. (I've been using Hitchcock's own terminology here. In the bus sequence there are actually two buses. The first of these Hitchcock called the 'good' bus, its pursuer he called the 'bad' bus.)

* * *

**Torn Curtain** owes something to Fritz Lang's **Cloak and Dagger** (1946) whose physicist hero joins the wartime secret service and is sent to Germany to interview a kidnapped scientist. Equally, it depicts a new Cold War scepticism, to be seen in novels like John Le Carré's 'The Spy Who Came In From the Cold' (filmed in 1966 by Martin Ritt) and movies like Raoul Lévy's **The Defector** (1966). In Hitchcock's case, he quickly decided that his defector would be a bogus one, and that Armstrong's trip behind the Iron Curtain to try and obtain vital information relating to his stalled Gamma Five project would comprise little more than the film's MacGuffin. Much more important would be the emotional effect of Michael's actions on Sarah, his fiancée.

But even here Hitchcock had obviously done his background research. He remembered the Burgess-MacLean spy case in England and asked himself how the (non-existent) Mrs Burgess would have felt on hearing that her husband had turned up in Russia. As for the idea of Gamma Five, here the film scored a coup. Years ahead of the US Government's official Star Wars project, the film propounds the idea of an 'anti-missile missile'

system. Probably the idea came indirectly from famous physicist Edward Teller, a real-life proponent of such a system, who in 1935 had fled his alma mater at Leipzig University to work in America.

Other precedents for **Torn Curtain** are to be found in Hitchcock's own work. **The Secret Agent** (1936) showed a reluctant amateur spy dispatched on a possibly murderous mission. **Lifeboat** (1943) seemed to advocate an ethics that is mindful both of our common humanity and of our human diversity, adding a caution concerning its characters' too-narrow views. Its ambiguous villain was a distinctly 'Nietzschean' character called Willy ...

* * *

I've mentioned the inseparable nature of the concepts of Will (in the Schopenhauerian sense, not the Nietzschean) and Representation. Dr Oliver Sacks was paraphrasing Schopenhauer when he said that to speak in terms of either concept alone is to lay oneself open to a destructive duality, to the impossibility of building a meaningful world.[8] This, I take it, amounts to an exhortation to be both subjective and objective at the same time. To live in the world yet remain apart from it, so to speak. However, for most of us, if we think of such matters at all, we are conscious mainly of having failed. We find that what Buddhists call 'the veil of Maya' (illusion) has clouded our vision and we have been forced into error. Certainly when Michael Armstrong penetrates the Iron Curtain, he (at best) only partially penetrates the veil of Maya ...

The early scenes of **Torn Curtain** are about Representation - largely divorced from a sense of Will and therefore depicted as literally superficial. Soon after Michael and Sarah arrive by ship in Copenhagen, the possibility of a united humankind, i.e. one without destructive duality, is raised in suitably quixotic fashion. Someone comments that the Hotel d'Angleterre is a Danish hotel whose French name means the Hotel of England. And staying at the hotel, adding its own Babel of tongues, is an international congress of physicists. Fortunately the congress members have their own common language - which nevertheless sets them apart - in the language of mathematics. But the film is at pains to remind us that their language has Greek origins (or, at any rate, draws on such Greek letters as 'pi' and 'gamma').[9]

The Copenhagen scenes are the film's most colourful and lively. But again English composer Addison's music tells us how best to read the film's intentions. He allows the music to imitate the theme-accompaniment from one of J. Arthur Rank's more trite programme-fillers, the 'Look at Life' documentaries. The title logo of that popular series showed a colourful rooster with vari-coloured tail feathers, and it carried a sub-title, 'This Colourful World'. But, as I say, the series **was** trite.

* * *

Now, the veil of Maya never gets to be fully lifted in this phenomenal world of ours. Hitchcock kept faith with such a notion by having his cinematographer John Warren shoot the entire film through a grey gauze. On the other hand, it's most pertinent to **Torn Curtain** to recall that Schopenhauer allowed that there might be at least two ways for us to learn something of the Will and its attendant 'truths'. One way involves our inner awareness of our own bodies, through which the Will flows. In times of exceeding good health, or exceeding poor health, we may be particularly conscious of the Will inside us.[10] The second way is that of art (and its analogues, e.g. certain forms of meditation). Of music, Schopenhauer said boldly that it **is** Will; of the other aesthetic forms (e.g. fine art, literature, sculpture), he said that they somehow make the Will more objectively accessible - here he evoked Plato's Ideas. And he implied how all art involves a temporary dissolution of the individual ego in order that the more objectified knowledge may enter. As for science, Schopenhauer felt that it could deal only with the phenomenal world.

How, then, should we respond to Michael's 'defection' speech on his arrival in East Germany, in which he says his 'work is more important than any personal considerations of loyalty to any one country'? Is this where impersonal truth, truth which may bring about a united humankind, is vested?

Fairly obviously, no. At best, the speech offers a **negative** guarantee about the future: if Michael's and Lindt's work is successful, it may ensure that humanity **doesn't** blow itself up. In any case, the presence of smug officials and a large media contingent should alert us to how the occasion is one of Representation

ahead of Will, i.e. where the true nature of Will has been suppressed as far as possible. On show is the phoney world of political speechifying, whose language falsely promises Nirvana or a new Golden Age.[11] As Schopenhauer could have pointed out, what is involved is the politicians' and even the scientists' perversion of the will-to-power for their own ends. (In this special application of his insight concerning the nature of Will, Schopenhauer anticipated Nietzsche. But Schopenhauer, let's note, detested Will which he knew to be both amoral and blind.) Significantly, Michael is lying when he announces his defection; and his underlying motive is a selfish one, concerning the cutting off by Washington of funds for his ailing research.

* * *

I'm about to describe the film's murder scene which, I'll argue, is designed to make us feel the nature of Will. (Later I'll describe the bus sequence with its emphasis on Representation.) For now, it's time to say something about Michael's Communist bodyguard Gromek (Wolfgang Kieling). He's a doughty little fellow, one of the film's many battlers.[12] True, he has acquired some unfortunate Americanisms, like his habit of chewing gum; and all his talk of having once lived in New York is certainly a sham. Even so, it's surely rather loose of critic Robin Wood to call him a 'lost soul'.

If the film had managed to include a key scene, soon after the murder, in which Michael encounters Gromek's twin brother at a workers' factory, we'd have learnt that Gromek had been an ordinary family man with wife and kids and holiday snaps to show for it. (The scene was shot, and provides the basis for a memorable episode remaining in the novel.) In other words, we would have learnt that Gromek had been not so very different from the pious 'Manny' Balestrero in **The Wrong Man** (1957). If that sounds implausible, consider the following. In analysing **The Wrong Man** in 'MacGuffin' 6, I pointed out that Manny never really comprehends the forces that shape him. No more does Gromek. That's suggested in the small matter of how he never masters the operation of his (American?) cigarette lighter. But also in a further item that confused the 'Newsweek' film reviewer. 'Gromek', the reviewer scoffed, 'says he used to live on 88th Street and Eighth Avenue, but there is no such address in Manhattan.'[13] Quite so. Gromek's information about America has been obtained solely from the American movies and radio shows that he had been exposed to in spy school. (Cf. the novel, pp. 47, 77.) What he hasn't realised is that movies don't always tell the whole truth.

But then, movies are all Representation and little or no Will. And Gromek, like Manny, neglects to leaven the former with a touch of the latter. (Intuition? Insight? Compassion?)[14] There's another, related similarity between the two films. Manny in **The Wrong Man** has a 'double' and several look-alikes (see 'MacGuffin' 6). **Torn Curtain** goes even further. Various characters are doubled, and there are several sets of twins (e.g. the two Gromeks). Even the good bus and the bad bus are twins, when you think about it. Now, the doubling in **The Wrong Man** implies a certain invisible interconnectedness of lives and fates which I've previously suggested is Dickensian - but which is unavailable to Manny as a lasting insight. In the case of **Torn Curtain**, the doubling is especially apposite. For again it stresses the idea of humanity's interconnectedness, its oneness, which this time seems as if it might extend beyond the grave.

* * *

Any discussion of the murder scene should embrace the haunting 'echoing footsteps' scene in the museum, which immediately precedes it. The two scenes are really one, in much the same way as an 'echoing footsteps' episode in **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956) relates integrally, if in more humorous vein, to the free-for-all in a taxidermist's workshop which follows.

Michael visits the museum to try and elude Gromek. The setting figures naturally in the story inasmuch that East Berlin is noted for its fine museums; what we see here is the Berlin Museum. Significantly, the scene is introduced by an exterior view from a tourist-information brochure, followed by a dissolve which effectively allows Michael to walk into the photograph. (He's about to leave behind, perhaps for good, the superficiality of earlier scenes.) The Graeco-Roman facade dwarfs him, but the effect is accentuated once he enters the building. A high long-shot shows him crossing a tiled floor inlaid with a magnificent mandala. In the middle of this he suddenly pauses, listening. All around him are classical columns, although the museum seems strangely deserted of people.

Actually, the scene has another precedent, or rather two, for it combines aspects of the art gallery and Muir Woods scenes from **Vertigo** (1958). They, too, intimated some sobering thoughts about art and mortality. However, to pass now from the sublime to the mundane, I have to report that I'm unsure if the view we see here is authentic, i.e. based on an actual Berlin Museum interior. An article in 'American Cinematographer'[15] discloses the astonishing fact that only the floor of the film's museum was 'real', and that all the rest of the shot was a matte-painting. You guess that Hitchcock would have insisted on absolute truth-to-life. Yet, concerning the columns, it's just possible that either the filmmaker or his art director, Hein Heckroth,[16] was inspired by some separate memory of old Berlin, e.g. of the famous Hall of Pillars in Berlin Castle (demolished in 1950).

Of course, what most matters is the statement the scene makes. When Michael pauses at the very centre of the mandala, the moment combines classic German Expressionism with equally classic Jungian and Buddhist-Hindu symbolism. Not that Michael is aware of any of this - he only has eyes and ears for his possible pursuer. In effect, the moment is meant for us. Nevertheless, it suggests our equivocal hero's need to look at himself, to judge what he sees (German Expressionism) and to begin to achieve an integration of ego and deep, even collective, unconscious (Jung). This interpretation is fully commensurate with Schopenhauerian principles. But the fact that the museum is virtually deserted suggests that people in this part of the world, no less than in the flashier Copenhagen scenes,[17] may not be in tune with such matters at present. At least, not in any contemplative way. Meanwhile, the museum performs its function of preserving part of our cultural and human heritage. Interestingly, its statues and sculptures seem to portray mainly figures of Graeco-Roman mythology, in alternating black and white marble, and to tell a similar story of struggle to that of the film's credits ...

Suspecting he is being followed, Michael keeps turning corners à la **Vertigo** (the Muir Woods scene, et al.), then stopping to try and identify the sound of footsteps echoing on the stone floor. Finally he leaves by a (strangely unsupervised) side door, still uncertain of where Gromek may be.

In the street, a housewife trudges by. A fragment of skyline shows typical East Berlin war ruins. Needing to hurry to an assignation outside the city with his 'Pi' contact, Michael takes a taxi. The driver has what the novel calls 'an incurious, pleasantly stupid face' (p. 69). He wears a pale open-necked shirt, making him an older version of the 'demure' and 'mild' identical twins we'll later see on the bus (pp. 149-50). Michael feels in luck.

* * *

There are no echoing tile floors at the farm where Michael arrives by taxi. He's met by a pleasant **frau** (Carolyn Conwell) in an apron. With his shoe he draws the 'Pi' sign in the farmyard dirt - in effect, a triple reminder (though not intentional on his part) of the basis of the Graeco-Roman culture he's just seen: linguistic, mathematical, demotic ... The woman points to a field where her husband is driving a tractor.

The farmer (Mort Mills) is described in the novel by one of his 'Pi' colleagues as, simply, 'the finest' of men (p. 176). In the film he's represented by the actor who played the highway patrolman in **Psycho** (1960), and commands a voice like that of Physics Nobel Laureate Steven Weinberg. (The novel, though, gives him an accent that is 'pure lower-class Southern', hinting that he's a former American Serviceman - p. 71.) His hearty first line both makes a vital plot point and is suitably thematic: 'Well, Professor Armstrong, how does it feel to play the part of a dirty defector?'

Both the farmer and his wife have their 'doubles'. The moustached farmer is a more robust version of Michael's Copenhagen contact, the bookstore proprietor named Freddy. And the farmer's wife strikingly resembles another brave 'Pi' member, Dr Koska at the University of Leipzig. The truth is that Michael himself is one of the few characters in the film who lacks a physical double. But the reason for this, I suggest, isn't that he's played by the inimitable Paul Newman. More likely, it's because, in the film's terms, he has failed to achieve a suitable merger with society, especially the demos, a merger which the film is now increasingly going to insist on. For instance, it's about to deprive him of his distinctive overcoat ...[18]

As the farmer drives Michael back towards the farmhouse, the 'Pi' music starts up. Michael dismounts and the farmer deftly - virilely - swings the tractor round and returns to work. Nearby are the remnants of an outhouse wall. Walls have already figured prominently in the film, either as divisive **new** walls which serve as ironic reminders of the one between East and West Berlin, or as war ruins.[19] For the moment, Michael probably feels he's far from all that.

So when the 'Pi' music ends with an abrupt crash, the arrival of Gromek is doubly jolting. Moreover, the little fellow has put himself between Michael and the waiting taxi, and Michael must duck into the farmhouse. Quickly Gromek follows him. The ensuing scene is played without music.

Music would be redundant, and distracting, in a scene which Hitchcock said he designed 'to show how hard it is to kill a man'. The scene builds slowly at first. Inside the farmhouse, watched by the woman, Gromek has got Michael cornered. He soon shows he can get tough when he jabs at Michael's coat with an accusing fist - and in an example of 'subjective' style[20] the film jabs **us** by excising a few frames from the middle of each shot. But next minute he's cracking jokes, speculating that Michael is headed for 'the Big House' as in certain Edward G. Robinson prison movies.[21]

Gromek also appears to have read some of the American press reviews of **The Birds** and **Marnie**. ('It's strictly for the boids. You still say that.') The poor fellow virtually asks to be dispatched, like some stand-up comedian who has outstayed his welcome. I don't think I'm being callous in claiming this; at some level, the audience surely feels the working of just such a crazy logic as I'm implying. Compelled to watch a protracted and messy killing, we need to find something to laugh at. Of course, Hitchcock compounds the effect in various ways. Just to list what happens shows one of them: Gromek dies from a combination of a saucepan of scalding soup thrown in his face, a kitchen knife embedded in his shoulder, blows to his shins delivered with the edge of a spade, and finally asphyxiation in a gas oven. Only unexceptional, homely implements are used, notice.[22]

But Michael has got blood on his hands. And on his coat. Now he really is 'dirty'. And his shocked face clearly shows the sort of dissolution of ego Schopenhauer spoke of (albeit with less drastic circumstances in mind). Above all, for the scene's participants, as well as for the audience, what Schopenhauer meant by Will has here been made virtually palpable. (As I say, though, music wasn't called for. Music may indeed be Will, but by that very fact is invisible.)[23] In the rest of this article we must look at how the film applies the knowledge of Will to its ensuing scenes, especially the scene on the bus, and at how it works to convey its enriched insight to us, the audience.

* * *

Something else that Hitchcock remarked about the murder scene is revealing. He fully intended, he said, that the death of a man from asphyxiation in a gas oven should evoke Auschwitz. So far as I know, he didn't say **why** he intended it, but we may guess. Probably he was remembering how it was in just such tranquil surroundings as those of this German farm that some of the extermination camps operated. Further, we know that in 1945 Hitchcock was summoned by his friend Sidney Bernstein and the British Ministry of Information to supervise and edit footage of the camps. As the film flooded in, he could hardly bear to watch it.[24]

When Michael and Sarah escape from Leipzig to East Berlin, they do so on a 'Pi' bus which passes itself off as the route's regular bus. In charge of the escape is the Jew, Mr Jacobi (David Opatoshu). It's his quick-thinking which at one point saves the couple from being recognised by searching police; and his coolness which prevents dissenting voices among the bus passengers, including an hysterical **fräulein**'s, from erupting into disaster. Connotations of concentration camps and of the Occupation (cf. **The Diary of Anne Frank**) are strong here, too.

However, a further connotation stresses the scene's element of diversity, its mix of people. Jacobi himself is another of the film's doubles: with his goatee, he resembles Professor Lindt. And although nearly all the passengers on the bus are members of 'Pi', they're a motley lot. They include a little man with a cold, a student and his girlfriend, a set of identical twins, and the hysterical Fräulein Mann. In short, they collectively resemble groups encountered in at least two other Hitchcock films having a pro-democracy message, the 1942 **Saboteur** (with its bizarre circus troupe) and **Lifeboat**. They are all ordinary-enough

people, and for that reason represent those from whom Michael and Sarah have been shielded in an ivory-tower existence back in Washington. (With particular irony, Sarah in the novel is a Senator's daughter - p. 53.)[25]

Now, both the film and the novel are ambivalent about 'Pi'. Given a naturally divisive, and already divided, humanity, it's clear that an organisation like 'Pi' can't do much about the fundamental problem. Besides, its members are as capable of dissension and limited thinking as anyone. The novel calls some of the bus passengers both 'nice' and 'well-meaning' (p. 149) - a likely allusion to Carol Fisher's 'well-meaning' but ineffectual Peace Party in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940). On the other hand, as all these earlier Hitchcock films stress, it's almost a necessity that you eventually make a stand for what you believe in. Arguably, **Torn Curtain** doesn't disagree with that, but it does emphasise the need for wisdom. Through the characters of Michael and Sarah, it comes to focus on the need to integrate public action and private insight, and in the process to fuse knowledge of Will and of Representation.

As the film progresses, Michael increasingly questions the nature of appearances, and not just from a scientist's perspective. On the whole, he becomes more pessimistic. Note, for example, the quotation from the novel at the head of this article. Though the passengers on the bus represent demos, they also resemble the audience watching the film; and one of the characteristics of a film audience is that its members may seem a cohesive unit but really aren't, certainly not once the house-lights return. Of course, most of us are stimulated by group company. So it's understandable that the bus passengers see fit to applaud their collective performance. That moment gives us one of the film's few fleeting warm spots.

Also, we naturally trust that Michael and Sarah will always be grateful to 'Pi' for showing that a purely logical outcome of human selfishness (or Will), i.e. finding oneself in the cold, may sometimes be confounded by an equally human inconsistency (which we may call fellow-feeling). I'm not sure that Schopenhauer sufficiently acknowledged such a possibility, but then his attention was focussed on both broader and more individual tendencies. Moreover, the film, with its downbeat ending, soon reverts to an almost equally gloomy outlook. Yet the bus sequence (and the twins/doubles motif) has left us this clear message. We're all both like and unlike each other. Each of the passengers on the bus is both universal Will **and** individual 'will' - in the latter case, sometimes inconveniently or irritatingly so. In turn, such a situation carries an ethical imperative for anyone who can sufficiently penetrate the veil of Maya to see that Representation isn't everything.

* * *

Michael and Sarah are promptly tested on how well they have learnt the lessons of the bus sequence. Few people could appear potentially more inconvenient or irritating than the scatty Countess Kuchinska, who approaches the American couple in the street. She's a displaced person, a former Polish aristocrat, though it's not inappropriate that she's played by Russian-French actress Lila Kedrova fresh from an Academy Award-winning performance in Michael Cacoyannis's **Zorba the Greek** (1964). In the **Torn Curtain** novel the Countess proclaims, 'I am an old woman. But there is **la vie** left in me. Lots of **la vie**' (p. 168). The film signals as much by giving her a garish multi-coloured scarf. Now, it would be easy for Michael and Sarah to dismiss her as of no more consequence to them than one of the tourists back in Copenhagen - in effect, their own former selves. But that would be seeing only half the picture.

Mind you, the situation is highly ambiguous. The Countess, it happens, can direct the couple to their next contact-point, the Friedrichstrasse Post Office. Also, for reasons of her own, she's not averse to employing a spot of blackmail, for she hopes that Michael and Sarah may sponsor her to the United States. In short, she's like everyone else in having a selfish side. Her double is Michael's nemesis-figure, the ballerina, inasmuch that both of those rather theatrical ladies wants her place in the sun; for the ballerina, that largely means the spotlight of public acclaim,[26] for the Countess it means somewhere to enjoy her remaining **vie**. Before the end, though, the film will have implied that both ambitions are by themselves inadequate. Meanwhile, Michael and Sarah agree to the Countess's deal.

* * *

Another test comes when the couple seek to make their final 'Pi' contact by attending an evening at the

ballet. The scene was shot on the set where **The Phantom of the Opera** had been filmed twice (in 1925 and 1943); film buffs may also detect in the scene allusions to such classic movies as **The Red Shoes** (1948) and **Hangover Square** (1944). With State Security closing in, some bravura gesture seems called for. Michael provides it when he turns the on-stage artifice to his own purpose with an inspired shout of 'Fire!', causing a general panic in which he and Sarah manage to escape. The stage flames, depicting Hell, neatly combine the film's symbol of Will (life-energy)[27] with what is patently Representation. By being able to merge - or rather, separate - the two aspects in his mind, Michael may be said to pass this test, too.

* * *

But perhaps the final emphasis of the present article should be on the fact of the successive tests themselves. I've always thought of **Torn Curtain** as giving Michael and Sarah (and the audience) an initiation into deeper knowledge. My early notes on the film, made about the time I saw it on its first release, include a definition of initiation as a three-stage process: 'a rite of submission, followed by a period of containment, and then by a further rite of liberation'. Regrettably, I've no record of the source of that quotation. But it's likely that it came from Jung or one of his followers. Certainly Jung's 'Man and His Symbols' (1964) had recently been published in London - moreover, it's the sort of book Hitchcock himself might have consulted -[28] and it contained similar points.[29] As well, it carried Jung's keynote comment about how the world had become 'dissociated like a neurotic, with the Iron Curtain marking the symbolic line of division'.

Accordingly, I think we may sum up **Torn Curtain** as follows. The film is suggesting that the veil of Maya will continue to screen the heavenly clarity of Nirvana from us for some time yet. Equally, there can be no early prospect of one united humankind. All the more reason, then, why each of us should give thought to plotting our particular **inward** path. We may find there many of the sources of our problems. And not the least of those problems may simply be one of getting started. In Michael Armstrong's case, his inward journey appears to begin in a well-known fashion when he suffers a career setback (the halting of his Gamma Five project) which in turn affects his sense of self-esteem.

It's worth specifying the more obvious areas where Michael's perceptions are going to be altered or enlarged. For a start, both the museum and ballet scenes have hinted at how insulated from cultural matters, and the humanities generally, he has been. Near the end of the novel he muses that when he gets back home, 'he must make a point of broadening himself, going to ballet and maybe opera and reading some novels' (p. 177). Similarly, the scenes where he must literally make contact with ordinary people (the farm, the factory canteen, the bus) show how shielded from the roots of democracy his career has made him. The word 'democracy' is Greek-derived: from 'demos', the people, and 'kratos', strength. Yet if Michael knows anything at all of his Greek heritage, you feel that his knowledge relates just to his specialist fields of mathematics and physics. As for his relation to the natural world (represented by the Norwegian fjord, the farm, and finally the open sea), clearly that has also been largely off-limits for him. Sarah implies no less when she chides him in Copenhagen, 'A scientist is supposed to respect a natural order in all things'.

Now, there seems to be three ways in which Michael and Sarah undergo a process of submission/containment/liberation. In a very broad sense, they do so as the rest of us do it, by being born and entering on the 'sorrowful weary wheel' of time. Less broadly, they undertake such a process when they go behind the Iron Curtain, experience various tests and perils there, and then effect their escape (in the end, by swimming to safety from an East German ship, which reminds more than one commentator of 'traversing ... the river Styx').[30] But even individual scenes pointedly follow the same pattern. The essential element of containment is stressed in the murder scene (the tightly-closed windows), the blackboard sequence in Professor Lindt's underground workroom, the bus sequence (although Fräulein Mann has to be expelled from the vehicle before the journey's end), and the ballet scene where armed Volpos arrive to guard each exit. And in case we've failed to spot the motif already, Hitchcock has Michael and Sarah finally smuggled out of the country in costume baskets belonging to the ballet company, on a ship bound for Sweden.

It comes to this. One of Jung's colleagues, Joseph L. Henderson, says that the purpose of initiation rites is always 'to create the symbolic mood of death from which may spring the symbolic mood of rebirth'.[31] Michael Armstrong is subjected to a succession of deaths and rebirths, each time having his eyes opened a little further to the - often Hellish but also grand - scheme of things, even as he and Sarah learn a new

humility which leaves them each other but not much more. Yet, precisely as a result, the two of them can huddle thankfully at last beneath the grey blanket provided by the Swedish assistant harbourmaster (who adds a further humbling perspective by noting, 'We keep a whole stack of blankets for refugees').

* * *

I've my own thoughts on why **Torn Curtain** doesn't work as well as it might have, although they've little to do with Donald Spoto's suggestion that the film has 'dated hopelessly since [the events of] 1990'. In general, it's just too downbeat and even cerebral for audiences to bear, and not sufficiently romantic.[32] And here's a fairly specific instance. Michael never makes more common cause with other people than when at the ballet he looks at the stage flames and yells 'Fire!', thus prompting a latent fear - of any audience indoors - to erupt in onscreen panic. Of course, he's not really making common cause with the audience at all, and that fact already works against the scene's full effectiveness. Even so, I've suggested that thematically the concept is promising. What's most wrong with it, I think, is the apparent basic stolidity of Paul Newman's character from the start. By contrast, his shout of 'Fire!' shows real wit, albeit of a dramatic life-and-death kind. Accordingly, the scene needed a Cary Grant, in a film like **North by Northwest** (1959), to make it believable. More generally, you could say that Michael is consistently too bland a character to excite strong viewer-feelings, whether of identification/admiration or of sardonic appraisal (as I believe Hitchcock at one stage intended).[33]

Likewise, Julie Andrews is wasted if not unconvincing. Significantly, her strongest scene entails her thirty seconds of silence in the Leipzig University lecture room after Professor Lindt has asked her about the outcome of Gamma Five. (Her eventual, guarded answer: 'I have nothing to say.') Another of the Americans' minders, Professor Karl Manfred (Gunter Strack), clearly fancies her; and there seems to have been some attempted seduction by Manfred while Michael was at the farm. On Michael's return from there, he's summoned by Gerhard (Hansjöerg Felmy) of State Security and told that Sarah has been persuaded to come over to the Communists. It appears that Manfred possesses a 'unique line in argument', one which combines 'mathematical logic and romantic inconsistency' (yet that's something the film comes close to advocating we all follow).[34] Moreover, Manfred remains possessive towards Sarah, at Leipzig even taking it upon himself to answer when Lindt asks a question of Michael, 'Have you your assistant [i.e. Sarah] with you?' Of course, all of this is resolved immediately afterwards in the controversial hillock scene (which I find tacky), but my point is that Sarah's big moments are either static or coy or take place off-screen.

Finally, Hitchcock was surely right when he once said of his brand of thriller, 'The better the villain, the better the picture'. Unfortunately, the overt **villainy** in **Torn Curtain** is entirely conceptual - a matter of ideology - and I have real difficulty in thinking of its nominal **villains** - Gromek, Manfred, Gerhard - as anything but generally likable, and subject to the same Will as the rest of us. No doubt, most of this was intended by Hitchcock, but what does it do to the dynamics of his film?

* * *

Postscript. More about the grey blanket that ends the film. That image goes all the way back to **Number 17** of 1932 (see 'MacGuffin' 5) via **Psycho** (see 'MacGuffin' 4). Of course, it signifies coming out of the cold. But equally, and quite literally in **Torn Curtain**, it signifies turning one's back on the world. Interesting, therefore, that the **happiest** character in the film is so decidedly Professor Lindt, ensconced behind the Iron Curtain, which is also grey. But then, as we saw, he's a self-described 'genius', like the painter in **The Trouble With Harry**. And as Schopenhauer reminds us, only the genius, the artist and the saint regularly penetrate the veil of Maya which so baffles everyone else. As I see the matter, the one optimistic connotation of the blanket which Michael and Sarah draw around themselves is this : like the word 'couple', it makes duality one.

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Notes

1. The novel was published in 1966 to coincide with the release of the film. It appears to adhere closely

to the original screenplay, i.e. pre-dating the film's last-minute modifications. I consider it an authentic, and useful, research tool for scholars of the film, and quote from it several times during the present article.

2. This particular version of Schopenhauer's essay appears in A. Schopenhauer, 'Essays and Aphorisms', translated and selected by R. J. Hollingdale (1970).

3. Without ever actually becoming a split-screen, i.e. the action is assigned merely to two distinct areas.

4. I recall that Hitchcock obtained the shot of the flame after learning that a rocket-base was going to burn off a million dollars' worth of excess fuel, and he obtained permission to send along a camera crew.

5. Several times the film evokes myth, especially Greek myth. Here you naturally think of Prometheus's successful attempt to steal fire from the gods and give it to humankind.

6. His 'genius', too, is of the self-described kind. I've discussed the 'genius' theme in Hitchcock's films before, e.g. in my article on **Psycho** ('MacGuffin' 4).

7. See the novel, p. 132.

8. O. Sacks, 'Awakenings' (revised edition, 1982), p. 219.

9. The novel contains a significant piece of dialogue when an impatient Professor Lindt mocks his colleagues' dithering. '"The day has come [he says] when our universities are staffed from the barnyard. Pigs teach Greek, horses teach German, and chickens teach physics. A great age."' (p. 108) He sounds a bit like the (mock-Byronic) figure of Sir Humphrey Pengallan in **Jamaica Inn** (1939) ...

10. This observation is mine, not Schopenhauer's, but I think it suitably conveys his meaning.

11. Shortly before Hitchcock's film was made, Carl Jung had observed that the Communist world had one big myth, 'the time-hallowed archetypal dream of a Golden Age (or Paradise)'. But he was quick to add that the Western world, too, was 'in the grip of the same mythology'. See C. G. Jung (ed.), 'Man and His Symbols' (1964), p. 85. Certainly the film implies something of this idea by shooting several of the East German scenes, in particular, in a honey-coloured oblique sunlight. Perhaps equally, you sense an affinity with George Orwell's 'Nineteen eighty-four' (1949) with its oppressive regime and, initially, its characters' dream of 'the Golden Country'.

12. Watch him in action shouldering his way through the crush after Michael's press conference! Typically, he can afterwards manage a grin or a joke. By contrast, note the grim fellow among the 'swells' when panic breaks out at the ballet, who looks like an unredeemed W. C. Fields.

13. 'Newsweek', August 8, 1966. The review is unsigned.

14. 'But' [writes Oliver Sacks] 'how shall we unite the "final cause" with the "efficient cause", the will with the matter, the motive with the molecule, when they seem so remote, and disparate from each other?' ('Awakenings', op. cit., pp. 219-20.) Sacks finds one answer to that question in a certain use of language, 'which we - as scientists - so often feel impelled to reject and ignore' (p.220). I've discussed this matter previously, when reviewing Lesley Brill's 'The Hitchcock Romance' in 'MacGuffin' 3.

15. 'American Cinematographer', October 1966.

16. Heckroth's most famous work, of course, was done for Michael Powell's **The Red Shoes** (1948) - a film to which Hitchcock seems to allude more than once in his own films, e.g. the ballet scene of **Torn Curtain**.

17. Where a hippie working in a bookstore removes apparently dusty Bibles to a storeroom.

18. A variant, this, on how characters in **Number 17** (1932) and **North by Northwest** (1959), for example, remove a hat or a jacket before getting down to physical action at the film's climax.

19. Walls figure prominently or intrusively at Michael's press conference, in the scene between Michael and Sarah in the East Berlin hotel, etc.

20. I discussed 'subjective' style in my article on **Number 17** in 'MacGuffin' 5.

21. A likely example of such a film is Edward Ludwig's **The Last Gangster** (1937), a clip from which turned up recently in Woody Allen's **Crimes and Misdemeanours** (1989).

22. The basis for this scene, though, may well be the clumsy, drawn-out murder of the Earl of Clarence in Shakespeare's 'Richard III' (Act One, Scene Four). Hitchcock alluded to the Shakespeare play when he addressed a class of cinema students at the University of Southern California. See my article, "Out of Hitchcock's Filing Cabinet", in 'Filmviews' 135, Melbourne, Autumn 1988.

23. The phenomenon to which I refer here is that of the fish which knows no other environment than water. Of course, Plato's 'myth of the cave' reminds us of how a more transcendent form of knowledge is available - though perhaps never (for most of us) absolute knowledge. In turn, Plato's thinking relates to Schopenhauer's concept of art, mentioned elsewhere in this article. Finally, such thinking perhaps also resembles Hitchcock's concept of cinema.

24. Not all the concentration camps, by any means, were isolated from population centres - something which Hitchcock noted at an early stage of planning the BMI film. By means of panning and tracking shots, done without cuts, he was able to affirm the reality of what was shown. (Perhaps it's time that such footage was re-screened, particularly in Germany itself.) See Elizabeth Sussex's article, "The Fate of F3080", in 'Sight & Sound', Spring 1984.

25. An aspect of this sequence may remind us of how another American couple abroad, on a bus filled with Arabs, had once been told by a beaming Frenchman, 'There are moments in life when we all need a little help'. I'm thinking, of course, of Hitchcock's 1956 **The Man Who Knew Too Much**.

26. In 'Odd Spot' in 'MacGuffin' 1, I mentioned how the film's business with the ballerina and the press photographers may have been suggested to Hitchcock by an embarrassing incident which had happened to him when he was staying at Lake Como in Italy. (The incident occurred some years before 1970, so the timing seems to fit.) As the person recounting the story remembers the incident, 'I think he was actually a little offended when we told him that [the photographers] were not there for him but for the wedding.'

27. Besides the on-stage flames, there's a fiery sun painted on the stage back-cloth.

28. Hitchcock's library in his office contained an impressive collection of art books and current magazines on graphics. (The Jung book mentioned in the text is profusely illustrated with pictures of classic paintings, stills from films, etc.) See Stephen Rebello, 'Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of **Psycho**' (1991), p. 142.

29. More recently, screenwriter Michael Eaton has said that 'the structure of the thriller narrative exactly corresponds to that of a rite of passage.' See his "Thrilling Rituals" in 'Sight & Sound', August 1991.

30. Gorham A. Kindem, "Towards a Semiotic Theory of Visual Communication in the Cinema", Ph. D. dissertation (Arno Press, 1980), p. 212. Note the citing of another Greek myth here.

31. Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient myths and modern man", in Jung, op. cit., p. 132.

32. Actually, '**Torn Curtain** attracted a surprisingly large audience, generating more domestic rental income (approximately $7 million) for its distributor (MCA/Universal) than any of Hitchcock's other films after **Psycho**'. Robert E. Kapsis, 'Hitchcock: The Making of a Reputation' (1992), p. 264 (n. 27).

33. Hitchcock originally wanted to end the film with Armstrong, having arrived in Sweden, burning Lindt's formula in the fire. But commercial considerations intervened. See L. Furhammar & F. Isaksson, 'Politics and Film' (1971), p. 141.

34. Cf. my point about fellow-feeling in the bus sequence. For what it's worth, I'm reminded of Dickens's critique in his novel 'Hard Times' of Mr Bounderby, 'a man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and is not to be talked into allowing for anything over'.

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## Ten Best Lists - of now and forever

Pulsing with significance, the 1992 'Sight & Sound' list of the ten greatest films (as voted by international critics) is as follows:

1. Citizen Kane (Orson Welles, 1941)
2. La Règle du Jeu/The Rules of the Game (Jean Renoir, 1939)
3. Tokyo Story (Yasujiro Ozu, 1953)
4. Vertigo (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)
5. The Searchers (John Ford, 1956)
6. Battleship Potemkin (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925)
   Pather Panchali (Satyajit Ray, 1954)
   The Passion of Joan of Arc (Carl Dreyer, 1928)
   L'Atalante (Jean Vigo, 1934)
10. 2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968)

(For the 1982 list, which hardly differs from the above, see 'MacGuffin' 1.)

A contributor to the 1992 'Sight & Sound' poll was Australian film critic - and 'MacGuffin' reader - Tom Ryan. We thought we would publish not Tom's 'all-time' best (that's in 'Sight & Sound', December 1992) but his best of 1992. Next time we'll print more 1992 lists received from our readers. Note that the following list includes both features and documentaries which received their Australian first-release last year.

1. Madame Bovary (Claude Chabrol, France)
2. Night on Earth (Jim Jarmusch, USA)
3. A World Without Pity (Eric Rochant, France)
4. Paris is Burning (Jenni Livingstone, USA)
5. That Night (Craig Bolotin, USA)
6. Black Harvest (Robin Anderson and Bob Connolly, Australia)
7. The Long Day Closes (Terence Davies, Britain)
8. Bram Stoker's Dracula (Francis Ford Coppola, USA)
9. Strictly Ballroom (Baz Luhrmann, Australia)
10. Trust (Hal Hartley, USA)
    Light Sleeper (Paul Schrader, USA)

(In a letter, Tom calls **Madame Bovary** 'Chabrol's best film in years'. He especially mentions the director's comment on one of his earlier films with Isabelle Huppert, **Violette Nozierre**, to the effect that he's 'not interested in judging but in understanding'.)

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Hitchcock films discussed in articles so far published include **Vertigo** and **Family Plot** ('MacGuffin' 1), **Stage Fright** ('MacGuffin' 2), **The Lodger** ('MacGuffin' 3), **Psycho** ('MacGuffin' 4), **No. 17** ('MacGuffin' 5), **The Wrong Man** ('MacGuffin' 6), and **Suspicion** ('MacGuffin' 7).

Charles Barr's "Hypnagogic Structures: Hitchcock's British Period" appeared in 'MacGuffin' 6. A table of contents for issues 1-4 was printed in 'MacGuffin' 5.

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## ODD SPOT: SHADOWS OF HITCHCOCK

Hitchcock's **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) has become the most re-made of all his films. First there was **Step Down to Terror** (1958), which had Charles Drake in the Joseph Cotten role as a psychopathic killer hiding out in a small town. Rod Taylor played a policeman and writer Czenzi Ormonde (**Strangers on a Train**) helped in adapting the script.

Then came **Strange Homecoming** (1974), a TV movie starring Robert Culp which no-one now remembers, perhaps because the plot had been altered to make its debt to the original less apparent. The sister, so well played in the original by Patricia Collinge, became a brother who is also the local sheriff (Glen Campbell in his TV-movie debut).

Now there's a third re-make, another TV movie, which keeps the original title, stars Mark Harmon, and has Tippi Hedren in a supporting role. Clearly not wanting to hide the Hitchcock connections, the filmmakers have even added a carnival sequence straight out of **Strangers on a Train**. Even so, 'Sight & Sound' (June 1992) calls this version 'unnecessary'.

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