

Alfred Hitchcock: The Master of Adaptation

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by

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Abstract

My research explores Alfred Hitchcock's use of adaptation and the impact that this has on his status as an 'auteur'. The aim, through looking at a cross section of his work, is to produce the basis for an adaptation model that could be used to examine his entire body of work, accounting for all influences, extratextual references, intertextualities, sequels, remakes and most importantly, other authors. By exploring Hitchcock's use of the theatrical (a subject that is often ignored) and his lesser earlier films, we can begin to form the foundations for this model. By looking at his adaptation of a particular author and the textual evolution of one of his most iconic films, we are able to put this model to the test.

Chapter one is the introduction, which looks at Hitchcock's status within cinematic history, while also examining the current state of Hitchcock scholarship, auteur theory and adaptations studies.

Chapter two examines the theatrical adaptations of Hitchcock's British period, specifically shining light upon texts that are often ignored or maligned by theoretical study.

Chapter three discusses the American theatrical adaptations, specifically looking at the role of the 'meta-text' and Hitchcock's fascination with recreating the theatrical.

Chapter four explores Hitchcock's relationship with Daphne du Maurier, examining his adaptation of her work, overall themes, characters and ideologies. This chapter also presents an original reading of *The Birds*, which examines how Hitchcock's film is more indebted to Du Maurier's novels than her shot story of avian horror.

Chapter five examines the evolution of *Psycho*. Hitchcock's adaptation of, amongst others, Robert Bloch and Henri-Georges Clouzot will be discussed, as will the multiple sequels, remakes and exploitations that, in turn, adapt his own film. It will be argued that these texts are in fact adapting *Psycho*'s influences and origins as much as the film itself.

Chapter six is the conclusion where the findings are analysed and the model of adaptation, which positions Hitchcock at the centre as a collector of texts is discussed. In occupying this position the notion of him as an 'auteur' is erased and instead he becomes the 'Master of Adaptation'.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Adapting Hitchcock

The idea for this thesis occurred to me when I picked up and read Robert Bloch's *Psycho* for the first time. The novel and text were incredibly similar in terms of narrative, but Bloch's first person perspective of Norman added something to Hitchcock's text for me. For the first time I found myself in the head of Norman Bates, a perspective the film does not allow or is capable of achieving in a way that literature can. Of course we are only allowed into one part of Norman's many minds, but even this small window altered my perception of the film, on one hand giving me an extra insight into the inner workings of the Bate's household and on the other presenting me with a question: why exactly had this narrative change occurred? Matthew H. Bernstein writes that the study of adaptation "helps the critic to understand artistic choices"¹ thus by looking at Bloch's text, I was able to see what particular aspects of the novel that Hitchcock had changed and why, but it also showed me what he did not alter, and from there I thought about the concept of two authors embodying one text, authorship versus adaptation, which prompted me to look at Hitchcock's entire body of work.

Of the fifty-three feature films that Hitchcock directed, forty-four of them are adaptations. This is a staggering statistic when placed side by side with Hitchcock's status as an 'auteur', which despite the rise and fall of auteur theory, is still often used to describe the director. The very notion of adaptation studies flies in the face of auteurism as it dares to suggest that the lifeblood of a film has origins found outside of the director and instead within the work of another author. Yet it is not just the notion of auteur theory that clashes with this statistic but also the director himself. Hitchcock was often very dismissive of the texts and writers that had clearly influenced his work. Considering the staggering number of adaptations that he produced, the subsequent influence that his work has had on society, on film theory

¹ Matthew H. Bernstein, 'Unrecognizable Origins: The Song of the Dragon and Notorious', in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, Albany, New York Press, 2011, p. 157.

and on film history, suggests that analytical work that considers the original adapted catalysts should be paramount within Hitchcock scholarship.

Concerning Hitchcock and his forty-four adaptations, which in other words is just over eighty-three percent of his work, twenty-five of those are adapted from novels, eleven from plays, six from short stories, one of which in the case of *The Wrong Man* (1956) was adapted from a story based on a true crime case. Nine of Hitchcock's films are considered original works, yet out of those *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) is itself a remake-adaptation of his earlier 1934 effort, and *The Mountain Eagle* (1926) is currently lost. That leaves nine original screenplays under the Hitchcock brand, and make no mistake about it, the name 'Alfred Hitchcock', like most commercially mainstream auteurs, *is* a brand. Whether it is under the guise of the 'Master of Suspense' or as the 'auteur', the 'Hitchcock' brand always involves the collaboration of individuals that come under the same banner and are a part of the same collaborative process yet have one guiding figure. Mark Osteen notes that Hitchcock often worked with the same people, returning to particular writers and producers throughout his career.² Osteen refers to Hitchcock's infamous line of being different to other filmmakers, that rather than making slices of life, he attempted to create slices of cake.³ Osteen believes Hitchcock viewed himself as the only cook in the kitchen, yet his reliance on multiple collaborators meant that his cakes had multiple bakers. The contribution of the original authors cannot be ignored.

As well as the fifty-three films to Hitchcock's name, there were two television shows, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* that ran for two hundred and sixty-eight episodes from 1955 to 1962 and then *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, ninety-three episodes from 1962 to 1965. Each of these were self-contained tales of terror which Hitchcock himself would introduce. He directed only seventeen episodes of the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and only one of *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, yet his name and face were

² "Cinematographer Robert Burks, for example, worked on twelve Hitchcock films...Edith Head designed costumes for ten; Bernare Herrmann composed the scores for seven films...writers – Eliot Stannard (seven British films); Charles Bennett (seven – eight, if one counts both versions of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*); John Michael Hayes (four); Ernest Lehman (two)." – Mark Osteen, 'Introduction' in his edited collection *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen*, Rowman and Littlefield, Plymouth, 2014, p.ix.

³ Truffaut, F., *The Definitive Study of Alfred Hitchcock: Revised Edition*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 1984, p. 103.

synonymous with the shows. He also had his own theme tune and silhouette of his upper torso that he would eventually incorporate into the signature that he would use for signing autographs. It could be argued that he has the most famous signature of all time. The director also lent his name to other avenues of marketing such as the nineteen fifties board game 'Why?' which was based upon *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and saw players use character pieces such as Dick Crazy, Charlie Clam and Shylock Bones, all clearly standing in for fictional crime fighters Dick Tracy, Charlie Chan and Sherlock Holmes. While somewhat extended and removed from the real Alfred Hitchcock, this is still an example of the Hitchcock brand appropriating the work of others for its own gain, which is evident in the television shows as the majority of episodes were based on the short stories of other authors. This is also clear within the many Hitchcock anthologies that were published within the sixties and seventies. Anthologies such as *Alfred Hitchcock's Witch's Brew*, *Alfred Hitchcock's Sinister Spies* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents Games Killer's Play* were all collections of stories by famous authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Bloch and W. Somerset Maugham. The anthologies all contain very short introductions by Hitchcock and the claim that he chose them. While this is probably not true and merely a marketing technique, what the anthologies represent is - namely, that they feed off the Hitchcock legend, the 'Master of Suspense' and provider of tales, yet it is the work of others that provide the foundations for his lofty platform.

One would assume with the adaptation of existing texts, having such a bearing on the work of one of the most famous auteurs of the 20th century that somebody somewhere would have decided to look at Hitchcock's body of work in relation to adaptation studies. However, as far as I am aware, the current body of work consists of a few excellent edited collections of *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor* (2011) and *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen* (2014). Both collections look at a wide variety of Hitchcock's work, selections of films and the texts that they are adapted from, the fidelity of certain texts and the influences they have had on other media. Some essays such as David Boyd's 'The Trouble With *Rebecca*' look at the background behind Hitchcock's adaptation, such as Selznick's involvement and Du Maurier's stance whereas other essays such as Brian McFarlane's '*Psycho*: Trust the Tale' look to challenge Hitchcock's position as auteur in light of the source text. Most of these essays are invaluable contributions to both

Hitchcock criticism and adaptation studies, but they still do not paint a picture of the true cause and effect of adaptation on the work of Hitchcock. There is also very little critical work on the adaptation of the stage plays that shaped Hitchcock's earlier work, but then this is in keeping with the general lack of critical work on pre-nineteen thirties Hitchcock. It appears to be much more popular amongst critics to discuss films from *The Thirty Nine Steps* (1935) and onwards as that is when it is considered that the true Hitchcock pictures began, though special attention is often given to *The Lodger* (1926), *Blackmail* (1929) and *Murder!* (1930) because they feed into Hitchcock the 'Master of Suspense'.

Varied essays involving Hitchcock and adaptation crop up in general Hitchcock collections such as 'Hitchcock's Literary Sources' within *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, but there is no sustained study of his entire body of work in relation to adaptation theory akin to a collection like that of either Charles Barr or Raymond Durnat who both look at each of Hitchcock's films, with Barr covering all of his British work while Durnat discusses everything up until *Frenzy* (1972) which was Hitchcock's most recent work at the time of Durnat's writing.

The purpose of this thesis is to look through the lens of adaptation and produce an examination of a large bulk of Hitchcock's work, in an attempt to show that such an undertaking of his entire work, all fifty-three films, would lead to a much clearer understanding of Hitchcock and his filmmaking process, while also explaining and accounting for his often conflicting reputations as an 'auteur' and as the 'Master of Suspense'. We will begin at first with his British period and the plays that were adapted during that time. It is in the theatrical adaptations that the routes of his authorship are evident. I will argue that points throughout Hitchcock's body of work, the signposts of his authorship, the moments when you know that you are watching a Hitchcock film, are not only from the adapted literary texts, but also from his earlier theatrical adaptations. For example, in amongst the many intertextualities that embody *Psycho* (1960), such as Robert Bloch's novel, the film also shares its origins with Hitchcock's adaptation of Noel Coward's *Easy Virtue* (1927). The fact of the matter is that the very bones that make up Hitchcock's body of work have often found their way from the graves of other authors. Sometimes the bone will be small, minimal narrative details, as in the adaptation of John Taintor Foote's short story *The*

Song of the Dragon (1923) which became *Notorious* (1946) which is often described as having very little to do with its literary origins (which is discussed further in Appendix II) or perhaps an almost complete skeletal structure in terms of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1940). The point being that if these bones are not his, then what does that say about his own?

This thesis will follow the structure of a pyramid. The first main two chapters will broadly look at the adapted theatre of Hitchcock's work, essentially the foundations of the pyramid. Like the shape of a pyramid, the focus on adaptation will then narrow and the middle part of the pyramid, the face, will concentrate on the adapted work of Du Maurier, less texts than the theatrical, but dependant on the theatrical foundations, and then atop the pyramid at the very tip will be *Psycho* which could not exist without the structure below it, but from its perch has a vast influence on everything around it.

Concerning Hitchcock's British period, chapter one will look at the films *Easy Virtue*, *The Farmer's Wife* (1928), *Blackmail*, *Juno and the Paycock* (1930) and *The Skin Game* (1931). *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmer's Wife* will be discussed in terms of narrative, as they are silent films that adapt popular plays and have had very little critical work applied to them. The remaining three will be looked at in terms of Hitchcock's use of the camera and his attempt to use and shape the theatrical. From there, chapter three will move forward in time and look at both *Rope* (1948) and *Dial M for Murder* (1954), two Hollywood produced theatrical adaptations that signified Hitchcock's return to the stage play. This chapter will also provide the basis for an adaptation model. By drawing upon Hitchcock's use of the theatrical, the foundations for a model that can be used to examine his complete body of work as a matrix of intersecting intertextualities will be explored and put in place.

Hitchcock's adaptation process will be examined in detail, firstly within the theatrical adaptations and then within the work of another author, Daphne Du Maurier. The Cornish writer was the only author that Hitchcock ever returned to and with the films *Jamaica Inn* (1939), *Rebecca* and *The Birds* (1963) there is an intriguing process to be examined. Not only are both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* Hitchcock's two most well known and most commonly discussed adaptations, but it

was arguably the only time that Hitchcock ever adapted an author who was as famous as he was in his peak. There is also the argument of triple auteurs, with the presence of both Charles Laughton and David O. Selznick, two domineering figures who both insisted on having their say on how the films were adapted. Yet the most interesting element that will be discussed in relation to Du Maurier is *The Birds*, one of Hitchcock's most iconic films, where it will be argued that it bears more similarities to *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* than to Du Maurier's short story. Hitchcock's avian horror at first seems removed from the short story, sharing only its central premise, yet further examination will show that if it were not for the adapted works of Du Maurier's other novels, *The Birds* would not exist. It is a product of the adaptation of Du Maurier as an author and not just of a particular text.

Finally I will look at what is often considered Hitchcock's most famous film, *Psycho*. From looking at a type of adaptation, to the use of an author's work, to one particular iconic film, this narrowing focus is deliberately designed to look at Hitchcock's adaptation process at different levels. This last chapter will also have a slightly different approach. By building on the adaptation model through the use of the theories of, amongst others, Elizabeth Cardwell and Robert Stam, the evolution of *Psycho*, from the cultural influences that inspired and influenced it, through to the many adaptations of *Psycho* itself, will be examined. Amongst discussion will be its roots in Robert Bloch's novel, the serial killer Ed Gein, 1950's post-war America, the film's relationship with Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Les Diabolique* (1955) and the influence that *Psycho* had on American and European cinema. The legacy of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, including the many sequels, remakes, and television shows, will also be reviewed. In essence the purpose of a remake and a sequel is to adapt and recreate the original, yet if the original is not necessarily a product of Hitchcock's authorship, who exactly, for example, is Gus Van Sant recreating with his 1998 version?

None of the texts in this thesis were picked at random. The four British theatrical adaptations and two American were chosen as representative of the theatrical adaptations as a whole. *I Confess* was side-stepped as the original play is in French, while *Waltzes from Vienna* is in German, which would have added an even further adaptation into the mix in the form of a translation. The original texts of the

plays *Downhill* and *Number Seventeen* could have easily replaced any of the four British plays but were side lined instead because the source materials were not as easily accessible as that of *Easy Virtue*, *The Farmer's Wife*, *The Skin Game* and *Juno and the Paycock*. Four plays were picked to offer a wide range of examples but not so much as to dilute the argument with textual references. The Daphne du Maurier adaptations were chosen because they are representative of the one author that Hitchcock adapted more than any other, thus allowing for a prolonged examination of another author within Hitchcock's body of work. The focus will then shift from the study of multiple texts to that of one single adaptation. The criteria for choosing this film meant that it had to be representative of Hitchcock as 'The Master of Suspense', and have a legacy that went beyond Hitchcock, influencing other films and all forms of culture. *Rear Window* or *Strangers on a Train* could have been chosen but *Psycho* was also the most economically successful of all Hitchcock's films⁴ not to mention its far reaching influence on European cinema.

I will be examining and using multiple branches from adaption studies from issues of fidelity, to historical and commercial factors, examining the cultural power of the text, the statuses of the authors and directors, while also incorporating such techniques as Elizabeth Cardwell's 'meta-text theory' and Brian McFarlane's use of narrative adaptation. The purpose of this, in the vein of Gueric DeBona who discusses similar ideas within *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era* (2010) is to create "a matrix for this field of study, broadly consisting of intertextuality, cultural value and authorship"⁵ The aim is to combine the multiple branches of adaptation studies to create a model to challenge the position of the auteur and redefine Hitchcock as the 'Master of Adaptation'.

The title of Boyd and Palmer's book *The Auteur as Adaptor* probably describes the situation best. Concerning Hitchcock, the term auteur is not correct, especially if we are going to consider him an adaptor of texts, yet both labels can co-exist, for it is clearly not only Hitchcock that is a collector of texts. Steven Spielberg, Quentin Tarantino and John Ford are all global names and auteurs, yet all are either

⁴ As will be discussed later, *Psycho* was, commercially, Hitchcock's most successful film.

⁵ DeBona, G., *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2010, p. 6-7.

adaptors of literary texts or in the case of Tarantino, a curator of cinematic forms. All are examples of directors who have a body of work that is rife with intertextualities, thus if the auteur is to exist, then arguably they can only do so via the process of adaptation. The fact that adaptation theory does not fit within the parameters of auteur theory suggests that new parameters need to be drawn up.

This thesis will not deal in length with Hitchcock's screenwriters or his music, nor will it attempt to incorporate all of Hitchcock's text. The intention is to provide a detailed snapshot of Hitchcock's adaptation process to prove that a comprehensive critical analysis is needed of his entire body of work and the vast adaptive process that he has accomplished. While the role of the screenwriter is vital to the process of a film, it is not essential to the preliminary discussion of Hitchcock as an adaptor. If the discussion pertained to Hitchcock's entire body of work then his relationship with and use of the screenwriters would be analysed but as we are looking at a slice of Hitchcock's body of work, his adaptation of plays and novels through a text-to-text comparison will be more than adequate.

To reiterate my original work will consist of a deconstruction of Hitchcock's 'auteur' status, setting out to prove that he is in fact a 'Master of Adaptation', and it is through this status that we will explain his authorship, his brand and his genre. Extensive work will be done on the theatrical plays, especially the early British stage adaptations, which so often sit on the side-lines of Hitchcock scholarship. By analysing Hitchcock's adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's novels, an original reading of *The Birds* will be carried out. While the evolution of a 'Psycho-meta-text' will be discussed, incorporating all sequels remakes and exploitations. Lastly each of the chapters will provide different elements that can go towards the creation of an adaptation model that will be able to organise and structuralise Hitchcock's entire a body of adaptations.

1.2 Auteur Theory and Hitchcock Studies

Auteur theory helped establish film as an art form, identifying a canon and canonical filmmakers, giving importance to the director while playing down the role

of the industrial side of filmmaking. Its very nature is elitist and it is because of this that as a theory it has gone in and out of fashion within film studies. It is however intrinsically linked to adaptation studies; in fact it is very difficult to understand the process of adaptation without addressing the notion of authorship. Both deal with the creation of art and the role of the artist and it is within the attempt to understand these roles that has caused so much debate.

In 1951 *Cahiers du Cinema* appeared and through it French New Wave theorists such as Andre Bazin, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Eric Rohmer and Francois Truffaut gave birth to auteur theory. The movement was born out of a rejection of the then current French period pieces that dominated cinema. Bazin and others believed in the role of the filmmaker and that there was more to film than the recycling of the pre-consumed literature that was often fed to the viewer. The phrase ‘auteur theory’ did not come into existence until Andrew Sarris uttered it years later but its foundations were built in France.

One of the Cahiers champions was Truffaut. In his 1954 essay *Une certaine tendance du cinéma français* he coined the infamous ‘La politiques des Auteurs’, the politics of the author. One of the more often cited points of this essay is Truffaut’s declaration that he would rather watch the worst film of Jean Renoir than the best film of Jean Delannoy. The meaning being that he would rather watch the work of Renoir, a man that Truffaut considered an artist rather than the work of Delannoy, a man that Truffaut dismissed as a craftsmen. ‘Auteur’ versus ‘Metteur en scene’ was one of the main gripes shared by the new wave theorists. It was not the screenwriter or the producer that was responsible for the film, but the director. It was a romantic notion that was born out of a frustration with the industry. An auteur was not merely someone that took instruction and pointed a camera, but someone who used the camera to project their vision. An auteur infused their work with feeling and emotion and was not beholden to anyone else.

The writers of *Cahiers du Cinema* defended and promoted the work of international directors around the world and particularly looked to Hollywood as a source of inspiration where despite being run by powerful producers and moneymen, the director as auteur was able to freely express himself. John Ford, Howard Hawks

and Alfred Hitchcock were among just a few that Truffaut and his colleagues admired and revered. These filmmakers were viewed as auteurs because they appeared to transform material into something personal and should be defended as such because they were the light in the darkness of mediocrity. Bazin wrote:

The evolution of Western art towards greater personalization should definitely be considered as a step forward, but only so long as this individualism remains only a final perfection and does not claim to define culture...the individual transcends society, but society is also and above all within him. So there can be no definitive criticism of genius or talent which does not first take into consideration the social determinism, the historical combination of circumstances, and the technical background to which a larger extent determines it.⁶

It was not until Truffaut in 1962, as Dona Kercher discusses in *Latin Hitchcock*, that Hitchcock was actually “perceived as a great director” and a “true artist” after he “proclaimed Hitchcock great” following his extensive interview with him.⁷ This was followed by his book on the interview *Alfred Hitchcock: A Definitive Study* (1967), and this, coupled with other early sixties work on Hitchcock such as *The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock* (1963) by Peter Bogdanovich, which was also based on an interview with the director, cemented Hitchcock as a “great” director which once the phrase was coined by Andrew Sarris, became a “great” auteur.

Sarris himself, like auteur theory has gone out of fashion. He believed that the auteur was independent of time and place and that they should not be defined by historiography. To do so would take away from the genius. This theory sparked much criticism from other theorists such as Pauline Kael and Edward Buscombe who both argued that not only is aesthetics in fact actually a branch of ethnography⁸ but that Sarris himself would later contradict himself in his own work. Sarris would later write that auteur theory should act as a measurement of value, something that is eventually recognizable over a body of work. This was built upon his notion that the Hollywood industry enabled directors to create structures throughout their work. Overtime these structures would become visible within a directors work. The structures themselves would contain reoccurring characteristics, styles, shots and motifs that would be distinctive to the director, their own signature. This recognition of structures,

⁶ Andre Bazin, ‘On the politique des auteurs’ in Heller, J. (ed.), *Cahiers Du Cinema: The 1950s Neo-Realism, Hollywood, New Wave, Vol. 1*, Routledge. Abingdon, 2005, p. 251.

⁷ Kercher, D., *Latin Hitchcock: How Almodovar, Amenabar, De la Iglesia, Del Toro and Campanella became Notorious*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2015, p. 2-3.

⁸ Edward Buscombe, ‘Ideas of Authorship’ in Grant, B.K (ed.) *Auteurs and Authorship*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2008, p.81.

something that is recognizable over a body of work, as Sarris states can act as a measurement of value, but as Buscombe counters:

[Sarris] is attempting to make the *auteur* theory perform two functions at the same time. On the one hand it is a method of classification. Sarris talks elsewhere about the value of the theory as a way of ordering film history, or a tool for producing a map of the cinema, and no one could deny that in this sense the theory has, whatever its faults, been extremely productive, as a map should be, in opening up unexplored territory. But at the same time Sarris also requires the theory to act as a means of value. Films, he is saying, become valuable so far as they reveal directorial personality. He therefore does precisely what Bazin said should not be done: he uses individuality as a test of cultural value.⁹

Buscombe, amongst others, argue that it is impossible to separate the *auteur* from the culture that formed him; here Sarris trips over his own words. It is worth noting though that Sarris' suggestion that *auteur* theory should be used as a map of film history is very important, especially when regarding the cinematic work of the twentieth century. For example, concerning Hitchcock, his work in the twenties is a snapshot of a director's view of post-World War One Britain. While not being documentaries in the traditional sense of the world, cinema, in whatever form, is still a commentary of the time.

It is from the work of *Cahiers* and Sarris that Hitchcock's reputation still survives today, prompting Thomas Leitch to refer to him as the "last *auteur* standing"¹⁰ amongst what he sees as a continuing disavowal of the *auteur*, something which dates back to Barthes who in reaction to the elitist standing given to the author famously argued:

The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into *before* and *after*. The author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern scriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here* and *now*.¹¹

Barthes proclaims that the author is no longer relevant. The art of writing has moved on and changed, becoming more of a product of society and culture as

⁹ Edward Buscombe, 'Ideas of Authorship' in Grant, B.K (ed.) *Auteurs and Authorship*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2008, p.81-82.

¹⁰ Thomas Leitch, 'Hitchcock the Author' in Osteen, M. (ed.), *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen*, Rowman and Littlefield, Plymouth, 2014, p 4.

¹¹ Roland Barthes, 'Fiction of the author/ author of the fiction' in Caughie, J., *Theories of Authorship*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1999, p. 210.

opposed to defining it. An author's words have thus become just language, and it is in society and the reader where the true meaning is found:

For him, on the contrary, the hand, cut off from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin – or which, at least, has no other origin than language itself, language which ceaselessly calls into question all origins.¹²

Michel Foucault shares Barthes vehement rejection of the author's role although the French theorist's attitude is less rigid. Foucault saw the use in an author's name performing classification functions:

The proper name and the name of an author oscillate between the poles of description and designation, and, granting that they are linked to what they name, they are not totally determined either by their descriptive or designative functions. Yet – and it is here that the specific difficulties attending an author's name appear – the link between a proper name and the individual being named and the link between an author's name and that which it names are not isomorphous and do not function in the same way; and these differences require clarification.¹³

One cannot take away the fundamental function of a proper name but if the author has become merely a 'regulator of fiction' then the name must undergo a change as well. The name becomes the beholder of the discourse in question. It is a label used to identify the work within the culture that it is positioned.

Foucault details the different positions that a name can hold in society from ownership of property through to the signatory on the bottom of a private letter. The point Foucault makes is that society has become saturated with redundant pieces of information, all of which are products of a name, and thus to truly understand the culture that is produced within this overcrowded society, the name of the author must be reduced to merely a classification tool so that the work in question can be truly understood:

In this sense, the function of an author is to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society.¹⁴

¹² Barthes, p. 211.

¹³ Michel Foucault, 'What is an author? (extract),' in Caughie, J., *Theories of Authorship*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1999, p. 283.

¹⁴ Foucault, p. 284.

Yet despite all this ferocity at the position of the author, as Leitch states, Hitchcock still stands. Foucault was followed by theorists such as John Caughie who summarised¹⁵ much that went before him, such as believing that the author was within the text rather than behind it, and that this recognition was not recognition of their genius, but in keeping with their own discourse. Helen Stoddart remarks that this notion was rarely challenged within film journals in the eighties, yet the power of the auteur still remained prominent within film reviews and public perception.

Since then the notion of authorship has been resurgent in many different forms. It can be argued that in modern culture the notion of an 'auteur' has become somewhat of a marketing label, with directors such as Quentin Tarantino and Steven Spielberg becoming as popular as their own films, something which refers back to the work of Truffaut. The biography of a director is also incredibly important in today's society with someone such as Spike Lee and his relation to black cinema or Park Chan Wook and his relation to Korean cinema as examples of the concentration on a director's biography that echoes back to Bazin, ultimately stressing the importance of culture on the auteur.

In *Film Authorship: Auteurs and Other Myths* (2010), Sellors argues that "conventional notions of the auteur mythologise filmmaking by attributing authorship solely to a director"¹⁶ and thus like Leitch in 'Hitchcock the Author' calls for a different form of authorship because "the concept of a film author is indispensable"¹⁷

In 2006 David Morris Kippen coined the term 'Schrieber Theory' when he argued that the principal author of the film is and always has been, the screenwriter. This is another argument that again pulls the stage light off of the director as auteur and one that can be viewed in other criticism such as the argument for producer as auteur in Matthew Bernstein's 'The Producer as Auteur'.

Hitchcock scholarship mirrors this trend in returning to the need for the author without actually suggesting an auteur. In recent years critical works such as *Writing*

¹⁵ Caughie, p. 204.

¹⁶ Sellors, C.P, *Film Authorship: Auteurs and Other Myths*, Wallflower Press, London, 2010, p. 127.

¹⁷ Sellors, p. 4.

With Hitchcock: The Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and John Michael Hayes (2001) and essays such as Charles Barr's 'Blackmail: Charles Bennett and the Decisive Turn' have championed the role of the script-writer within the work of Hitchcock, specifically contradicting Hitchcock's own public downplaying of the process. *After Hitchcock: Influence, Imitation, and Intertextuality* (2006) looks at both the authorial influences on Hitchcock's work while also examining the director's influence on other films, as such looking for Hitchcock the author elsewhere. This links to other branches of scholarship, firstly adaptation theory which will be looked at separately and secondly the influence of Hitchcock outside of Hollywood, which is examined in Kercher's *Latin Hitchcock* (2015) and Jerome Silbergeld's *Hitchcock with a Chinese Face: Cinematic Doubles, Oedipal Triangles, and China's Moral Voice* (2004).

Prior to this recent wave of texts that have looked to re-establish an author within Hitchcock's work, the critical scholarship lent itself towards all facets of film theory. Concerning Hitchcock's authorship, Rothman's *Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze* (2012) sets out a detailed close analysis of five of Hitchcock's films that "complement each other meaningfully" and "stand in for Hitchcock's authorship as a whole" while Raymond Durnat's *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock* (1978) and Rohmer and Chabrol's *The First Forty-Four Films* (1979) represent a body of work that looked at Hitchcock's films while he was alive, not always favourably as in the case of Durnat, but always with the director in mind as the author. These three texts are also examples of an analysis of Hitchcock's authorship that ignores the majority of the British plays, as well as other 'obvious' adaptations such as *I Confess* (1953) and *Jamaica Inn*. Even within biographical texts such as the often criticized *The Dark Side of Genius* (Spoto, 1983)¹⁸ *Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness* (McGilligan, 2003), and *It's Only a Movie: Alfred Hitchcock* (Chandler, 2005), all of which are historical journeys through Hitchcock's life and his work, the majority of the British theatrical adaptations hardly get a mention. There are multiple reasons for this ignorance, the first of which could be blamed on the lack of availability of the early British films for critics to re-watch, which has only been made recently available in

¹⁸ Kercher refers to Spoto's book as being "disavowed by the Hitchcock clan." – Kercher, p. 1. While Robin Wood describes it as an "extremely unpleasant book" but still "very useful" – *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, p. 340.

the case of some of his silent cinema. Secondly, the fact that the theatrical adaptation is considered by many to be the antithesis of Hitchcock's 'pure cinema' and thus the pre-1934 British work, the majority of which is adapted for the stage, is often disregarded in studies of authorship. Thirdly, ignorance could be due to the critic Robin Wood who, despite retracting the reading in his revised edition of *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* (2002), would have influenced a generation of film critics when he destroyed Hitchcock's British work in his 1965 edition:

One day, perhaps, we shall rediscover Hitchcock's British films and do them justice; they are so overshadowed by his recent development as to seem, in retrospect, little more than 'prentice work...One can, of course, find most of the later themes and methods adumbrated in them; but who wants the leaf-buds when the rose has opened? The notion that the British films are better than, or as good as, or comparable with the later Hollywood ones seems to me not worth discussion.¹⁹

Concerning other aspects of this thesis in relation to Hitchcock scholarship, the Daphne du Maurier adaptations receive varied levels of attention. *Jamaica Inn*, like the majority of the theatrical plays is often overlooked. It hardly ever occurs in accounts of general British film history, nor do Hitchcock collections or readers appear to ever contain essays or chapters devoted to it. The main exceptions are Charles Barr's *English Hitchcock* (1999) and Maurice Yacowar's *Hitchcock's British Films* (2010) which each take time to look at every British film, yet neither spend any real time devoted to Du Maurier and, while *Jamaica Inn* is discussed, the theoretical interest is just not there. *Jamaica Inn* is an unusual case. Critically it has fallen into a gap where it follows Hitchcock's much discussed thriller sextet, comes just before he moves to America, is an adaptation of a popular novel thus alienating authorship criticism and is generally considered a 'bad' representation of his work.

Rebecca appears more prominently, lending itself to historical and production criticism due to Selznick's dominant role in the filmmaking process, as described in *Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood* (1987), while also lending itself to queer theory, psychoanalysis and the film noir genre as seen in such texts as *Women in Film Noir*

¹⁹ Wood, R., *Hitchcock's Films Revisited: Revised Edition*, Columbia University Press Ltd., New York, 2002, p. 73.

(Kaplan, 1998) and *The Women Who Knew Too Much* (Modleski, 2005), the latter of which will be used extensively in this thesis in relation to Du Maurier.

The Birds can be placed in the same context as *Psycho* with both texts having libraries of literature devoted to them, although this does not include what this thesis will cover. These two films, alongside *Rear Window* (1954) and *Vertigo* (1958), are often considered Hitchcock's best films, thus while they are all theoretically accessible from almost every angle (cultural, technical, gender, psychoanalysis etc.), there is also a commercial factor that comes into play, as in a critical work devoted to *The Birds* will always sell more than one about *Jamaica Inn*.

1.3 Auteur-structuralism

A brief explanation of auteur-structuralism is needed as the adaptation model that will be discussed within the thesis is borrowed from the work of Peter Wollen. Auteur-structuralism is essentially the search for order and structure within cinema. As Helen Stoddart states²⁰ the framework for this was taken from the work of Levi-Strauss who in turn used Saussurean linguistics. Meaning is drawn from the relationship between language and signs and it is through the work of British structuralist Peter Wollen that we can see how auteur-structuralism took shape. Helen Stoddart notes²¹ that Wollen drew much of his work from Vladimir Propp's work on the structure of fairy tales which ultimately evolved into finding structures within an auteur's work:

My own view is that Ford's work is much richer than that of Hawks and that this is revealed by a structural analysis; it is Ford's work that makes him a great artist, beyond being simply an undoubted *auteur*. Moreover, the *auteur* theory enables us to reveal a whole complex of meaning in films such as *Donovan's Reef*, which a recent filmography sums up as just 'a couple of Navy men who have retired to a South Sea island now most of their time raising hell'.²²

²⁰ Helen Stoddart, 'Auteurism and Film Authorship' in Hollows, J., and Jancovich, M., (eds.) *Approaches to Popular Film*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995, p. 44.

²¹ Stoddart, p. 45.

²² Peter Wollen, 'The Auteur Theory' in Grant, B.K (ed.) *Auteurs and Authorship*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2008, p.63.

Using Wollen's example of Ford, he believes that by identifying the structure of Ford's work he can not only compare it to the work of another director but he can seek out meaning in a so called lesser film, thus bringing theoretical credibility to a film such as *Donovan's Reef*.

Helen Stoddart comments that Peter Wollen abandons Sarris' checklist of techniques and styles and instead moves forward with Geoffrey Nowell Smith's use of structurally hidden motifs that:

...may reveal an auteur, but that the work of 'great directors' needs to be marked not only by 'shifting relations' across films, but by 'singularity' and significant eccentricity or exception.²³

The auteur's work must therefore be exceptional, but this exception is found within the hidden structure. Unlike *Cahiers* where the director is praised, the structuralist praises the unconscious work:

It is wrong, in the name of a denial of the traditional idea of creative subjectivity, to deny any status to individuals at all. But Fuller or Hawks or Hitchcock, the directors, are quite separate from 'Fuller' or 'Hawks' or 'Hitchcock', the structures named after them, and should not be methodically confused.²⁴

'Hitchcock' films are thus different to Hitchcock's films. The structure that defines the body of work subsequently transcends the status of the director. Concerning this theory Stoddart remarks²⁵ that the director is thus reduced to a mere catalyst for "the coming together of culturally important structuring motifs, the full weight of which may be quite beyond them".

The structuralist model's ability to find "meaning" within "lesser" films while also identifying structure within "unconscious work" are two factors that are in a sense, going to be adapted for another cause. An adaptation model will factor in and make use of every text from a director's body of work, while the very notion of adaptation involves the coming together of cultural structures.

²³ Helen Stoddart, 'Auteurism and Film Authorship' in Hollows, J., and Jancovich, M., (eds.) *Approaches to Popular Film*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995, p. 46

²⁴ Peter Wollen, 'The Auteur Theory,' in *Signs and Meanings in the Cinema*, 2nd ed., Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1972, p.168

²⁵ Stoddart, p. 47.

1.4 Adaptation Theory

I have always been interested in adaptation as a practice, and while the notion of ‘interest’ is not very theoretical, it has to be recognized that adaptation and the issue of fidelity is a substantial marketing tool within the film industry. This marketing tool relies on an element of ‘viewer interest’, which usually concerns itself with fidelity, the bane of adaptation studies. Now while it may be ‘interesting’ to discuss how a film may differ from its original source, if all that can be appreciated from an adaptation is its cinematic differences and faults, then the academic value of the transformation process becomes redundant, especially when the notion of fidelity is used to judge whether an adaptation is successful or not. The viewer interest in adaptation is typically derived from an expectation of faithfulness to the source text and thus when those expectations are not fulfilled, adaptations are often judged accordingly, which is a notion that originally affected the early workings of adaptation studies. In recent years some of the most commercially successful films in Hollywood have been the franchises of *Harry Potter*, *Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* and *The Hunger Games*, all of which have were under strict scrutiny from rabid literature fan bases that already had prior expectations of a certain faithfulness to fidelity.

Adaptation studies have been through a rough time over the years, its main problem being that nobody really ever found it a home. It has been discussed, attacked and defended from all sides, but it is only in recent years, as will be discussed, where it has been really put to pragmatic use.

In its simplest form an adaptation must be analysed for what it has become and the actual transformation from text to film must be examined. Precedence should never be given to one piece of art over another, so for example, making changes to a particular character in a novel cannot be considered a negative change; it is merely part of the artistic process. Novels and films, good or bad, are all forms of art, and if art is an imitation of life, then adaptation is an imitation of art. Art is not judged on its accurate portrayal of life, it is judged on what it has become, what it now represents and how it came to be. Adaptation must thus be judged accordingly. This is not a new

way of thinking. Pick up any modern critical work on adaptation and you will find that the aim of the writer is to legitimize adaptations studies and to help it find a proper home in the academic world.

Within ‘Adaptations – The Contemporary Dilemma’ Imelda Whelehan discusses the modern novel and Hollywood’s relationship with adaptations. She notes that “there is little that unites the study of visual and written narratives in academic work” and moves on further to say that “perhaps the chief problem lies in teasing out our own and other’s conscious and unconscious prejudices about this kind of ‘hybrid’ study”.²⁶ It is this search for a middle ground between literature and film that has caused many problems for theorists over the years. Whelehan’s suggestion that it is our own prejudices that create issues when studying adaptation does have some credence, yet it is not really relevant anymore. The stigma that may have been attached to the study of both film studies and literature is no longer present. Literature and film are almost interchangeable in today’s society, with both mediums using each other to promote themselves and further their own evolution. The practise of adaptation within cinema is more than just a global process; as discussed it is a lucrative marketing technique. A commercially successful novel has always meant that any subsequent adaptation would be placed in the spotlight, ready to be either criticised or congratulated by an awaiting audience. Whatever the outcome, Hollywood will generally benefit financially and it is through Hollywood’s attention to adaptation that academic interest in the subject has grown. Whelehan notes “an interest in the process of adaptation from text to screen which has increased in the past two decades, in a sense has emerged with the popularity of films based on works of fiction and particularly the developments of the Hollywood film industry”.²⁷

1.5 Problems & Differences

Film theorists seem to have spent more time analysing the problems with adaptation studies than actually searching for a practical use for the much-maligned

²⁶ Imelda Whelehan, ‘Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemma’ in Cartmell, D., and Whelehan, I., (eds.), *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 3.

²⁷ Whelehan, p. 3.

subject. The main problem is fidelity and it is a self-inflicted wound. At its most basic level, adaptation deals with at least two entities. There is nothing wrong with comparing a film adaptation with its literary source because the film in question exists because of the novel. It is through comparing the two texts that one can understand the process that has been undertaken. Analysing the differences between novel and film is the essence of adaptation studies, but it is a fine line between making an analysis and passing judgment. Fidelity criticism has dogged adaptation studies since its inception within the film studies canon, attempting to ensnare any film theorist who dared to come in to contact with the subject. Criticism of a film because it differs to its source novel is irrelevant. However, discussing differences or similarities as a means of examining a particular adaptive process is the key to adaptation studies. To understand the mechanics of the adaptive process from novel to film, it is essential to look at the differences between the two mediums and the conclusions from the findings.

In *Novels to Film* (1966) George Bluestone states that the relationship between novel and film is “overtly compatible, secretly hostile”.²⁸ What Bluestone means is that while novel and film seem to share many obvious characteristics that in turn would allow for some progressive academic study, the differences between the two are in fact so vast that any kind of study is already compromised on a fundamental level. Bluestone states, “it is insufficiently recognised that the end products of novel and film represent different aesthetic genera, as different from each other as ballet is from architecture”. He goes on to speak more specifically about the mediums:

The reputable novel, generally speaking, has been supported by a small, literate audience, has been produced by an individual writer, and has remained relatively free of rigid censorship. The film, on the other hand, has been supported by a mass audience, produced co-operatively under industrial conditions, and restricted by a self-imposed Production Code. These developments have reinforced rather than vitiated the autonomy of each medium.²⁹

Bluestone is completely correct in his analysis of the physical difference between the film and novel. Each medium is of course produced under vastly different conditions, but one must ask, does it really matter? Film and literature are far more closely connected than Bluestone’s exaggerated example suggests. While both

²⁸ Bluestone, G., *Novels Into Film*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1966, p. 2.

²⁹ Bluestone, p. viii.

share narrative mediums, films are often produced because of some form of literature. There is already an underlying connection between the texts. Theatre and literature were originally reference points for cinema's aspirations towards respectability so historically there is already a theoretical connection.

Seymour Chatman's essay 'What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa)' eventually boils down to the theory that a film cannot physically recreate a novel. Chatman examines Jean Renoir's *Une Partie de campagne* (1936) and the short story of the same name by the French writer Guy de Maupassant, and despite expressing great admiration for the film; Chatman believes that it fails in adapting the novel. The reason for this failure is because of what Chatman perceives to be vast differences in narrative techniques. He focuses his attention on description and point of view, and relates both to time structuring, which he sees as a constant in all narrative mediums. Time structuring consists of 'realist time', which follows a linear time passage and 'discourse time', which consists of flashbacks and flash-forwards, ultimately following no linear passage. Chatman presents a very close textual analysis of Maupassant's short story, literally word for word, and then examines its depiction on screen. Chatman argues that the visual world depicted by a film, can never be that of a novel. In literature we create a picture with the words with which we are presented, whereas in film we are presented with a picture and we (usually) have a very short time to take anything away from it. Chatman writes "in its essential visual mode, film does not describe at all but merely presents; or better, it depicts." Chatman is essentially examining the faithfulness of Renoir's film, yet he is not taking anything away from Renoir. Chatman clearly loves the film ("Now we get to one of my favourite shots in the film"),³⁰ yet he is attacking it on the level of being an adaptation. Chatman sets out to prove that Maupassant's short story cannot be recreated and that Renoir has to change certain scenes, characters and parts of the narrative to film the novel. Chatman discusses how Renoir solves these problems and subsequently what impact they have on the film. This approach allows no room for interpretation on Renoir's part. Chatman looks at parts of Maupassant's text as un-

³⁰ Seymour Chatman, 'What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (and Vice Versa), in Braudy, L. and Cohen, M (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Sixth Edition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 455.

adaptable obstacles, and thus they *must* be changed. According to Chatman, Renoir is not creating his own work, but instead he is trying to recreate Maupassant's.

The fact that most novels and short stories come to us through the voice of a narrator gives authors a greater range and flexibility than filmmakers.³¹

Authors apparently have more to work with, thus the voice of a narrator, a greater manipulation of time and boundless descriptions, all play a part in creating a text that according to Chapman, cannot be adapted properly. This elevates the novel to a higher status than the film. This was and still is a very real danger in adaptation studies. Many view the novel as being sacred and thus any form of on screen manipulation is sacrilegious. Sarah Cardwell's *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel* (2002) discusses the problems that adaptation studies faces when the novel is of an established kind. Cardwell examines such adaptations as *Moll Flanders* and *Pride and Prejudice* and discusses how because of the novel's popularity and subsequently the audience's rapport with the text, fidelity becomes almost impossible to escape from:

It seems both inaccurate and unjust to obviate the intentions of those responsible for 'authoring' the screen text, reducing the adaptation's 'authors' to some kind of transparent medium through which the source-text author expresses his or her intentions. It is reductive to refer the meanings expressed in an adaptation to the intentions of the author of the source-text. It is also unfair to assume that the filmmaker's intention to adapt necessarily constitutes a desire to subordinate his or her own artistic aims to the expression of the intentions of the 'first' author, so that the interpretation of adaptations becomes the evaluation of fidelity to intention twice removed.³²

The film should not be expected to just present the same meanings and views as the source-text. It is narrow minded to think that the literary beginnings should have a hold over the cinematic adaptation. Cardwell writes "to bring about an adaptation clearly requires (a process of) adaptation – a conscious process of working upon a text in order to suit it to another medium". It is not a case of just recreating the actions from a work of literature, to think so is an insult to the medium of film and television. As mentioned earlier, if art is an imitation of life, then adaptation is an imitation of art. Just as art digests life to produce something, so an adaptation digests art and allows for the creation of new and interpretative form:

³¹ Chatman, p. 453.

³² Cardwell, S., *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002, p. 23.

Every adaptation is an authored, conscious response to or interpretation of a source text, one that may or may not be concerned with ‘fidelity’, but is necessarily concerned with the creation of an independent film or television text.³³

1.6 A ‘Successful Adaptation’

Is there such thing as a successful adaptation? To suggest that there is would surely mean that criteria would have to have been established to create a model that could gauge if an adaptation was indeed successful. So far no model exists, and essentially it could not. To whose standards would one measure the success? If it is to be measured on narrative content or any other particular characteristics then it must be able to cross the mediums. To discuss the idea of a successful adaptation once again runs the risk of bringing in fidelity, yet that has not stopped some film theorists from giving it a try. In ‘Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemmas’, referring to the work of Bluestone and Hortense Powdermaker, Imelda Whelehan discusses:

What is clear is that certain features of novelistic expression must be retained in order to guarantee a ‘successful’ adaptation, but clearly the markers of success vary depending largely on which features of the literary narrative are deemed essential to a reproduction of its core meaning.³⁴

This theory completely contradicts Sarah Cardwell’s argument that a film should not be viewed as a “transparent medium” for the source-text. How exactly would one define these “features” and if this is the only way for a novel to be considered a successful adaptation, then what does this mean for the author of the film? Consider very briefly Hitchcock’s *The Lodger*, an adapted novel that changes the identity of the killer; is this a change too far? Is this an essential element of the literary narrative? Multiple accounts suggest that it was a change made by the studio in an attempt to protect Ivor Novello, thus what does this say about the status of Hitchcock? Considering that the novel deals almost solely with one couple’s obsession with the possibility that their lodger is in fact a notorious London serial killer and that the novel builds towards a climatic ending to reveal the truth, one could

³³ Cardwell, p. 21.

³⁴ Imelda Whelehan, ‘Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemma’ in Cartmell, D. and Whelehan, I., (eds.), *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 7.

assume that in the terms of the novel's narrative, the identity of the killer is essential. Yet the ending is changed, revealing a different killer altogether. In fact, the lodger in question transforms from possible killer to hero. Does this dramatic change then mean that Hitchcock's film is not a successful adaptation? In Deborah Cartmell's 'The Shakespeare on Screen Industry' she discusses the literary-biased idea that "success is achieved not by rubbishing but by revering the original; the successful adaptation must make clear that it is – and can only be – a pale version of the Shakespearian text."³⁵ This may be referring to Shakespeare, but it is still establishing grounds for a 'successful adaptation', in this case that the source-text must be revered and the adaptation must always recognise that it can only ever be a "pale imitation". If Hitchcock had decided to produce a film of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, could it only ever have been considered successful if it bowed down to Shakespeare's original text? Would Alfred Hitchcock have set out to make a film, knowing that it could only ever be a pale version of the Shakespearean text? The answer is obviously no. This may only be a hypothetical situation but if Hitchcock had decided to adapt Shakespeare then he would have done so on his own terms, approaching the source-text in the same manner as he did with every film project he worked on. Orson Welles' Shakespearean adaptations were notorious for cutting dialogue and character, while Kenneth Branagh often attempts to produce accurate reproductions of Shakespeare's work, does this then mean that as Branagh as shown a great reverence to the literary text then his adaptation is more successful? Much like auteurism has often walked over adaptation theory, in the same vein the source novel is often presented as transcending above the filmmaker. Adaptation studies is doomed to fail if it is approached from the point-of-view that the source-text is an untouchable work of art.

1.7 Classifying Adaptation and Adapting the Narrative

In his essay 'Adaptation', Dudley Andrew attempts to identify types of adaptation without favouring either medium. This has been a common practise among

³⁵ Deborah Cartmell, 'The Shakespeare on Screen Industry' in Cartmell, D. and Whelehan, I., (eds.), *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 29-30

theorists. If an adaptation can be identified, then it can be categorised. Thus adaptations can be looked at under different labels and studied accordingly. Andrew appreciates the importance of the novel and the relationship that it has with its adaptation. Any novel “bears a transcendent relation to any and all films that adapt it, for it is itself an artistic sign with a given shape and value, if not a finished meaning.” As quoted earlier Andrew goes on to say “no filmmaker and no film... responds immediately to reality itself, or to its own inner vision. Every representational film adapts a prior conception.” Andrew is stating that every representational film, which in a sense, every single film, is an adaptation of a prior conception and to Andrew the novel is essential to understanding the adaptation. He separates and identifies three modes of adaptation: borrowing, intersection and fidelity of transformation. On borrowing, Andrew notes “the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text.” Andrew goes on further to state that this form of adaptation aims to build off the prestige of the original text. Biblical stories, Charles Dickens’s novels and Shakespeare plays would all be examples of what Andrew would view as likely candidates for ‘borrowing’:

To study this mode of adaptation, the analyst needs to probe the source of power in the original by examining the use made of it in adaptation. Here the main concern is the generality of the original, its potential for wide and varied appeal; in short, its existence as a continuing form or archetype in culture.³⁶

The second form of adaptation according to Andrew is ‘intersecting’:

Here the uniqueness of the original text is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation. The cinema, as a separate mechanism, records its confrontation with an ultimately intransigent text...Andre Bazin championing this film,³⁷ and this mode, claimed that in this instance we are presented not with an adaptation so much as a refraction of the original.³⁸

Dudley Andrew likens the novel to a chandelier and the film to a flashlight. The chandelier illuminates the room in a brilliant light. The flashlight however is unable to light up the entire room, yet it *is* able to brighten the room in a different way and more specifically light up areas that the chandelier’s light may fail to illuminate.

³⁶ Dudley Andrew, ‘From Concepts in Film Theory’ in Braudy, L. and Cohen, M (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Sixth Edition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 463.

³⁷ Dudley Andrew refers to Robert Bresson’s *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951) when he explains what ‘intersecting’ is and then subsequently Andre Bazin’s view of the film and theory.

³⁸ Andrew, p. 463.

Now while Andrew's metaphor obviously favours the source text, the theory behind it is still practical and sound. The adaptation can take the text and view it in an entirely different manner. Continuing with the 'illuminated room' metaphor, the film camera can twist and manipulate how the room looks into almost anything it desires, yet it is still the original room.

Andrew's third form of adaptation is 'fidelity of transformation':

Here it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about an original text. Here we have a clear-cut case of film trying to measure up to a literary work, or of an audience expecting to make such a comparison. Fidelity of adaptation is conventionally treated in relation to the 'letter' and to the 'spirit' of the text, as though adaptation were the rendering of a legal precedent.

Andrew's continues:

More difficult is fidelity of the spirit, to the original's tone, values, imagery, and rhythm, since finding stylistic equivalents in film for these intangible aspects is the opposite of a mechanical process. The cineaste presumably must intuit and reproduce the feeling of the original. It has been argued variously that this is frankly impossible, or that it involves the systematic replacement of verbal signifiers by cinematic signifiers, or that it is the product of artistic intuition.³⁹

Dudley Andrew explains that to transform the mechanical process of a novel into a film is 'frankly impossible'. As Seymour Chatman attempted to prove, the two mediums of literature and screen are apparently too different. However, Andrew touches on the possible key to adaptation studies when he mentions verbal and cinematic signifiers.

In Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film* (2011) he examines every approach that there is towards adaptation studies in a bid to find a mode of study to replace the subjective response. McFarlane declares that adaptation studies remains in a 'limited' and 'tentative' stage and will remain so due to three chief inhibitive approaches:

- (a) the near fixation with the issue of fidelity;
- (b) the reliance on an individual, impressionistic sense of what the two texts are like; and
- (c) the implied sense of the novel's supremacy or, the other side of this particular coin, the sense that a film is a film and there is no point in considering it as an adaptation."⁴⁰

³⁹ Andrew, p. 465.

⁴⁰ McFarlane, B., *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 194

After rejecting these approaches, McFarlane uses five different case studies in an attempt to create a new apparatus for adaptation studies:

I believe it has been shown possible to draw some useful conclusions about the processes involved in novel-to-film adaptation and about critical procedures in dealing with these. Broadly, a distinction has been made between those novelistic elements which can be transferred and those which require adaptation proper, the former essentially concerned with narrative, which functions irrespective of medium, and the latter with enunciation, which calls for consideration of two different signifying systems.⁴¹

McFarlane stresses the importance of narrative and describes how because it ‘functions irrespective of medium’ it is the one constant that a subjective analysis involving sign systems can be built upon. By using the respective narratives and the narrative procedures of each medium, there is something practical that can be analysed. McFarlane draws on Roland Barthes’ theory of ‘narrative functions’ and more specifically ‘cardinal functions’ and ‘catalysers’.⁴² ‘Cardinal functions’ are the key elements to a narrative, the actions that link the plot together rationally and chronologically. The ‘catalysers’ allow the ‘cardinal functions’ to operate, connecting and supporting the action. The ‘catalysers’ are smaller actions, yet if they were to be changed then the impact would be to alter that of the ‘cardinal functions’.

Certainly film will need to select from among a novel’s cardinal functions and sometimes it may feel the need to create new ones of its own.⁴³

The adaptation process that occurs between novel and film becomes much clearer once the ‘narrative functions’ of both mediums are analysed. By using this system, the notion of fidelity is reduced to a study of signifying signs. In a sense, adaptation studies then becomes a study of signs and more accurately, how those signs are interpreted and transformed. A filmmaker may choose to present a novel’s major narrative elements, retaining the important ‘cardinal functions’, yet due to the in-transferable ‘functions’, functional equivalents come into play, ultimately

⁴¹ McFarlane, B., *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 195.

⁴² McFarlane cites Roland Barthes theory of ‘narrative functions’ in ‘Introduction to the Structural Analysis of narratives’, in Heath, S. (trans. & ed.), *Image-Music-Text*, Fontana Press, London, 1977, p. 89.

⁴³ McFarlane, p. 196.

“exercising the film’s signifying system in such a way to give a different emphasis”⁴⁴. As mentioned earlier, there are elements in literature that are not transferable to film. Novelists have different technical options to filmmakers and thus when an in-transferable ‘cardinal function’ appears, an equivalent function is created. What does this equivalent mean? What does it mean to the text? What is the filmmaker attempting to achieve? A simple change conjures up a host of simple questions that adaptation studies looks to answer.

In the conclusion to McFarlane’s study he writes:

My purpose has not been to arrive at comparative evaluations of novel and film, a surely pointless enterprise, but to try to establish some guidelines for exploring the different natures of the experiences by the two related texts. By distinguishing between transfer (i.e. of certain narrative functions) and adaptation proper (e.g. dialogue, ‘informants’, which draw on both processes), I believe it is possible to discuss what kind of adaptation has been made. That is to say, one can with some degree of objectivity distinguish the literal-minded translation from those adaptations which, more or less radically, rework their source material.⁴⁵

Using the study of signs and their signifiers, McFarlane suggests that adaptations can almost be categorised, separated into particular ‘kinds’. This notion, while making logical sense, borders too closely to Andrews three types of adaptation, itself a notion, when looked at in light of the evolution of adaptation studies, is almost unnecessary. It is a tactic that has been championed multiple times by such theorists as Jack Jorgen and his three classes of ‘theatrical, realist and filmic adaptations’ and also Kamilla Elliot’s six divisions of adaptation, ‘psychic, international, ventriloquist, decomposing, genetic and trumping’. Deborah Cartmell, Imelda Whelehan and Thomas Leitch all comment on the fact that these lists border too closely with fidelity, suggesting that their systems of classification involves judgement and values which is essentially returning to the issue of fidelity and thus rendering the many forms of classification fruitless. However, it should be noted though that despite his suggestion of ‘adaptation types’ McFarlane’s adaptation of Barthes’ theory of ‘narrative functions’ is quite possibly the most practical and effective means of studying the adaptive process.

⁴⁴ McFarlane, p. 197.

⁴⁵ McFarlane, p. 197

1.8 Historical Adaptation and the Meta-Text

In *Adaptation Revisited* Sarah Cardwell puts forward one of the most intriguing approaches to adaptation studies, with an alternative model of study referred to as the ‘meta-text theory’:

There is evidently the necessity for a more realistic, complex and nuanced understanding of adaptation. It would be more accurate to view adaptation as the gradual development of a ‘meta-text’. This view recognises that a later adaptation may draw upon any earlier adaptations, as well as upon the primary source text. In a sense, this understanding of adaptation draws upon the model of genetic adaptation for its inspiration, in terms of its increased historicity and its recognition of the role that each and every adaptation, as well as the source text, has played in the formation of the most recent adaptation. It allows for generic development, as subsequent film or television adaptations draw upon previous ones, and it does not posit the ‘original’ source/individual adaptation relationship as a direct, unmediated and ahistorical one.⁴⁶

Cardwell’s suggested model of adaptation allows for an adaptation to be tracked along an artistic line, starting with the ur-text (the original text) and then through to the adapted works. Shakespearean adaptations, as well as classic novel adaptations fit perfectly into this model as they are of a historical genre where the same texts are continually adapted. For example, Shakespeare’s original text of *Romeo and Juliet*, Franco Zeffirelli’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and the 2011 animated feature *Gnomeo and Juliet*, are all a part of the *Romeo and Juliet* ‘meta-text’. Each one can be “regarded as points on a continuum, as part of an extended development of a singular, infinite meta-text...that is constantly growing and developing, being retold, reinterpreted and reassessed.”⁴⁷ Texts that appear to have only been adapted once, such as James Dickey’s *Deliverance* (1970) and John Boorman’s adaptation of the same name are also a part of the ‘meta-text’ model. Every film that has borrowed from Boorman’s film and every novel that has been influenced by Boorman’s adaptation becomes a part of the *Deliverance* ‘meta-text’. Every piece of art is adapted from another, and the ‘meta-text’ allows for this chain of artistic adaptations to be recorded and studied. For example, we can track James Dickey’s classic American novel all the way to *Without a Paddle* (Brill, 2004). Brill’s film is in no way a literal adaptation of Dickey’s text yet in many ways it parodies Boorman’s film, creating a gross-out comedy about a

⁴⁶ Cardwell, p. 25.

⁴⁷ Cardwell, S. (2002), (Page 25).

group of old friends who come up against nature. *Without a Paddle* is a part of the infinite *Deliverance* 'meta-text' that will continue to evolve with every adaptation, version and influence, no matter how far removed it may appear to be. It is a theory that can and will be applied to Hitchcock's work with texts such as *Rope* and *Psycho*, allowing us to draw on remakes and sequels as well as pre-existing texts. This theory has been studied in numerous works such as in *Hunting the Dark Knight* (2012) where Will Brooker examines the authorship of Chris Nolan within his Batman trilogy and within the Batman-meta-text as a whole. Brooker argues that Batman represents different aspects of culture and history every time he is recreated on page and screen and that Nolan's authorship converges with the Batman myth, using it and feeding off of it, but ultimately it is the reader who becomes the auteur:

I have proposed that all Batman texts enter a matrix of cross-platform product, and operate in a dialogue between the other current incarnations, and all the previous versions, even if they define themselves against an earlier tradition now judged to be aberrant. They also exist in a network with the future possibilities of the text, as stories, trends and institutional decisions yet to come may rule them out of official continuity, and relegate them from the formal history. But perhaps most important, they enter a dialogue with the reader. It is the reader, finally, who constructs and collages a Batman from all the pieces of the cultural mosaic, the reader who is the ultimate scriptor and author, the editor and compiler of all those different, diverse traces into a single, complex figure.⁴⁸

Connected to the 'meta-text- theory is Gerard Genette's work on intertextuality and his theory of 'Hypertextuality' which involves:

any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary.⁴⁹

Concerning 'Hypertextuality' Robert Stam writes that film adaptations:

are hypertexts derived from pre-existing hypotexts that have been transformed by operations of selection, amplification, concretization and actualization.⁵⁰

This relationship between one text and another, and the means by which the one text builds upon, manipulates, transforms and exploits the other, is the core basis of the 'meta-text' theory and when applied to multiple texts, such as the evolution of

⁴⁸ Brooker, W., *Hunting the Dark Knight*, I.B Taurus, London, 2012, p. 219.

⁴⁹ Genette, G., *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (trans.), University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1997, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Stam, R., *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 209.

Rope (which will be looked at within this thesis), it will be from the relationship between the numerous hypertexts that meaning will be extracted and examined.

Cardwell examines the idea of the ‘meta-text’ within examples of historical adaptations, as do a vast number of theorists when discussing adaptation theory. The historical adaptation is usually clear about what it is aiming to represent, specifically playing on the prior knowledge of the text. The work of Charles Dickens, Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters are examples of historical fiction that are often adapted. The popularity of these novels has ensured that it often through them that the past is craved and subsequently recreated. In *Screening the Novel* (1990) Robert Giddings and fellow authors Selby and Wensley, talk of a greed for nostalgia and a longing for images of the past which “are all symptomatic of the condition of the national psyche which is shedding layers of modernity and reverting to its own past tones under the stress of contemporary economic, political and social crisis.”⁵¹ Recreating the past is thus a form of escapism. This links in with Lisa Hopkins view that historical adaptations often focus on what is not essential to the novel. Shakespeare very rarely discusses what costumes his characters would be wearing, likewise Austen never goes into the dimensions of houses or rooms, nor does she focus too often on decoration and furniture. These are issues that would have been taken for granted at the time of writing but are now some of the many exotic attractions of the historical adaptation.⁵² Hopkins also discusses the historical adaptation often showing actions that the novel never would such as kissing and sex. Hopkins takes great offense to Kenneth Branagh’s *Hamlet* (1996) which he describes as a ‘full-text’ version of the play yet has a scene with Hamlet and Olivia in bed together, something that, despite its logical positioning, could never have been in the original text.⁵³ While evidence of Hopkins’ preference to the original text, this is also symptomatic of the problem with adapting the historical novel. Above all other types of adaptations, it is probably the historical adaptation that suffers most from fidelity criticism. A play such as *Hamlet* is so well known, from its characters and narrative to the writer William Shakespeare that a viewer coming to the text will often have a pre-conceived notion of how the play

⁵¹ Giddings, R., Selby, K. and Wensley, C., *Screening the Novel: The Theory and Practice of Literary Dramatization*, The Macmillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke, 1990, p.38

⁵² Hopkins, L., *Relocating Shakespeare and Austen on Screen*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2009, p. 1-2

⁵³ Hopkins, L., *Relocating Shakespeare and Austen on Screen*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2009, p. 4

should be filmed and thus any attempt from a different author to manipulate the text, becomes a violation. *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* depict this problem with the novels being of such a standing that Du Maurier's readers will arrive at the film with a pre-conceived notion, but concerning the adaptation of the historical narrative, the Du Maurier films are interesting because, as in the case of *Jamaica Inn*, the novel was published in 1936, yet it is set in 1820, thus we have an author that is recreating a past and a director that is adapting the re-creation.

How the past is viewed within an historical adaptation is significant, specifically with the *why* it is being shown in the first place:

If adaptations of nineteenth-century novels have as part of their concern the bringing of the period 'to life', what choices are made about the depiction of the past in the will to produce 'authenticity'?

There is clearly a case for investigating the extent to which an idea of the past is what a classic adaptation seeks to capture, and how that idea of the past coalesces with the period in which the adaptation is made.⁵⁴

Whelehan is calling for an examination of the cultural adaptation between the modern and the historical, yet it is also worth noting the influence that historical authors often have over their readers. Bates writes:

Representations of Dickens' Victorian England have shaped our ideas of the Victorian age as much as those ideas have been shaped by cultural and historical influences. This is perhaps even more the case in relation to an author such as Dickens, where the status of the author exceeds our familiarity with the prose. Thus novels such as *Bleak House* or *Our Mutual Friend*, and their television counterparts, may be less well known than other classic texts, but Dickens as an author triggers specific narrative and visual expectations in the audience.⁵⁵

Bates is suggesting that historical authors such as Dickens have such an influence over the reader that, for example, what the people of the Victorian age read about is not necessarily the *real* historical age, but rather a fictional account created by Dickens, which suggests that Whelehan's call for a cultural analysis between the period of the adaptation and of the time the text is set in, is actually a depiction of a

⁵⁴ Imelda Whelehan, 'Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemma' in Cartmell, D. and Whelehan, I., (eds.), *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 14.

⁵⁵ Iris Kleinecke-Bates, 'Historicizing the Classic Novel Adaptation: *Bleak House* (2005) and British Television Contexts', in Carrol, R., (ed.), *Adaptation in Contemporary Culture*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2009, p. 112.

fictional past. The viewer does not want to see Victorian England, but rather Dickens's Victorian England.

1.9 Cultural Adaptation

Guerric DeBona's 'Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era' provides a useful look at cultural adaptation and also three different perspectives for viewing adaptation. Concerning cultural adaptation, DeBona builds on James Naremore's statement:

What we need instead is a definition of adaptation and sociology that takes into account the commercial apparatus, the audience and the academic cultural history.⁵⁶

Concerning this, DeBona states:

The method I have chosen is to take four instances where American film culture has redeployed the 'literary' and placed them under the lenses of intertextuality, cultural/textual power, and authorship, using them as coordinates inside a specific period in Hollywood history.⁵⁷

DeBona looks at films such *David Copperfield* (Cukor, 1935) and *Heart of Darkness* (Welles, 1939) and examines their sociological and cultural impact, in conjunction with what the texts stood for when they were written by Dickens and Conrad. DeBona examines the redeployment of politics through three different areas of study. By building on the work of New Wave French theorists such as Bazin and Truffaut as well more modern critics such as Robert Stam and Thomas Leitch, he creates a methodological template for examining adaptations. The first approach involves looking at Bazin's view of adaptation as cinema that makes literature more accessible. This view originates from public criticism but Bazin believed that in relation to 'commercialism, industrial modernity and democracy', an adaptation allows for literature to be "better tolerated by the consumer's mind."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ James Naremore, 'Introduction: Film and the Reign of Adaptation' in Naremore, J., (ed.) *Film Adaptation*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2000, p. 10.

⁵⁷ DeBona, G., *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2010, p. 6.

⁵⁸ DeBona, p. 5.

The second approach involves studying the cultural power of the text. By building on Truffaut's deconstruction of bourgeoisie literary adaptation and established literary conventions, DeBona is able to examine the value of the original text, no matter what its literary status may be.

The third approach involves looking at the status of the original author and their relationship with the filmic text, thus leading to the question of 'who actually is the author'? These three approaches can be summed up as "the use of intertextuality, the function of the cultural value and the aura of authorship."⁵⁹

An extra facet to cultural adaptation, yet one that links directly to both DeBona's as well as Cardwell's 'meta-text', can be found in Peter Falconer's essay '3:10 Again: A Remade Western and the Problem of Authenticity'. Here Falconer looks at the 2007 film *3:10 To Yuma* (Mangold), itself a remake of the 1957 film of the same name, which itself was an adaptation of an Elmore Leonard novel from 1953. Here we have an example of the 'meta-text', examined through the cultural values of each of the texts. Falconer discusses how the fifty year gap between films means that the western genre is now viewed very differently, for example guns, hats and horses are all treated as symbols with greater relevance in the 2007 film as opposed to being standard acceptable props in 1957. In 2007, audiences were no longer accustomed to watching westerns, just as directors were not accustomed to making them.⁶⁰ As Giddings and his fellow authors describe, adapting is essentially forging. The adaptor is a forger. It is not just putting together a piece of art that looks like the work of another artist, but rather about satisfying a contemporary need.⁶¹ Thus the 2007 *3:10 To Yuma* says more about the society it was produced in than the western genre of the 1950's, a theory that could be just as readily applied to Gus Van Sant's remake of *Psycho* (1998) which was produced thirty-eight years after the original.

⁵⁹ DeBona, p. 5-6.

⁶⁰ Peter Falconer, '3:10 Again: A Remade Western and the Problem of Authenticity', in Carrol, R., (ed.), *Adaptation in Contemporary Culture*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2009, p. 62-63.

⁶¹ Giddings, R., Selby, K. and Wensley, C., *Screening the Novel: The Theory and Practice of Literary Dramatization*, The Macmillan Press Ltd., Basingstoke, 1990, p.29.

1.10 Adaptation: What has been gained?

Robert Stam is often quoted by adaptation theorists for stating that for the subject to move forward we need to stop focusing on what has been lost and start focusing on what has been gained,⁶² which is ironic as a part of this thesis will deal with discovering what has been lost in terms of Hitchcock's silent period. He also presents a rather promiscuous analogy of Cardwell's 'meta-text' theory:

Any text that has slept with another text...has also slept with all the other texts that the other text has slept with.⁶³

It is the transfer of energies and intertextualities that interest Stam. For Stam, adaptations:

Can take an activist stance toward their source novels, inserting them into a much broader intertextual dialogism. An adaptation, in this sense, is less an attempted resuscitation of an originary world than a turn in an ongoing dialogical process. The concept of intertextual dialogism suggests that every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces. All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations on those formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and confluences and inversions of other texts. In the broadest sense, intertextual dialogism refers to the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practises of a culture, the entire matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated, which read the text not only through recognisable influences, but also through a subtle process of dissemination.⁶⁴

Adaptation is an ongoing dialogical process. In the words of John Ellis, it is the consumption of memory,⁶⁵ it is intrinsically linked to all that has gone before it and what will come after it. The evolution of adaptation studies is shown here, for example, with the differing opinions of Peter Wollen who stated:

“The director does not subordinate himself to another: his source is only a pretext which provides catalysts, scenes, which fuse with his own preconceptions to produce radically new work.”⁶⁶

⁶² Robert Stam, 'Introduction: the theory and practice of adaptation' in Stam, R., and Ranego, A., (eds.), *Literature and Film*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2005, p.46.

⁶³ Stam, p.16.

⁶⁴ Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation' in Naremore, J., *Film Adaptation*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2000, p. 64.

⁶⁵ John Ellis, 'The Literary Adaptation: An Introduction,' in *Screen 23*, no. 1, May-June 1982, p.3.

⁶⁶ Peter Wollen quoted in Corrigan, T., *Film and Literature: An Introduction and Reader*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, 1999, p. 51.

The director as auteur does not fit in with Stam's 'ongoing dialogical process'. The director's work is something new and fresh, no matter what the original source, a theory that harks back to the French New Wave theorists. In *Screening the Text: Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema* (1992), T. Jefferson Kline discusses how intertextualities are found abundantly throughout the work of the French auteurs, even though their very presence clashes with the apparent auteuristic ideologies that birthed them:

Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* is in some ways a metaphor for the whole of post-war French cinema's relationship with books: banned by decree, they remain cherished, embedded firmly in the minds of the principal players of the unfolding drama.⁶⁷

Originality in art is essentially impossible. A text has multiple influences and readings and can thus be argued to never truly be the product of just one person. In 'Rematerializing Adaptation Theory' Kyle Meikle jumps on the term 'raw materials' that is used by theorists such as Bluestone, Leitch and McFarlane who all describe original texts as such, and presents an extensive analogy of "books as natural resources and adaptors as drillers". To Meikle, adaptation theory is about discovery:

Who better than adaptation scholars to combat "canonized" narratives of media culture and history? Who better than adaptation scholars to retrieve, record, and recast the most minute shifts in medium, the most material shifts between media? Adaptation scholars thrive in the middle-in the intermezzo. An intermaterial approach to the adaptive process would find adaptation scholars traipsing from text to text with trowels in hand, equipped to dig up the quasi-objects buried among page, screen, speaker, and stage. The recovery of these raw materials and artefacts-of which celluloid, which only emerges as an artefact amid cries for film preservation (with no louder a proponent than Scorsese himself), is simply a single privileged example- would amount to nothing less than an archaeology of adaptation.⁶⁸

Here Meikle is discussing adaptation in conjunction with Martin Scorsese's *Hugo* (2011), a film about discovering the past, learning from it and sharing in its wonders. Meikle views adaptation scholars as miners and archaeologists, a far cry from the post-war 1950's scholars who Guerric DeBona describes as rescue workers sifting through rubbish. Archaeology is the study of history and as Indiana Jones states in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg, 1981), it is the search for fact. We have to

⁶⁷ Kline, T.J., *In Screening the Text: Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema*, The John Hopkins University Press, London, 1992, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Kyle Meikle, 'Rematerializing Adaptation Theory', in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 41.3 (2013): 174-183.

be careful though that archaeology is not all that adaptation becomes. We have to go one step more from that of the professor who teaches archaeology to the sociologist who interprets cultural anthropology.

1.11 Outside Factors and Hitchcock Adapted

Attention to the ways in which influences, not all of them literary, may bear on the film version of a novel points to one of the potentially most rewarding approaches to the process of transition. The fact that the effect on the spectator of other texts (literary, cinematic, non-fictional) and of other pressures (e.g. genre conventions, auteurist predilections, studio style, 'industry' matters such as use of certain stars, let alone extra-cinematic influences such as the prevailing ideological climate) is not readily susceptible to the quantifying possibilities referred to above does not mean that the critic of adaptation can afford to ignore them.⁶⁹

Because of the subjective view taken by many to adaptation studies, outside factors will always play a role in the discipline. For example, a successful novel is nearly always touted for potential cinematic treatment; yet from that very moment, the adaptation process is immediately placed under a microscope with the novel's audience harbouring expectations of how the text should be presented. No matter how much film theorists would like to move away from fidelity, it is something that will always be a part of audience expectation, thus it cannot be ignored, and instead it must be acknowledged.

The role of the film studio and producer are also significantly influential to adaptation studies. Studios have always had creative input into the film productions that they oversee and thus while an adaptation of a novel maybe commissioned, it may not be the director's auteurist intent but rather studio policy that calls for a drastic change to the narrative. The director may have a specific style of filming that is set in stone, immovable no matter what the adapted text may be. The director in question may not care about the source-text. Alfred Hitchcock stated on numerous occasions that he did not care for the author of the text; it was the audience of the film that mattered.

⁶⁹ McFarlane, B., *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 201.

The egotism of auteurism is an opposing factor that has stood in the way of adaptation studies. The film disciplines clash because the very notion of adaptation studies suggests that the film is not necessarily the director's. The film is created and put together by the director, but adaptation studies suggests that there is already a body of work ready for the director to mould and shape. Thus Hitchcock's position as author of the text, despite still acting as "the last auteur standing", is now, as already shown, at a point in history where theorists are looking for a new author of filmic texts.

Novels such as *Latin Hitchcock* and studies that look at Hitchcock's collaborative process with such screenwriters as Charles Bennett and John Michael Hayes are examples of this search for the new author that have already been mentioned. Within Leitch and Poague's *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock* (2014), Ken Mogg's 'Hitchcock's Literary Sources' examines literary texts that have had influence over Hitchcock's films and can be read within them but yet are not the actual original adapted texts. For example he discusses how the work of Dickens and *Bleak House* can be read within *The Wrong Man*.

Hitchcock scholarship has mirrored the history of film theory, as Osteen discusses in his introduction to *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On Page and Screen*, it has moved from authorship to psychoanalytic, to semiotic, to feminist, structuralist, religious, historicist and queer, while also focusing on such aspects as music, his British period and his signature motifs and devices.⁷⁰ Like film theory, Hitchcock criticism has now turned towards the literary with the field now embracing adaptation studies. Osteen's collection of essays breaks Hitchcock's adaptation down into four categories, his authorship, his adapting, his collaborations and his work that is itself adapted. This is a slightly different approach to Palmer and Boyd's *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor* which contains twenty essays that, apart from Thomas Leitch's 'Hitchcock from Stage to Page', are each case studies of a different Hitchcock adaptation. While both collections are excellent and possibly the two most comprehensive studies of Hitchcock and adaptation available, neither tackles his British plays (except for *Blackmail*), while *Jamaica Inn* and *I Confess* are also

⁷⁰ Osteen, M., *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen*, Rowman and Littlefield, Plymouth, 2014, p. x11.

notably absent. All three are, in their own way, problematic areas which Hitchcock scholarship has tended to ignore and this early foray into Hitchcock and adaptation appears to be following the same trend, which this thesis intends to put right.

2. Theatrical Adaptation: Part 1 – The British Plays

2.1 Silent Cinema and Early Hitchcock

From a silent stage to a world of sound, Hitchcock's British period is a varied collection of interesting films that, on the surface, contrast deeply with his later American work, yet they are in fact intrinsically linked and ultimately bear heavy influence upon everything that follows them. However, this status of reverence is not and has not been universally shared by critics and theorists since the conception of auteur theory. Robin Wood's brutal burial of Hitchcock's British period and subsequent retraction to this stance is an example of the indifference often shown towards Hitchcock's earlier work.⁷¹

When we refer to Hitchcock's British period it should be categorized into two sections, 'pre-1934' and 'post-1934'. Often most Hitchcock journals and biographies will 'logically' categorize it by silent and sound pictures, but 'pre-1934' and afterwards is more appropriate. Since Wood's criticism in 1965, Hitchcock's British films have slowly over the years become more readily accessible to viewer and critic alike, and with this availability, Hitchcock criticism has necessarily moved to include and evaluate these previously dismissed films, yet it is fair to say that it is the '1934 and onwards' branch that has often garnered more attention.

With the exception of *The Lodger*, *The Ring* (1927) and *Blackmail*, the 'pre-1934' movement is often overlooked within Hitchcock studies, and even more so within Hitchcock and adaptation. *The Lodger* and *Blackmail* clearly lend themselves to Hitchcock's suspense genre while *The Ring* is an original film, not adapted from any obvious texts and when an example of a 'pre-1934' is called upon, it is often *The Ring* that answers.

Between 1934 and 1940 before Hitchcock had left for Hollywood to work on *Rebecca*, he produced seven films. The first five were scripted by Charles Bennett of who Hitchcock had already adapted with his play *Blackmail*. *The Lodger* and

⁷¹ Wood, R., *Hitchcock's Films Revisited: Revised Edition*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, p. 73 and p. 231.

Blackmail are often both referred to as the first true ‘Hitchcock’ films, and it is from *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in 1934 and the subsequent run of pre-war action and adventure ‘flicks’ that the study of his authorship usually begins. This period is synonymous with Bennett whom Charles Barr argues is the most important of all Hitchcock’s writers⁷², helping influence and shape Hitchcock’s blossoming career, yet for all the influence that Barr attributes to Bennett’s writing, one original screenplay and four adaptations, his influence and role have often gone unnoticed. Referring to the work of Tania Modleski’s *The Woman Who Knew Too Much* and Robin Wood’s *Hitchcock’s Films Revisited*, both of which devote significant work to *Blackmail*:

Bennett is mentioned by neither of them. They really do both write as if Hitchcock had made the whole thing up himself, and they do not feel the need to justify this; such an approach has not, of course, been unusual in author-centred criticism, before or since.⁷³

Barr goes on to discuss Hitchcock’s own indifferent attitude towards writers and source novels⁷⁴, which Hitchcock himself often commented upon (more to feed his auteuristic image than to actually stand as an example of how he felt), but even so Barr links this with Wood and Modleski’s ‘author-centred’ approach. It is this approach that often seems to dictate which films are studied. The Charles Bennett films clearly fit into an auteuristic model that contains later adventure thrillers such as *North By North West* (1959), the remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *Torn Curtain* (1966), while as mentioned already *The Lodger* and *Blackmail* lend themselves to such suspenseful films as *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Shadow of Doubt* (1943) and *Psycho*, but Bennett⁷⁵ is subsequently marginalised in favour of the director, and while the screenwriter is marginalised, the author of the source text is simply forgotten. The ‘pre-1934’ films fair even worse.

Of the sixteen ‘pre-1934’ films, fifteen of which are adaptations, eight of them are from theatrical plays. Seven of the films were adapted by Eliot Stannard while the

⁷² Charles Barr, ‘Blackmail: Charles Bennett and the Decisive Turn’ in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D., (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2011, p. 67.

⁷³ Barr, *Blackmail: Charles Bennett and the Decisive Turn*, p. 70.

⁷⁴ Barr, *Blackmail: Charles Bennett and the Decisive Turn*, p. 70-71.

⁷⁵ It should be noted that there is critical work on the screenwriters of Hitchcock’s career, such as *Writing with Hitchcock* where Steven DeRosa discusses the four films that Hitchcock collaborated with John Michael Hayes, yet in general, while the role of the screenwriter has risen in prominence within film theory, the role of the auteur, specifically in relation to Hitchcock, still supersedes the writers who are merely used and adapted.

remaining nine were adapted by either Hitchcock or his wife Alma Reville.⁷⁶ For the record there is no correlation between Stannard and Hitchcock in terms of who adapted plays and novels, but then that appears to be irrelevant amongst most Hitchcock scholarship, as like Bennett, the work of Stannard is not deemed relevant, even more so, the influence of the theatrical adaptation is almost non-existent.

Often categorized as melodramas, with the exception of *Blackmail* and *Number Seventeen* (one a murderous suspense thriller, the other a comedic crime adventure), the British plays of ‘pre-1934’ have struggled for acceptance into the Hitchcock canon. When Hitchcock’s body of work is looked at through the lens of auteur theory, it seems no gaze is ever casts upon this area. The British theatrical adaptations do not fit in to Hitchcock’s authorship, and if we take Peter Wollen’s term of ‘Hitchcock’ to mean more than just a name, and rather a type of film, then these adaptations would appear to struggle to be even considered ‘Hitchcockian’. The argument to be had is that despite auteur theory rejecting the theatrical adaptations of the ‘pre-1934’ phase of Hitchcock’s career because they do not fit, they are actually an essential component to the evolution of Hitchcock’s work and not merely just a training ground for honing his directing skills. The argument presented is that Hitchcock is as much an adaptor as he is an auteur, and by approaching his body of work from this angle, his theatrical adaptations suddenly become more important. In the eyes of auteurism, the ‘pre-1934’ films apparently bear little fruit, but concerning adaptation theory, their connection with his later more iconic, more ‘auteur-friendly’ work, becomes essential. Robert Stam’s description of adaptation as an “ongoing dialogical process” and suggestion that “every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces”⁷⁷ means that adaptation is continuous, ever evolving as it is assimilated by the next text. Hitchcock not only poached the texts of other author’s but he heavily relied on the integration of his own work, thus adaptation theory allows for *Psycho* to not only be discussed in conjunction with Robert Bloch but also with *Blackmail* and Charles Bennett, and *Easy Virtue* and Noel Coward. In this case an obvious example

⁷⁶ On some occasions Hitchcock would be credited with ‘Adaptation’ while Alma would be ‘Scriptwriter’ or they would share credit or swap roles. In some cases such as *Murder!* The writing credits would be shared with another, in this case ‘Adaptation’ was shared by Hitchcock and Walter Mycroft, while ‘Script’ was by Alma Reville.

⁷⁷ Robert Stam, ‘Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation’, in Naremore, J., (ed.) *Film Adaptation*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2000, p. 64.

is with the characters of *Blackmail*'s Alice and *Easy Virtue*'s Larita who both bear many similarities with *Psycho*'s Marion Crane and while one could examine these within the boundaries of auteur theory, examining their roles within the 'Hitchcock blonde' motif, how Hitchcock used them, drew upon them, how they fit into his typical narrative model etc., adaptation theory allows us to move one step further. Larita for example is Noel Coward's creation, yet when Hitchcock adapts her, is she now his? If she is, then what has occurred for this process to take place? If she is not his, and when we say 'not' what we are really saying is that through the eyes of fidelity the Larita that appears within Hitchcock's film is the same Larita that appears in Coward's text, and if she is then surely by extension, Noel Coward is connected to *Psycho*, and subsequently Hitchcock's auteur status concerning both films becomes unclear. These links are there but they are ignored in the eyes of auteurism yet amplified through adaptation. To understand these links we must look at the theatrical as the foundation of Hitchcock's adaptive structure.

There are two aims to this chapter; the first is to extensively look at the two adaptations of *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmer's Wife*, looking at not only the adaptation process that Hitchcock undertakes when adapting a play to a silent film, but also to shed light on the two films in general, both of which are examples of early Hitchcock cinema that have received little attention within Hitchcock studies. *Easy Virtue* was chosen because of the status of Noel Coward who was arguably much more famous than Hitchcock at the time of the adaptation, while *The Farmer's Wife* was chosen because unlike many of his earlier films, it was essentially a comedy and thus adapting a comedic play to silent cinema is a completely different challenge to that of the dramatic. The status of its author Eden Phillpotts was also one of influential standing at the time of adaptation, thus there is a connection there with Noel Coward.

The second aim of the chapter is to look at Hitchcock's status as an auteur, examining the specific points within his filmography where his 'auteur-stamp' is visible and then analyse these within the 'pre-1934' sound films *Blackmail*, *Juno and the Paycock*, and *The Skin Game*, while going further and searching for these 'stamps' within the original texts, essentially demonstrating that the very points used to show Hitchcock's authorship are found within multiple texts that have currently been ignored by both auteur and adaptation branches of Hitchcock studies. The films and

plays will be looked at individually in a traditional adaptation comparison to highlight their relevance and importance in an attempt to reclaim their position within the Hitchcock cannon.

Before we examine the relationship between Hitchcock and the stage, we must first establish the difference between adapting a play and adapting a novel. Thomas Leitch's detailed account of the difference between novel and film is a good starting point. Leitch breaks down the obvious differences between novels and films to narrative techniques, audience consumption and verbal and visual signifiers. The two mediums are simply different beasts. He comments that unlike plays, novels need tighter structural constraints as they are full of generalisations and habitual actions. There are often "descriptive passages that must be either lost or translated into very different expositional strategies of cinema."⁷⁸ Leitch goes on to discuss the method of consumption for which a novel is designed. As opposed to a typical play that is often designed to be viewed in one continuous stretch, a novel is meant to be "absorbed discontinuously" as the reader, moving through their own pace, is free to contemplate the implications of whatever has been created.⁷⁹ Films are traditionally meant to be viewed in the same manner as plays, sharing that mode of audience consumption, but the novel is fundamentally different:

Novels and movies mark tone and style in ways that are often parallel but never quite congruent. Novels can draw on an extensive variety of verb tenses: movies are restricted to the present tense. The verbal signifiers in novels communicate to their readers by means of concepts that require abstract thinking to assimilate, the visual signifiers in movies by precepts that require no such abstract thought. Hence even the visual and auditory images in novels that might seem to make them most cinematic operate differently in novels than in movies, in which every picture and sound is a potential locus of meaning. Novels tell, and movies show.⁸⁰

Because of this vast difference between the two, the study of the adaptive process has to be focused and decisive. A novel is too vast for its entire body to be transferred on screen, so the adaptive process lies in *what* is adapted and *what* has been done with it. The film adaptation is now its own entity. What it stands for and what it represents in contrast to the novel are further ways of defining it. The

⁷⁸ Thomas Leitch, 'Hitchcock from Stage to Page', in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2011, p. 15.

⁷⁹ Leitch, p. 15.

⁸⁰ Leitch, pp. 15-16.

adaptation is separate and removed from its literary predecessor, yet of course intrinsically linked. The same cannot necessarily be said for the adaptation of a play.

Plays and films share the same audio and visual signifiers. They both rely on the audience's eyes and ears to accept and receive the narrative presented. Unlike the novel, a typical two-hour play or film is not meant to allow room for pondering or 'abstract thinking', at least not during viewing. Films and plays are meant to be watched and absorbed within a set period of time, and their meaning is meant to be presented in clear sight to the audience. It is not up to the audience to draw out the meaning. This is not to say that plays and films do not have ulterior meanings or require deeper thinking, as they quite clearly always do. This means that the visual signifiers presented within the visual medium are already formed for the audience. Thus it is with the examination of either the sharing or manipulation of the visual signifier that we will learn what actually separates the play from the film. The answers are found within Hitchcock's weapons of choice, the camera and editing. It is through the camera, and its manipulation that the play can be altered, and thus the adaptation process can be identified and examined. If the camera purely acted as a camera and merely recorded a play, then it could be argued that the only adaptive process that had taken place would be one of visual transference. In *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation* Phyllis Zatlin sites the work of Spanish playwright Alonso de Santos:

The sea in the theatre is a blue cloth; the sea in movies is the sea . . . The underlying drama in theatre is the struggle of ideas; in movies, it is the struggle of human beings. For that reason movie drama is transmitted as violence: it is translated as violence.⁸¹

De Santos believes that the camera brings a visceral sense of realism to the text. The audience may be a part of the theatrical play, within touching distance of the actors, breathing the same air, but yet they are, literally, in on the act. Film creates a distance between viewer and the material, yet the material, because the viewer is not a part of it, becomes real. This ironic transference of realism is what separates a play from the filmic re-creation of the play, but what still connects the two, is the script.

⁸¹ Alonso de Santos, J. L. 'De la escritura dramática a la escritura cinematográfica.' *Cine y Literatura*, Monographic issue incorporating papers from X Cielo Escritores y Universidad, 7 November–5 December 1995. *República de las Letras* 54, 1997, p. 77–82, cited in P.Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*, Multilingual Matters Ltd., Clevedon, 2005, p.158.

The script is the blueprint for the play, containing stage directions, scene descriptions, character nuances and dialogue. It is this framework of verbal signifiers that will become the on-stage visual medium. In this case we will not be looking at the stage *auteur*, but at the script's *author*. The plays in question were not recorded and other than reviews and first-hand accounts, the work and influence of the stage directors are unknown and even more importantly, performances change with every showing while different directors will present the same play in different ways, thus it is the theatrical script from which we will be working. The adaptation of the play to film thus becomes an interesting proposition, especially when it is by an 'established' auteur like Hitchcock. Unless radical changes have occurred (which is not the case with Hitchcock's theatrical adaptations), the status of the auteur must come under question.

As mentioned earlier, Hitchcock used Eliot Stannard and Charles Bennett often within his British work while in America writers such as Ben Hecht and John Michael Hayes each worked on multiple films, but in most cases it was a different writer. In many cases Hitchcock had several screenwriters for one film. This indicates that the actual adaptive process would not necessarily have been handled solely by Hitchcock, or at least he would not have been the only accountable person. There would have been scenes that may have been handled by assistant directors, pressure from studios and producers would have forced changes, even star power from particular actors would have changed Hitchcock's mind. However, when looking at Hitchcock's films as adaptations, we will be referring to Hitchcock as the adapter. His status as an auteur means that he must take the credit, and thus face any criticism. From Francois Truffaut's extensive interview with Hitchcock:

Truffaut: Your own work includes a great many adaptations, but mostly they are popular or light entertainment novels which are so freely refashioned in your own manner that they ultimately become a Hitchcock creation. Many of your admirers would like to see you undertake the screen version of such a major classic as Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, for instance.

Hitchcock: Well, I shall never do that, precisely because *Crime and Punishment* is somebody else's achievement. There's been a lot of talk about the way in which Hollywood directors

distort literary masterpieces. I'll have no part of that! What I do is to read a story once, and if I like the basic idea, I just forget all about the book and start to create cinema.⁸²

This is a viewpoint that to an extent is shared by auteurism; he takes the basic idea from a text, forgets said text and sets out to create a form of 'pure cinema'. Noel Coward, Daphne Du Maurier and Robert Bloch would all beg to differ, but this is an issue that will be approached later. I am not the first Hitchcock scholar to pick up on this throwaway comment concerning adaptation. In *English Hitchcock* Charles Barr writes:

He names three writers of his parent's generation, all of whom were already popular in his youth and each of whom he would, on one occasion, adapt for cinema, plus one near-contemporary in Priestly. Three of the four were English, and the Scot, Buchan, was based in the south of England for most of his working life. But a film criticism centred on directors, and unimpressed by the English contribution to cinema, has not been concerned to follow up Hitchcock's statements – here and elsewhere – of indebtedness to English literary figures. Still less has it been concerned to explore the influence of his predominantly English source materials or of his English scriptwriters, to whom Hitchcock was far less inclined to give credit. His readiness to claim full authorship of the films, at the expense of collaborators, can be seen as an unattractive egotism or as an astute marketing ploy, or as a mixture of both, but there is no reason for critics to continue to go along with it unquestionably.⁸³

Barr follows this up by commenting that Hitchcock used secretaries as skilled agents, writing up his ideas and yet "according to the joint screenwriter of *The Lady Vanishes* (1938), Sidney Gilliat, Hitchcock was widely quoted, at the time of the film, as claiming to be responsible for 99.2% of his own script material".⁸⁴ Barr is at first discussing the literary influences that helped shape Hitchcock's early career but soon descends into an attack on Hitchcock's authorship. The literary influences are unavoidable and the theatrical plays especially, define his early career. Thomas Leitch suggests that Hitchcock's metamorphosis into the 'Master of Suspense', the Hitchcock that became marketable around the world, was dependant on his movement away from adapting plays, and onto adapting novels, becoming the "master of novelistic adaptation" and thus:

In committing himself to adapting novels and stories rather than plays, Hitchcock seems to have found the creative voice he maintained had eluded him.⁸⁵

⁸² Truffaut, F., *Hitchcock: Revised Edition*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 1983, p. 69-71.

⁸³ Barr, C., *English Hitchcock*, Cameron & Hollis, Dumfriesshire, 1999, p. 8.

⁸⁴ Barr, *English Hitchcock*, p. 9.

⁸⁵ Leitch, p. 13.

Leitch is open to discussing Hitchcock's status as an adaptor but he stops short of committing that process to the theatrical plays because like Hitchcock he views them as stifling and restrictive essentially aligning himself with auteur theory, yet it is within the theatrical plays and their adaptive nature where Hitchcock's creative voice is formed, or more accurately, adapted.

2.2 *Easy Virtue* – The Play

The London opening was on June 9, 1926 at the Duke of York's, where Miss Cowl took ecstatic curtain calls amid an orgy of flowers; critics next morning were however divided about the value of the piece. The *Daily Telegraph* thought it 'a good piece of theatrical mechanism, unworthy of Mr. Coward's promise' the *Daily Express* offered their usual opinion that it was 'a play from an author not yet grown up'. Box-office business remained good throughout that summer and autumn however, much helped by a royal visit from King George V and Queen Mary.⁸⁶

Noel Coward's play of social standings and misguided love follows the upper class country based family the Whittakers and their ostracizing of the out-of-place foreigner and exotically named Larita. The play sets the tone by introducing the audience to Mrs Whittaker, the dominant figure of the household, who seems to delight in belittling her broken down husband the Colonel, and acting more as a battlefield general than a mother to her two daughters. Her son John's arrival with his new wife Larita brings immediate disharmony to the household. It is a situation over which Mrs Whittaker does not have control. John is besotted with his wife, her daughters are both in their own way captivated by her and even her husband shows an interest that has eluded Mrs Whittaker for several years.

The second act is set several months after the couple's arrival and everything has changed. Larita is now bored with her current life, the daughters have become distant and jealous of her, and her husband has started to spend more time with his family and ex-love interest Sarah and subsequently Larita has begun to feel ignored and out of place. Larita and Colonel Whittaker are shown to have a good relationship, one that is born out of being the outsiders of the household and enemies of Mrs Whittaker. Eventually one of the daughters, Hilda, produces a newspaper clipping that

⁸⁶ Sheridan Morley 'Introduction' in *Noel Coward Collected Plays: One*, Methuen Publishing Ltd, London 1999, p. xxiv.

exposes a past love affair of Larita's that resulted in a man's suicide. It is all the ammunition needed by the mother and daughter's to tear into Larita, yet she turns the table on them morally and verbally. She insults each of them in turn, bluntly and honestly.

The third and final act of the play occurs later in the evening. There is a party at the Whittaker's home, and Mrs Whittaker explains Larita's absence as the result of a headache. Larita eventually appears at the top of the stairs dressed in an extravagant and revealing gown. Everyone stops to stare at her. She publically contradicts Mrs Whittaker about the headache and then proceeds to dance with a young man called Philip which the guests of the party consider scandalous. Larita eventually discusses the difficulties of her situation with Sarah and her friend Charles, and makes Sarah promise to look after John when she's gone. With her husband none the wiser, she quietly makes her exit with the help of the butler Furber who like all good butlers, knows everything that is going on.

Noel Coward was well known to the British public and was a successful playwright by the time *Easy Virtue* was brought to the stage. He had been involved with theatre and the arts for years but hit the big time in 1924 with *The Vortex*, which was soon followed by *Fallen Angels* (1925) and *Hay Fever* (1925). Each of the plays are explicit in their deconstruction of high society, attacking attitudes towards sex, drugs, alcohol and family. Coward was famed for his fast, quick-witted prose and his ability to take either a drama (*The Vortex*) or a comedy (*Hay Fever*) and skewer the very people that were his target audience. Morley comments:

What is intriguing about the play, apart from the light it throws on Coward as a craftsman working from the models of his immediate theatrical and social past, is the way it mocks the conventions, prejudices and complacencies of its period while remaining well inside the drawing-room barricades. No writer of Noel's generation ever went more directly to the jugular of that moralistic, tight-lipped but fundamentally hypocritical Twenties society.⁸⁷

This description of Coward is quite similar to that of Hitchcock who was notorious for attacking and mocking different facets of society from the police force who are often pictured as bumbling and inept as in *To Catch A Thief* (1955), *The*

⁸⁷ Sheridan Morley 'Introduction' in *Noel Coward Collected Plays: One*, Methuen Publishing Ltd, London 1999, p. xxiv.

Wrong Man and *Frenzy* or the upper class of whose values he attacks in multiple films such as *The Skin Game*, *Rebecca* and *Rope*. This is an early example of Hitchcock the poacher, identifying and appropriating an author whose mind-set is similar to his own, and thus whose work will fit into his own framework. Barr writes:

Born in the same year, 1899, the two men forged a similarly precocious early career in their respective media, being strongly conditioned by, and at the same time flamboyantly challenging and revitalizing, the existing English frameworks and conventions in which they were operating.⁸⁸

Coward's play is an attack on the upper class mentality concerning sex, relationships and life in general. Larita is presented as an experienced and worldly woman who has already lived a lifetime of love and sadness. Her marriage to Peter, while ultimately doomed to fail, is not the problem. The society that she has married into is the problem. In *Mrs Whittaker* we have the embodiment of everything that is wrong with class and the importance of 'position'. To Mrs Whittaker, love and happiness are alien issues. Power, respect and security are what she holds above everything, particularly as these are what she can control. Her marriage is loveless and cold because her husband is her equal, he is not hers to command, and her lack of love renders him impotent. It is her position in society and her family that she holds dear.

*Mrs Whittaker, attired in a tweed skirt, shirt-blouse and a purple knitted sports-coat, is seated at her bureau. She is the type of woman who has the reputation of having been 'quite lovely' as a girl. The stern repressions of any sex emotions all her life has brought her to middle age with a faulty digestion which doesn't so much sour her temper as spread it. She views the world with the jaundiced eyes of a woman who subconsciously realizes she has missed something, which means in point of fact that she has missed everything.*⁸⁹

While Mrs Whittaker has 'missed everything', Larita has seemingly missed nothing. Larita is everything Mrs Whittaker could have been, but she has been entrapped by her society and has become a part of it. The same can be said for her daughter Marion who in the play is sexually repressive like her mother while also hiding behind a religious façade. Larita is more than just a threat to her; she is everything that Marion wants to be but cannot:

⁸⁸ Barr, *English Hitchcock* p. 47.

⁸⁹ Coward, N. *Noel Coward Collected Plays: One*, Methuen Publishing Ltd, London 1999, p. 195.

Marion – We're certainly not experienced in dealing with women of your sort, if that's what you mean.

Larita – It is what I mean – entirely. I'm completely outside the bounds of your understanding – in every way. And yet I know you, Marion, through and through – far better than you know yourself. You're a pitiful figure, and there are thousands like you – victims of convention and upbringing. All your life you've ground down perfectly natural sex impulses, until your mind has become a morass of inhibitions – your repression has run into the usual channel of religious hysteria. You've played physical purity too high and mental purity not high enough. And you'll be a miserable woman until the end of your days unless you readjust your balance.

Marion (*rising impetuously*): You're revolting – horrible!

Larita: You need love and affection terribly – you'd go to any lengths to obtain it except the right ones. You swear and smoke and assume an air of spurious heartiness because you're not sure of your own religion and are afraid of being thought a prude. You try to establish a feeling of comradeship by sanctimonious heart-to-heart talks. All your ideals are confused and muddled you don't know what to ask of life, and you'll die never having achieved anything but physical virtue. And God knows I pity you.⁹⁰

Coward is here talking directly to the audience and thus directly to the society that he sees living in fear of people like Larita, not that, according to Coward, there is actually anything to fear. Larita never apologises for her past transgressions. Does she regret her actions? Probably, but that isn't the point. To Larita life is about living, something that *Easy Virtue* suggests that the British upper class society of the twenties is incapable of doing.

It is clear to see within Coward's play the narrative elements that lend themselves to the points of authorship within Hitchcock's work. Echoing the relationship of Norma and Norman Bates, Mrs Whittaker is the domineering mother figure, fiercely protective of her family, yet also smothering of her son who she utterly resents for being with Larita, a stranger from an alien, more modern society. Coward's Larita shares many characteristics with both *Psycho*'s Marion and many other 'Hitchcock blondes' who are linked with sex and death throughout his work. If these examples were found within Hitchcock's later work, as in films more suitable to the study of auteur theory then they would be used as evidence, yet as it stands they are merely further evidence of Hitchcock's poaching.

⁹⁰ Coward, p. 258.

2.3 *Easy Virtue* – The Film

Just as is the case with *The Farmer's Wife*, *Easy Virtue* cannot be looked at in the same kind of way as any other Hitchcock adaptation. As stated earlier, plays and films share visual and audible signifiers that can be transferred. But with silent cinema, it is purely just visual. Noel Coward was a wordsmith; a playwright known for his barbed criticism and witty zingers which is visible within other such Noel Coward adaptations as *Blithe Spirit* (David Lean, 1945) and the 2008 remake of *Easy Virtue* (Elliot). Hitchcock's *Easy Virtue* is no different. The play revolves around the character's speech and not their actions, in fact there is very little in the way of physical action. A tennis match in the middle of the play, followed by dancing at the end all happen off stage. The only real moment of physical action that furthers the narrative is Larita's extravagant entrance towards the end of the play. Looking at the bare bones of the narrative, with Larita entering the household, arguing with some family members, befriending others, having her secret past revealed and then ultimately leaving, everything is present and correct within Hitchcock's film.

With Brian McFarlane's use of Barthes 'cardinal functions' for narrative transference we can literally pinpoint all the major points of Coward's narrative and find them in place within Hitchcock's text and it is with what Coward does not show and only refers to that Hitchcock truly exploits and builds upon. Larita and John's arrival to the household is a major narrative point, a proper cardinal function. However in the play its 'catalyser' (the smaller action that allows the cardinal function to operate) could be viewed as being the wired telegram that Mrs Whittaker receives that informs her and the audience, that her son is returning to England later that day with his new wife which no one has met. This catalyser does not exist within Hitchcock's text. The play alludes to Larita's 'scandalous' past, as well as her time in the south of France where she meets John, but Hitchcock takes these allusions and uses them to create a different opening to the film which in turn changes the tone and mood of later events.

Hitchcock opens with a courtroom scene that shows Larita being tried for adultery, which has subsequently lead to her lover's death. Once we have learned her tragic tale, she is found guilty. From here we follow her as she escapes to the south of

France to hide away from the public gaze. She meets and falls in love with John Whittaker where they marry and decide to return to John's home. The reason for this opening to the film is two-fold. The first and most important is that it portrays Larita as innocent and thus the audience is on her side from the start. Secondly, it allows Hitchcock more technical freedom and the chance to explore the world outside of the stage-confines of the Whittaker household, but without upsetting the balance of Coward's narrative. According to Barr:

Reworking it like this has the useful effect of opening up a one-set interior drama, bringing in Riviera locations that must have looked good in a pristine print, as well as avoiding excessive reliance on inter-titles by dramatizing, in linear fashion, a 'backstory' that on the stage is inevitably filled out in dialogue. It also gives us Larita as an identification figure from the start. We are with her anticipating and meeting the family, rather than with them in anticipating and meeting her.⁹¹

In Coward's play we are immersed within the household from the start. We learn about the Whittakers and their apprehension of Larita. Her arrival is an introduction to the audience as well as the Whittakers, and her departure from them at the end of the play is also one from the audience. Coward does not want the audience to identify with Larita but instead with the grotesqueness of the Whittakers and the backwardness of their society and in turn, the audience's. Hitchcock removes himself from Coward's critique of the Twenties society and instead implores the audience to follow in the footsteps of an innocent woman, which Coward's Larita is not:

Larita: ...that newspaper cutting was perfectly accurate – as far as it went. I *was* concerned in that unpleasant case. I changed my name afterward for obvious reasons. The papers rather over-reached themselves in publishing the number of my lovers – only two of the list really loved me.

Mrs Whittaker: You were responsible for a man killing himself.

Larita: Certainly not. It was his weakness and cowardice that were responsible for that – not I.

Mrs Whittaker: It's incredible – dreadful – I can hardly believe it.

Larita: I felt like that at the time, but it's a long while ago.

Mrs Whittaker: And how have you lived since this – this – scandal?

Larita: Extremely well.⁹²

⁹¹ Barr, *English Hitchcock*, p. 49.

⁹² Coward, p. 255.

Coward's Larita acknowledges her past transgressions. She does not apologize for them and she does not look for the pity of others. She does not view herself as a victim and has instead become hardened against the criticism of others. She does not need the viewer's sympathy, which Hitchcock deliberately seeks. Coward's Larita has learned to look after herself while Hitchcock's Larita, in the words of Sidney Gottlieb is much "less resourceful."⁹³ The film opens with Larita's court case and subsequent flashbacks to the event in question and it is within this sequence, lasting eighteen minutes and forty-five seconds, that Hitchcock presents a world that is against his heroine. This is another clear parallel with *Psycho* (which will be discussed in detail later) as Hitchcock adopts the same tactic with Robert Bloch's novel, moving Marion's transgressions to the front of the narrative, thus creating viewer empathy and identification. Here Larita is a victim of the law (the judge and prosecutor), the jury, the court spectators, her husband, the media and most crucially, the camera. It is this traumatic experience that will put her on the path to the Whittakers. To understand Hitchcock's Larita, is to understand her past and to understand her past we must look at the courtroom scene in detail.



Figure 1.

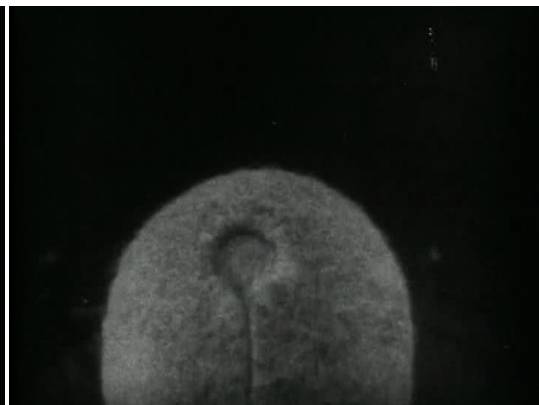


Figure 2.

⁹³ Sidney Gottlieb, 'Hitchcock's Silent Cinema', in Leitch, T. and Poague, L. (eds.), *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Chichester, 2014, p. 261.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

After the opening credits the first title card of the film appears. It reads:

Virtue is its own reward'
 they say - - but "easy
 virtue" is society's reward
 for a slandered reputation.

The inter-title then fades out and we fade in to a close up of a newspaper clipping which is titled 'Probate, Divorce and Admiralty'. The lighting then narrows to create a spotlight that highlights a particular court case. There is plenty of information to digest but words such as 'justice' and 'divorce case' clearly stand out from the page. The picture then fades into the image that can be seen above in figure 2. It appears at first to be a hole in a white semi-sphere, in fact it almost looks like a gravestone. After a couple of seconds, the object rolls back and it is in fact the head of a judge. He has an old gaunt face, narrow eyes and a few wrinkles. His eyebrows tighten as though he is trying to look at something and then we cut to a wide shot of a courtroom that he is presiding over. The camera cuts back to the judge so that instead of a close up of his face, it is now a medium shot of his upper body. The judge pulls out a monocle and holds it up to his eye. The camera then cuts to a point-of-view shot through the monocle's lens where it swoops over the audience and lands on a prosecutor who is gesturing wildly (see figure 3).

This opening introduction to the judge is an attack on the court proceedings and the law itself. The first image of the judge that is shown appears to be of a hole in his head suggesting emptiness and incompleteness. When his face appears it is not

one of wisdom, but one of tiredness and weariness. The monocle represents short-sightedness. The law in the case of divorce has become outdated. Justice has become blind. From here on whatever case is about to be tried cannot be taken seriously and after we have seen the prosecutor scream and shout about something that we, the viewer, cannot decipher, our first look at his target, Larita, is thus a look of sympathy. Figure four shows Larita dropping her head in defeat. She is tired and vulnerable. We do not know any facts from this case, why she is in the stand or what is being said to her. We have no information and thus the viewer is as lost as Larita.

The next action taken is by the judge, who speaks over a restless courtroom “Silence, please – or I shall clear the court” (see figure 5 below). Peter Conrad comments that Hitchcock “is calling for silence in a silent film, just to remind us that we have been frustratingly denied the information we crave”⁹⁴. This is a tenuous reading as all films in 1926 were silent so calling for silence in a silent film would have meant little at the time. Yet Hitchcock’s call for silence is deliberate and from a narrative point of view it makes sense. It is an example of the stupidity of the courtroom. This is a room where facts are meant to be read aloud and learned, and wisdom and truth are meant to prevail, instead we are kept in the dark by a half-blind judge with a hole in his head, leaking intelligence and cohesion by the minute.

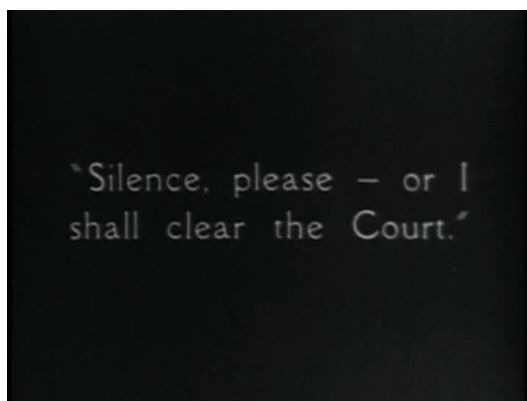


Figure 5.

In Coward’s *Easy Virtue* we learn nothing of Larita’s past husbands or boyfriends and we know nothing about the affair read out in the papers by the

⁹⁴ Conrad, P., *The Hitchcock Murders*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 2000, p. 159.

Whittakers other than that it led to her lover's suicide. Larita is viewed by Mrs Whittaker as a temptress who has ensnared her son:

Mrs Whittaker: You betrayed my son's honour by taking advantage of his youth and mad infatuation for you. He'd never have married you if he'd known.⁹⁵

To an extent Larita agrees with Mrs Whittaker. Earlier in the play she tells Charles, another outsider, separate from the Whittaker family:

Larita: He's awfully young and – well, almost ingenious sometimes. I think that must have been what attracted me to him at first – it was refreshing.⁹⁶

Then later in response to Mrs Whittaker's accusations of betrayal:

Larita: I suppose you wouldn't consider it betraying his honour if he'd had an affair with me and not married me?

Mrs Whittaker: It would certainly have been much more appropriate.

Larita: Unfortunately. I don't consider John worthy of me in either capacity – I realized a long time ago that our marriage was a mistake, but not from your point of view – from my own.

Marion: It's easy to talk like that now.

Larita: It isn't easy – it's heartbreaking. I love John more than I can ever say, but it's not blind love – unfortunately – I can see through him. He's charming and weak and inadequate, and he's brought me down to the dust.⁹⁷



Figure 6.

Coward's Larita recognizes her mistakes and thus they do not hinder her. She is strong and independent and while she was probably hurt in the past, she is now able

⁹⁵ Coward, N. *Noel Coward Collected Plays: One*, Methuen Publishing Ltd, London 1999, p. 257.

⁹⁶ Coward, p. 217.

⁹⁷ Coward, p. 257.

to shield herself from the world around her, making her ultimately invulnerable to the Whittakers. Hitchcock's Larita is unable to do this. Her flashbacks during the opening trial present a woman who is weak and lives in fear of her husband and ultimately everyone around her. Gottlieb describes her as "above all a spectacle, vulnerable to visual dissection,"⁹⁸ something which is visible within her framing in the courtroom, from the disapproving looks of the Whittaker family and from the gazes of her husband and the artist. Figures 6 to 8 express this "visual dissection" and ultimately show the distant relationship between Larita and her husband. Figure 6 (above) shows her husband, Mr Filton, pouring himself a drink from a decanter that the prosecutor showed in court. He turns and the camera pans right revealing a small statue that is on a dresser behind him (figure 7 below).



Figure 7.



Figure 8.

Her husband looks lost and appears to mirror the statue as if it represents him. However, he turns screen left as the camera continues to pan left (figure 8 above). Larita is revealed. She is sitting in a chair, dressed extravagantly, looking away from her husband. His line of sight is direct with the statue that is now facing him. He speaks to her but it is as if he is just talking directly to the statue. Figure 9 (below) exemplifies this relationship between Larita and the statue. She is meant to be seen and not heard in the presence of her husband. Like the statue she is a decoration. Figure 10 (below) is a wide shot of the room depicting the artist painting Larita while she sits patiently. He is the lover, the man who will kill himself over her, yet there is no love in her flashbacks. He sees her as a painting, a work of art that he must mould and sculpt into something that he can possess. Larita is questioned by the prosecutor

⁹⁸ Gottlieb, p.261.

about kissing the artist, to which she replies with a simple, innocent gesture of lifting her hand forward and then tilting her head sideways, suggesting that he only ever kissed her hand in the accepted pleased-to-meet-you fashion.



Figure 9.



Figure 10.

Hitchcock then inserts close up images of a damning letter sent by the artist in which he is professing his love for her. This is coupled with shots of Larita's cross-examination (see figure 11) that show her up close and side on. Her face appears almost like a mug shot. The camera is trying to convince the viewer of her guilt.



Figure 11.



Figure 12.

Hitchcock hands Larita's victimisation over to the artist after the husband has had his say. The artist caresses Larita as if she were a doll while she sits in the chair and her husband is absent. He is furious when Larita turns up at his studio, bruised at the hands of her drunken husband. He vows that the husband will never have a drink at his studio but then proceeds to grab Larita himself. Figure 12 shows the artist

pulling Larita towards him, while he leers and sneers affections towards her. Larita pulls away, in a hopeless and pathetic manner. Her husband appears and he and the artist glare at each other and begin to circle each other like wild cats. Larita grabs her husband's arm and mouths something to him. No title-card is needed because her words ultimately go unheard and unheeded. The artist hunches over and resembles Nosferatu as he slithers away from the husband who moves towards him while raising a walking stick above his head. The artist takes a gun out of the draw and shoots the husband who continues to try and hit him before collapsing. Figure 13 (below) shows Larita trying to revive her husband while the artist looks on and figure 14 shows the artist as he begins to realize what he has done. He grasps his face and his eyes widen and not once does he think about Larita. We are not shown what happens to the artist, instead the film cuts to a policeman and two men in civilian dress crouching around his dead body (see figure 15), with the presumption being that he shot himself. Larita's husband soon awakes and she rushes over to him, putting her arms around him and even smiling. He stares at her blankly, his head rolls towards the direction of the dead artist and then down towards the incriminating letter of the artist declaring his love for Larita.

Hitchcock's scene with the artist is a consequence of opening out the play, pulling on a thread that Coward leaves dangling and unravelling. It is also an example of a scene that Hitchcock repeats throughout his work, the sexual predator (in this case both the husband and artist) readying to punish the female victim who is in a sense being punished for expressing some form of sexual desire. *Blackmail* almost recreates this scene with the artist's attempted rape of Alice, while the scene is echoed in *Dial M for Murder*, and reversed in *Rebecca* with Maxim's murder of his wife. In *Dial M for Murder* Grace Kelly's Margot has been having an affair and her would-be murderer, while not technically a sexual predator, displays all the hallmarks of one, hiding in the shadows, waiting to strangle Margot before forcing himself on top of her, a scene which again echoes the rape-murder scenes of *Frenzy*. The parallels with rape are clear. *Rebecca* is different as it is Rebecca who is the sexual threat, with her use of sex towards Maxim and it his 'lack' of sexual prowess for which he is being punished. His ambiguous retelling of her 'accidental' death is the result of her being a predator.

Larita, Margot and Maxim are all morally grey characters, and it is this grey area that Hitchcock always gravitated towards, pulling from novels and plays and then reworking and readapting throughout his work until eventually he claims them as his own.

It is worth noting here Maurice Yacowar's reading of *Easy Virtue*, specifically the artist's death. In his extensive study of Hitchcock's British films, Yacowar correctly identifies the lack of attention that *Easy Virtue* has received, specifically and accurately calling out Raymond Durnat for his one sentence description of the film as well as Rohmer and Chabrol's rather pathetic account. Yet Yacowar himself does not do the film any justice either:

Larita Filton (Isabel Jeans) becomes notorious when her jealous, drunk husband divorces her. Her devoted friend, an artist (Eric Bransbry-Williams), commits suicide so he can leave her his income (2,000 pounds per annum). Larita tries to make a new life under a new name.⁹⁹

Yacowar defends Durnat to an extent, as he may not have been able to see the film and explains that it has only recently become available to see while Yacowar's detailed description suggests that he has seen the film. Yacowar goes on to describe the film in detail, even explaining that it is an adaptation and discusses what Hitchcock omits and adds concerning Coward's play, yet his description of the pivotal scene within Larita's past is incomplete, inaccurate and damaging to the rest of the reading. The artist does not commit suicide for Larita's sake, but because he believes he has murdered her husband, after attempting to seduce her. Hitchcock does not depict him a 'devoted friend' but more a violent, possessive jilted lover who is meant to mirror her husband. It is also not so much the divorce that gains her notoriety, but rather her relationship with the artist as shown by the judge's verdict. The title card reads:

We find Larita Filton
guilty of misconduct
with the late Claude
Robson.

⁹⁹ Yacowar, M., *Hitchcock's British Films*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2010, p. 37.

This is not so much an attack on Yacowar but rather on the haphazardness that has been shown within Hitchcock studies towards his earlier British films. While brief, Yacowar discusses the adaptation of Coward's play but it is half-hearted and more anecdotal than theoretical, aligning himself with Hitchcock the auteur. Yacowar opens his chapter on *Easy Virtue* by stating that it is "probably Hitchcock's most unfamiliar feature film"¹⁰⁰ and by the end of the chapter it still is.



Figure 13.



Figure 14.



Figure 15.



Figure 16.

¹⁰⁰ Yacowar, *Hitchcock's British Films*, p. 37.



Figure 17.



Figure 18.

Returning to the reading of *Easy Virtue*, Hitchcock continues to portray Larita as the victim throughout the film. The Whittaker household is just another courtroom, with the mother and daughters playing judge and jury alike. Their persecution is aided by the camera that follows Larita everywhere:

The free-spirited Larita in *Easy Virtue* is persecuted by the cameras that lie in wait for her. After her divorce, a title-card proclaiming 'The Verdict' is superimposed on the silhouette of a movie camera [see figure 17 above], previously used for the film's credits, where Hitchcock's own name appears over it [see figure 1 above]. She then flees to the south of France to escape gossip-mongering photographers [see figure 18 above]. Respectably remarried, she throws a pillow at a Kodak Box Brownie on the sideboard of her husband's house, as if she wants to blind it. When the marriage fails, she surrenders in despair to the cameramen outside the divorce court, mouthing words translated by title-card that Hitchcock himself wrote: 'Shoot! There's nothing left to kill.'¹⁰¹

Conrad is suggesting that as the eye behind the camera, Hitchcock is the ultimate architect in Larita's downfall. He bookends the film with the silhouetted camera, encompassing Larita and leaving her at the mercy of the flashing photographers. This notion of framing is apparent throughout Hitchcock's film. Christopher Morris' essay 'Easy Virtue's Frames' discusses at length Hitchcock's consistent use of framing within the film. From the witness box in the courtroom (see figure 4 above), to a long lonely hotel corridor (see figure 19 below), to the double framing of a hotel lobby door and pillars (see figure 20 below), Larita is framed in every conceivable way. Morris states that "framing is a metaphor for reading" and that "reading is made possible by what is excluded, marginalised, or not seen".¹⁰² Everything that Hitchcock frames comes under question by what is left out. Each

¹⁰¹ Conrad, P., *The Hitchcock Murders*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 2000, p. 197.

¹⁰² Christopher Morris, 'Easy Virtue's Frames' in Gottlieb, S., and Brookhouse, C., (eds.), *Framing Hitchcock*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2002, p. 83-84.

framed image essentially becomes an allegory of what we are really seeing. When Larita flees to France in an attempt to hide away and become someone anonymous, Hitchcock places her within another court. Morris writes:

The main link between the old and putatively new is established by her presence at the second court, another formally delimited space of ritualized conflict. The French tennis court – in history a famous nexus of sport and arbitrary law – is introduced by an impossible to ignore framing-shot, by means of which we view players and bouncing ball first through a racquet [see figure 21 below]. It is as if humans are subordinated to some network or mesh or fate larger than themselves. Of course, the seesaw motion of the tennis game recalls the courtroom’s images of alternating argument and counter-argument; the parallel likens the viewer, Larita, and the tennis audience to the jury and to courtroom observers of the back-and-forth of framed human discourse struggling to issue in truthful representation.¹⁰³

Larita may have left England and the courtroom behind but she is still being judged. As well as the tennis game physically representing the courtroom, it is also a metaphor for her life. Tennis is a game of frames within frames, ruled over by judges and spectators. Wherever Larita goes she is imprisoned by some form of framing. Within her frame is what she sees and what she perceives the situation to be. Yet the framing indicates that she is oblivious to the dangers around her and until she manages to break out of the frame, like Coward’s Larita, she will always be doomed to fail.



Figure 19.



Figure 20.

¹⁰³ Morris, pp. 85-86.

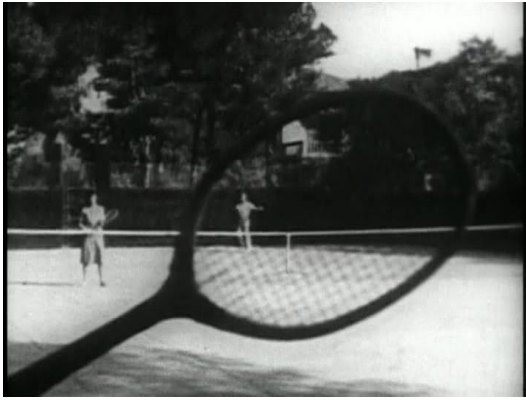


Figure 21.



Figure 22.

Figure 22 shows an interesting scene that has probably garnered more critical attention than any other scene in *Easy Virtue*. It depicts a phone operator who after connecting a phone call between Larita and her new lover John, decides to eavesdrop on their conversation. As Morris points out, this scene has been “praised as a virtuoso example of the way silent film ‘speaks’ purely through visual images”¹⁰⁴ yet the scene is also an example of hidden framing. Through the phone operator’s gestures and actions we are able to follow the notion that John is proposing to Larita. The suspense of the moment falls upon the operator. We can tell by her wide-eyed expression that there is genuine fear in what Larita will say, and when she relaxes and smiles, giggling to herself with delight, we know that Larita has said yes. In Hitchcock’s interview with Truffaut he talks about this scene being one of his early favourites and how it is the perfect example of creating suspense:

Truffaut: The word ‘suspense’ can be interpreted in several ways. In your interviews you have frequently pointed out the difference between ‘surprise’ and ‘suspense’. But many people are under the impression that suspense is related to fear.

Hitchcock: There is no relation whatever. Let’s go back to the switchboard operator in *Easy Virtue*. She is tuned in to the conversation between the young man and the woman who are discussing marriage and who are not shown on screen. That switchboard operator is in suspense; she is filled with it. Is the woman on the end of the line going to marry the man whom she called? The switchboard operator is very relieved when the woman finally agrees; her own suspense is over. This is an example of suspense that is not related to fear.¹⁰⁵

It is also an example of one of the many triangles that plague Hitchcock’s Larita. Christopher Morris writes that “the triangle is one of many images that show

¹⁰⁴ Morris, p. 86.

¹⁰⁵ Truffaut, p. 72.

love subordinated to a frame”.¹⁰⁶ This special moment between Larita and John is subjected to a third party. While it creates suspense, it also creates a sense of betrayal and furthers the notion that Larita can control nothing in her life. Her relationships are never just between her and her chosen love. There is always a third party, whether it is the judge, the artist, John’s mother or the phone operator. Larita is always one corner of the triangular frame but she is always facing inwards towards what she wants to believe is a workable relationship when in fact she should be facing outwards towards the forces that are working together with the rebel third corner in a bid to sabotage her happiness.

As Hitchcock approaches the Whittaker’s home and subsequently Coward’s main narrative, the action becomes confined to the country house. The majority of the scenes take place within the foyer of the house, as they do in Coward’s play, and like the stage counterpart, the main focus of the foyer action is based around the staircase that dominates the interior, allowing for dramatic entrances and exits. Framing is still used throughout the film to show Larita’s position within the household and as Christopher Morris notes, from the geography of the English countryside to the dining room table, Larita has once again been placed within another courtroom:

The film’s geographical circularity is only another frame. The lovers’ carriage-ride across flat wastelands ends in the Whittaker’s moated estate, rendered as a series of oppressive interior frames: the doorway, bedposts and mirror of Larita’s room; the interior gives that recall the courtroom, artist’s studio, and French hotel; the wooden carvings of saints looming over the dining table; the double landings and balustrades which frame Mrs Whittaker’s first entrance and Larita’s final defiance. Thus, the austere rigidity of the judicial frames is duplicated in the domestic world, which gradually “judges” Larita in a manner just as arbitrary as the court’s. The dining table repeats the jury room, as the social repeats the legal verdict.¹⁰⁷

Hitchcock’s use of framing, despite involving the opening out of the play and concerning scenes that are not in Coward’s text, is still representative of Coward’s work. At its core Coward’s play is about a woman who has already suffered at the hands of society because of her past transgressions and the Whittaker household is just another courtroom ready to condemn her. Hitchcock does not have Coward’s words and thus, compared to a sound picture that could conceivably be shot as a ‘photoplay’, slipping into something more ‘stagey’, *Easy Virtue* and other silent

¹⁰⁶ Morris, p. 86.

¹⁰⁷ Morris, p. 87.

adaptations of stage plays almost require *more* adapting. The frames follow and define Hitchcock's Larita and this use of 'oppressive interior framing' reveals what Coward is trying to say; that once scorned, society will judge no matter where you go, no matter how you try to conform or fit in, you will always be trapped.

Within the subtext of Coward's narrative, Hitchcock has found elements that he can explore and express. There are of course plenty of scenes that are literally photo-shots of what would have been stage action. None of the title-cards contain any of Coward's words, yet his narrative thread that runs through the Whittaker household, as discussed earlier, is repeated rather 'faithfully' within Hitchcock's text. The characters follow the same paths and act in the same ways yet it is with the climax of the narrative that the texts of Coward and Hitchcock show their true differences:

At this moment Larita appears at the top of the stairs. Her dress is dead-white and cut extremely low; she is wearing three ropes of pearls, and another long string twined round her wrist. Her face is as white as her dress and her lips vivid scarlet. Her left arm positively glitters with diamond, ruby and emerald bracelets; her small tiara of rubies and diamonds matches her enormous ear-rings; she also displays a diamond anklet over her cobweb fine flesh-coloured stocking. She is carrying a tremendous scarlet ostrich-feather fan. There is a distinct gasp from everybody. Marion rises and drops her glass of claret-cup.¹⁰⁸

Figure 23 (below) strongly resembles Coward's description of Larita's entrance. She is wearing a dead-white dress that is cut low, she is covered in a great number of pearls and jewellery, and more importantly, she enters dramatically, making a scene. Figures 24 and 25 show the party coming to a halt for Larita. Mrs Whittaker is caught off guard by her appearance. This is Mrs Whittaker's domain and after fighting off what she perceived to be a threat in Larita, she is now taken aback by her nemesis' public display. Both Coward and Hitchcock use the staircase as a means of expressing dominance with both Larita and Mrs Whittaker taking it in turns to either appear at the top of the stairs or to disappear dramatically up them, in a sense having the last word without actually saying anything. The difference however is that Larita's last stand within Coward's play is successful. The staircase is another important Hitchcock motif that repeats throughout his work and here we have an actual example of the staircase being lifted straight from the stage directions of

¹⁰⁸ Coward, p. 268.

another text. The implications of this will be examined more closely within the next chapter



Figure 23.



Figure 24.



Figure 25.



Figure 26.

Within the play, before the party takes place, Larita argues with Mrs Whitaker and her daughters over the newspaper clipping that reveals her past. Coward allows Larita the freedom to scold, ridicule and humiliate each of the Whittakers in turn. She then departs to her bedroom when she knows that the end of her tenure at the house is coming to an end. She knows her marriage is over, but in a sense it is on her own terms. She has hit the Whittakers where it hurts and thus her surprise entrance to the party, embarrassing Mrs Whittaker in front of her friends, is the final killing blow. Hitchcock does not allow Larita anywhere near as much freedom of expression. The film obviously cannot express the exact barbs and insults that Larita throws at the Whittakers and while actions often speak louder the words, Larita performs very little action. When confronted with the newspaper article she expresses shock and disbelief as opposed to the calm and coolness projected by Coward's Larita. Hitchcock positions Larita in the corner of a crowded room where she appears like a cowering mouse as the wild beasts circle. Mrs Whitaker is always pictured in a dominant

fashion and never once does Larita get the upper hand. Hitchcock even breaks with Coward's narrative briefly by having Larita's husband John enter the argument. In Coward's play he is completely unaware of any problems, and he is ignorant of Larita's final departure, as he believes she is just off to bed. Hitchcock has him enter the battleground under the instruction of his friend Sarah who has told him to support Larita no matter what. He is shown the newspaper clipping and after expressing momentary shock and disbelief, he attempts to shake it off by shouting something at his sister. He is not given a title-card to express his thoughts because they do not matter. His mother swoops in, places her arm around his shoulders and speaks for him. Larita stumbles backwards onto the arm of a chair. From there she tries to argue that none of this matters as it was before their marriage but it is futile. She leaves when the argument is over. She smiles at Mrs Whittaker to say that this is beneath her and that she will ultimately win, only to then in the following scene tell Colonel Whittaker that she knows that John no longer loves her. Larita is beaten by this point and where she could possibly make amends with a surprise grand entrance to the party, a-la Coward's Larita, this is instead immediately taken away from her by the camera's invasion of her bedroom where we witness her dressing and getting ready for the show. This violation strips away the impact of Larita's plan and thus the balcony at the top of the staircase, which could have been her stage, is going to become her prison. When she steps out of her room she is immediately framed by spiked wooden rails resembling medieval prison bars and her long walk down the stairs resembles more a walk to the gallows than an entrance to a party (see figure 23 above).



Figure 27.



Figure 28.

Coward's Larita leaves the party without the knowledge of anyone except for two friends and Furber the helpful butler. She has lost her husband and while she may have won the moral victory over the Whittaker's, ultimately she has lost. Nothing will change in the house and she will remain only as a bad memory, the kind that will sometimes give you cause for concern when you can think of nothing else. However, she leaves on a wave of optimism. The establishment has knocked her down, but she will get back up again. She has survived this before and you cannot help but feel that she will eventually find happiness. Hitchcock is not looking for this kind of conclusion from his heroine. *Easy Virtue* has been her downfall and not her rebirth. Unlike Coward's Larita who has walked through the fire and survived, Hitchcock's Larita has tripped and burned. Her leaving of the house is also discreet and under the cover of darkness, yet she ends up back in the familiar surroundings of the courtroom, with the same blind judge and the same damning outcome. When she leaves and is once again mobbed by reporters, she grabs her own throat as though the frames that have surrounded her for the entire film have finally closed in and are now choking her (see figure 28). Larita's final words are etched on the title-card "Shoot! There's nothing left to kill." Hitchcock states in his interview to Truffaut that this was the worst title card that he ever wrote¹⁰⁹ which may very well be true but it may also be his most accurate. He obliges her request with a final shot of the silhouetted camera, with the words 'The End'.

Returning briefly to Yacowar's ironic criticism of the 'lack of criticism' on *Easy Virtue*, it is clear that Hitchcock's film has been marginalised not only because it is a silent film and not a thriller, but because it is an adaptation of a play by a writer with a distinctive style that does not fit into the Hitchcock canon. When researching *Easy Virtue* it became apparent that many critics had either overlooked the film or simply disregarded the film as a 'photoplay' and nothing more. Hitchcock himself never really spoke warmly of the film itself but it should not dictate the views of critics and theorists. In his essay 'Looking For Lust: Stars of Gainsborough' Geoffrey Macnab throws out a criticism of Coward's text and never addresses the issue afterwards:

¹⁰⁹ Truffaut, p. 51.

Even a director with as much visual flair as Hitchcock was hard-pressed to animate such intractable material as *Easy Virtue*.¹¹⁰

Even noted Hitchcock admirer Françoise Truffaut, admitted to the director himself in their extensive interview that he had never seen *Easy Virtue*. Now while this seems like very questionable research on Truffaut's part, it is in keeping with the work of many other critics. More telling than the odd throwaway lines are the many extensive works on Hitchcock that do not mention the film at all. It begs the question why? At first glance it seems that *Easy Virtue* is written off as a basic 'photoplay' that Hitchcock had little say in choosing to adapt and then made little effort to bring anything original to Coward's narrative. This is anything but accurate. As has been shown, there are many narrative similarities between Coward's play and Hitchcock's film, while there are many aspects that Hitchcock would go on to use again and again, eventually passing into his 'ownership'. As mentioned earlier, adaptation is often effected by the passage of time, and thus texts are often forgotten about or consigned to the past. *Easy Virtue* was attacked from multiple sides on its release. The founder of Gainsborough Pictures, Michael Balcon, discusses the acquisition of two of Noel Coward's plays and their subsequent adaptations within his autobiography:

It was no doubt wrong of us to seek to bask in the reflected glory of people like Noel Coward: we followed trends and did not try to make them. It was doubly a mistake to lean on stage plays because we were making *silent* films, so the plays were deprived of their very essence, the words... Our policy did not always pay off. We filmed Coward's *Easy Virtue* and *The Vortex* and both were financial failures.¹¹¹

Balcon does not look back fondly on his experience with *Easy Virtue* and it is interesting that he refers to the process of adaptation as 'following trends'. He is correct in the sense that adapting a successful play could indeed be deemed capitalising on something 'trendy' but that should not necessarily be a criticism. Balcon only deems it one because he views Hitchcock's film as a failure. What then do we constitute as a failure? Balcon was a film producer and thus money would have been one of his major issues, as we can attain from his 'financial failure' comment. In 1927 Caroline Alice Lejeune wrote a scathing review of *Easy Virtue* in *The Guardian*

¹¹⁰ Geoffrey Macnab, 'Looking For Lust: Stars of Gainsborough' in Cook, P. (ed.) *Gainsborough Pictures 1924-1950*, Cassel, London, 1998, p. 105.

¹¹¹ Balcon, M. *A Lifetime In Films*, Hutchinson, London, 1969, p. 27.

newspaper.¹¹² Within the review she attacks the film yet she is full of praise for Hitchcock's ability as a technical director and for his future if he is willing to adapt. Her attack centres on what she sees as Hitchcock's inability to grasp realism yet it appears to have nothing to do with Coward's play. Lejeune attacks Hitchcock's control of the "artificial story" as though he were the creator, yet Balcon's declaration that they sought the "glory" of Noel Coward's success and not Hitchcock's suggests that it was Coward's "artificial story". Lejeune praise's Hitchcock's use of the camera, the very thing that he brought to the text, but it is in the "not knowing men" that he fails. Lejeune blames Hitchcock, Balcon blames himself, while Hitchcock when speaking to Françoise Truffaut about the film, other than a poorly written title, has nothing detrimental to say about the film, and considering he criticises many of his films within the Truffaut interview, as previously discussed, he even uses a scene from *Easy Virtue* as the perfect example of how to create suspense. How one chooses to review a film, just like how one chooses to judge the faithfulness of an adaptation is ultimately down to personal interpretation. Lejeune makes no mention of Noel Coward within her review yet she does state that Hitchcock's technique is undeniable and that he is destined to become great, again an ignorance of adaptation and a nod towards auteurism.

¹¹² "It is an extremely clever piece of work, and confirms all one's earlier suspicions that in Hitchcock England has found her first really brilliant technical director. But "Easy Virtue," for all its cleverness, is not a good film. It misses contact with the audience, just as, and because, it missed contact with the people whose lives are the picture's professed concern. Hitchcock had an artificial story and an artificial society to deal with here, but his treatment of them is not that of a director who matches artificiality of substance with artificiality of form, but of a man who has in himself so little reaction to flesh-and-blood truth that, he is almost incapable of knowing the living from the dead. Hitchcock's blindness to the things that people do in expression of their real emotions is not a mannerism but a fact. In his work he thinks, and cannot feel. No director in England, and very few in America, can tell a screen story as cleverly as he—can narrate so subtly and simply to the eye, without a word written, using all the tricks of the camera and all the loquacity of silent things to carry his audience from point to point in perfect understanding and ease. But he will have to learn to know men as well as he knows the camera or, not knowing men, to turn his talents from the intimate to the impersonal kinema before he can become one of the great directors of the screen."

- Caroline Alice Lejeune, 'This Week On Film', The Guardian, 3 September 1927, [http://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/The_Guardian_\(03/Sep/1927\)_-_THE_WEEK_ON_SCREEN](http://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/The_Guardian_(03/Sep/1927)_-_THE_WEEK_ON_SCREEN)

2.4 *The Farmer's Wife* – The Play

Eden Phillpotts was an incredibly prolific writer of novels and plays in the very early twentieth century yet any biography will tell you, not that there are many, that he shied away from any form of media and thus his work overshadowed his public image. Unlike Coward who craved the limelight and Hitchcock who built upon and used his popularity, Phillpotts lived a quiet life in Dartmoor where the majority of his work dealt with the people and countryside that surrounded him. *The Farmer's Wife* was written in 1917 yet the play is adapted from part of Phillpotts' comic novel *Widcombe Fair*.¹¹³

Leading up to Hitchcock's adaptation, the play "ran for 1,329 straight performances at The Court Theatre in London between 1924-27"¹¹⁴ It was very successful and Hitchcock, according to Donald Spoto, approached the adaptation with "high spirits" after his own success with *The Ring*.¹¹⁵ This is almost all of what Spoto discusses in relation to *The Farmer's Wife* in his mammoth Hitchcock opus. Like many of the other theatrical British adaptations Spoto skirts over their production history and while it is only a biography, it can be argued that this is symptomatic of the 'auteur syndrome' where anything that does not fall into the category of depicting Hitchcock as an auteur is placed to one side. Much like Hitchcock picked and chose the authors and texts that he would adapt from, proponents of Hitchcock the auteur will often pick and choose films, themes and characters to fit the need required. Spoto states that *The Farmer's Wife* was adapted for the screen by Hitchcock himself when in fact it was written by Eliot Stannard. This obviously bears little relation to the adaptation itself but Spoto's biography is the 'go-to' account that nearly every theorist uses when they cite Hitchcock history and considering we have already discussed the lack of theoretical work concerning Eliot Stannard and how influential and important he was to Hitchcock, then this mistake suddenly becomes quite important.

¹¹³ Mark Beeson, 'Eden Philpotts as Dramatist' cited in *Dartmoor Resource*, <http://www.dartmoorresource.org.uk/performance/theatre-on-dartmoor/theatre-history-of/156-eden-phillpotts-as-dramatist>

¹¹⁴ Beeson.

¹¹⁵ Spoto, D., *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*, Plexus Publishing Ltd., London, 1994, pp. 101-102.

Eliot Stannard is intertwined with the work of Eden Phillpotts. After working on *The Farmer's Wife* he then wrote the adapted screenplay of Phillpotts' novel *Widcombe Fair* (Norman Walker, 1928) which as noted earlier was the basis for the play of *The Farmer's Wife*. This chain of texts, Phillpotts' novel to play to Hitchcock's film to Stannard's scripted film lends itself to the 'meta-text' theory that will be discussed later in relation to *Rope* and *Psycho*, but for now it is important to note that films, like any other piece of art, be it a book, play or a painting, are the product of different intertextualities coming together. Walker's film is the consequence of a chain of adaptations and Hitchcock's films are no different.

The Farmer's Wife is a light-hearted comedy about love in the countryside. The main focus of the narrative concerns widowed landowner Samuel Sweetland and his personal quest to find a new bride as he systematically moves through a list of women and is rejected at every turn only to eventually find love in the form of his housekeeper Araminta who has been there all along for him.

We are introduced to Phillpotts' play through the housekeeper Araminta Dench and the gardener Churdles Ash. These two represent the working class element of the play as well as the polarizing moral standpoints. Their conversations hold the play together, acting like a Greek chorus explaining the events as they unfold. Like all good house servants in literature and film, Araminta and Churdles seem to know everything that is going on and are more in control of their household than their masters. Araminta represents love and hope, supporting her master, Samuel Sweetland, at every turn as he searches for a bride. She believes in marriage, but is not blinded by it. Araminta understands that happiness takes work and her wisdom is juxtaposed against the naivety of Samuel Sweetland's two daughters Petronell and Sibley and their would-be suitors Dick Coaker and George Smerdon. These four represent the sub-plot of Phillpotts' play. They are four young men and women who do not understand love or marriage, thus they misinterpret each other's feelings, and are constantly sidetracked by peripheral things such as money and social standing. Araminta watches these four as they fumble around after each other, while also keeping a watchful eye on her master. Her polar opposite is Churdles Ash. As the gardener, he is a man of the outdoors and represents life outside of society's constraints. He openly hates indoor folk as he associates indoor life with money. He is

a hunter and gatherer of game and other essentials. He is not tied down by love or marriage and views both as anchors to tie a man down. He is the supreme pessimist and is very anti-establishment, with many of his rants linking marriage with inadequacies of the government.

The following exchange of dialogue occurs within act one and is a good example of Araminta and Churdles and the roles that they depict. It encompasses the fears and hopes of both servants and sets up the play thematically:

Ash: There's marriage in the air, Araminta Dench, and us that have escaped the state be often quickest to see the fatal signs.

Araminta: Grapes are sour, Churdles Ash.

Ash: No, no. I've always been very interested in married people since I was fifteen years old, when father kicked me out of doors for trying to show him how to manage mother. Love did ought to be got over early in life. To see an old man in love be worse than seeing him with the whooping-cough.

Araminta: The master's not old and he's not in love.

Ash: Why can't he bide a widow man? He's had his dose.

Araminta: He was happy and wants to be happy again.

Ash: How do you know he was happy? Married people hide the truth for very shame. Marriage don't alter women – nothing alters 'em. They change their clothes – not their claws.

Araminta: You talk as if you'd got a scratch or two. Yet there's something magical in the married state. It have a beautiful side.

Ash: So have the moon; but there's another side we never see.

Araminta: That may be beautiful too. You'll hear married people sometimes raging and saying such cruel, bitter things and threatening to throw the house out of the windows; and you'll think 'tis all over with 'em and the end of their happiness; and then come presently, they bob up again, jogging along as peaceful and contented as a pair of ponies.

Ash: Yes, marriage breaks 'em in, and breaks their hearts too. Holy matrimony's a proper steamroller for flattering the hope out of man and the joy out of women.

Araminta: No, no. Some are built for it. Mr. Sweetland's the very pattern of a good husband. He's only got to drop the handkercher, I reckon.

Ash: No doubt he thinks so. There's no man better pleased with his own cleverness than our man. Please God, if he ventures, he'll find one of a mild and gentle sort. We've got enough fireworks here as 'tis.

Araminta: Petronell?

Ash: As proud as a turkey-cock, she is!

Araminta: And pretty as a picture. A right to be proud – such a fine thing as her. But she wont be here much longer.

Ash: George Smerdon's after her.

Araminta: And Dicky Coaker – very nice young men both; and they don't live in the public house, like George Smerdon's brother, Tom, and a good few others.

Ash: Beer drinking don't do half the harm of love-making. For why? Drink's a matter between a man and himself. Love's a matter between a man and a women; and that means the next generation. If I was the Government I'd give the drunkards a rest and look after the lovers.

Araminta: Petronell will take Dick, I reckon. He'll have Henry Coaker's little farm when the old man drops.

Ash: They haven't got the brains of a sheepdog between 'em.

Araminta: I wouldn't say that. They be both in love, and perfect love casteth out sense – but only for the time being.

Ash: [*Putting gun under his arm*] Bah! It makes me wild to see the men after the women. Poor things – the best of you – compared to us – sly, shifty and full of craft. But we be open and honest and straight, and say what we think and mean what we say. The difference between a man and a woman's the difference between a dog and a cat, Araminta.¹¹⁶

This section of the play is a perfect example of how the play is written and of the narrative threads that run through it. Phillpotts uses the bickering of Araminta and Churdles to explain the current situation of affairs that has overcome Applegarth Farm and in turn the audience is presented with 'narrative goals' to work towards; Sweetland's hunt for a wife and Pettronel's imminent courting. This exchange between Samuel Sweetland's two servants also sets up his character. We learn that he has been married before and is looking to be married again. We are presented with two polarizing views of marriage and thus his journey for companionship suddenly becomes clouded. Churdles' views are sexist and even misogynistic and at first he is not presented as being incorrect. As the play progresses and Sweetland slowly fails in his wooing of different suitors, the links between Sweetland and Churdles become more apparent. They may be separated by wealth and stature, but their attitudes towards women are deliberately similar. Sweetland insults and belittles each of the women he talks to and cannot understand why they reject him, yet when he finally returns home after a forth rejection which occurs offstage, it is Araminta, the play's shining beacon of love and marriage, that he suddenly realises is the woman for him. Sweetland recognizes his faults and misgivings and understands that he has to change.

¹¹⁶ Phillpotts, E, *The Farmer's Wife: A Comedy in Three Acts*, Kessinger Publishing, La Vergne, 2010, pp. 2-4.

In Araminta he sees someone that has always stood by him and looked after him. His acceptance of her means that he discards the shackles that are also worn by Churdles. Fortunately Sweetland's embracement of Araminta also leads to a similar redemption of Churdles as well:

Araminta: The master's going to wed in earnest.

Ash: Never! Caught that woman to Dawlish after all?

Araminta: Caught a woman, but not to Dawlish.

Ash: God befriend me and you then. To think of another female in this house!

Araminta: She's no stranger, Churdles.

Ash: From this place?

Araminta: Yes; a common, everyday object, you might say. In fact, I be the woman, Churdles
Ash: I've took him.

Ash: [*Indicating utter astonishment.*] You! Go on!

Araminta: Solemn truth. He's offered, and I was proud to answer 'yes.'

Ash: Jimmery! They say as the next best thing to no wife be a good one. He's come out top at last.

Araminta: Tis a great advancement for a simple creature like me.

Ash: I'll be by your side. I'll help you with the man.

Araminta: I know you will.¹¹⁷

Like Sweetland, Churdles casts aside his beliefs and accepts her for what she stands for. He is happy for his master, but more importantly he is happy for Araminta, his friend. He offers her his hand in help and she readily accepts. It is a union that transcends marriage and one that completes Samuel Sweetland's journey. *The Farmer's Wife* is essentially that, a journey. It begins in emotional chaos. Sweetland's desperation for a companion is at first mirrored by his daughter's failing attempts at love. He has two paths open to him, one towards Araminta where he will embrace happiness and companionship, and the other towards Churdles where he will end up bitter and alone. The women he meets are tests that he constantly fails but Araminta is the torch that keeps him heading the right way and eventually he finds her. His

¹¹⁷ Phillpotts, pp. 112-113.

daughters each find happiness and this is a further nail in the coffin of Churdles' way of life and thinking.

2.5 *The Farmer's Wife* – The Film

Easy Virtue would prove to be Hitchcock's last film for Gainsborough Pictures, the production company that he had previously made all of his films under. In 1927 Hitchcock signed with British International Pictures where "he was promised bigger budgets and greater artistic freedom."¹¹⁸ His first film for them was *The Ring*, which is important when looking at Hitchcock's adaptive process of plays because it slots in-between the productions of *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmer's Wife*, which when compared to *The Ring* were both very different films:

The Ring was Hitchcock's first original screenplay, and the executives at BIP were astonished at its careful symmetry, its economy of storytelling means, and its psychological sophistication.¹¹⁹

This is echoed by Raymond Durnat who, as already mentioned, found nothing of note to say about *Easy Virtue*, but a page later within *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock*' he is gushing over Hitchcock's first original screenplay:

Hitchcock's period with John Maxwell at B.I.P. opened with *The Ring*, described in *The Bioscope* of its time as 'the most magnificent British film ever made'. Not only are the production's qualities immeasurably improved, the style more consistent, and the material more intelligent, than under the previous regime, but we're parachuted from the flimsy vapours of the upper middle class novelette to something more like *terra firma*.¹²⁰

Terra firma is Latin for solid earth. Durnat is therefore saying that not only did Hitchcock's transference from Gainsborough to BIP benefit in almost every conceivable way the production qualities of Hitchcock's filming but it allowed him to make a film more realistic, more solid, more down to earth and ultimately more cinematic. Durnat, like many other critics praise *The Ring* for its production values and even Hitchcock himself referred to the film as only the second real 'Hitchcock'

¹¹⁸ Chandler, C., *It's Only a Movie: Alfred Hitchcock A Personal Biography*, Simon and Schuster UK Ltd, London, 2005, p. 65.

¹¹⁹ Spoto, p. 101.

¹²⁰ Durnat, R., *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1978, p. 78.

film¹²¹. Yet from a drama about boxing in which Hitchcock had free reign with the narrative, his next choice, on the surface at least, heavily recalls *Easy Virtue* and his time under Gainsborough. Like *Easy Virtue* we have an adaptation of a popular play that deals with the difficulties of love and acceptance, especially when there is a class barrier. Like *Easy Virtue*, the physical action is non-existent and the location is enclosed and static. In reference to *The Farmer's Wife*, Rohmer and Chabrol state that “the result was undeniably inferior to *The Ring*, not because the film is bad – within its genre it is a success – but because with it Hitchcock strayed from his true path.”¹²² This is a questionable point of view. The true path that Rohmer and Chabrol are referring to is Hitchcock becoming an auteur and *The Ring*, as they see it, is his first step towards this, while *The Farmer's Wife* is one step to the side. This teleological point of view suggests that *The Ring* is a milestone within Hitchcock's career that points towards the end game of what Hitchcock is to become, an auteur. Yet rather than an auteur, Rohmer and Chabrol should be looking at Hitchcock's destiny as being ‘The Master of Suspense’ and in that sense, *The Farmer's Wife* could be overlooked as it is a comedic film adapted from a comedic play, yet if the end-game is Hitchcock as adaptor, then *The Farmer's Wife* is a part of the teleological timeline.

It is important to note that concerning Sweetland and his quest for a new bride *The Farmer's Wife* sticks resolutely to Phillipotts' main narrative. Hitchcock does however strip away the sub-plot of Sweetland's daughters and instead gives him a solitary daughter who is married off at the start of the play. As well as this noticeable change, Hitchcock employs the same technique as he did within *Easy Virtue*, where he takes an important incident from the past which is discussed by the characters in the play, such as Larita's criminal past and in this case the death of Sweetland's wife, and opens the film with it. The scene in question will be discussed in detail shortly but the effect of this, just as in *Easy Virtue* and *Psycho*, is to allow a deeper connection with the main protagonist, offering a view, that in the case of the plays, are often constricted by a limited number of physical changes. Hitchcock tinges Sweetland's character with sadness. In Phillipotts' play Sweetland is restless and determined to marry, and while he bears these same trademarks within the film, Hitchcock allows

¹²¹ Truffaut, p. 52.

¹²² Rohmer, E., and Chabrol, C., *Hitchcock: The First Forty-Four Films*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1979, p. 15.

for the audience to be emotionally invested in his character from the start and thus a sense of desire is conjured up, meaning that the audience wants Sweetland to find a wife, a feeling that is largely absent within the play, at least until his unhappiness becomes clear. Because of this emotional investment by the audience, the bumbling, out-of-touch sexist that the play presents him as, suddenly becomes loveable and comical.

Concerning *The Farmer's Wife* Raymond Durnat finds many positives, including that of the original play and of Hitchcock's adaptive process:

The play is a pleasant enough piece within the rather parochial genre, the sensibly down-to-earth aspects of its comedy working within a myth of idyllic rusticity. It has its charm, and a certain wisdom, and Hitchcock respects both, while inkling the film towards a new mood, helped perhaps, by a slightly substandard budget (making stylization difficult) and by a company of knobbly character-players whose corners it can't have been very easy to round off in the interests of a cinematic rhythm.¹²³

The new mood that Durnat refers to is one of awkwardness. It concerns what Durnat sees as Hitchcock placing characters together that somehow do not fit. He is not specific and one assumes that he is not referring to Sweetland or Araminta, but rather the cast that swirl around them. He describes "bulky, clumsy, rigid personalities knocking awkwardly against one another – pomposity against nervousness, blindness against timidity, a secretive irony against the social hierarchy"¹²⁴. This is not a defect because the characters are interesting. What it does is to amplify how out of place they are in Sweetland's world. The character of Churdles Ash for example is central to the balanced narrative of the play, yet in the film he is used as a source of comic relief more than that of a polar opposite figure to Araminta. His beliefs and views are still the same, as shown by his over-exuberant gestures. The title-cards depict word – for – word his rants concerning women and the government, yet this is a silent film. The overriding image of Churdles Ash is one of a comical buffoon.

Figure 29 below shows Churdles Ash attempting to have a drink of wine only to have the bottle pulled away from him by Araminta. She scolds him and points off screen. Churdles then picks up a cup and fills it with water. Figure 30 shows Churdles

¹²³ Durnat, p. 81.

¹²⁴ Durnat, p. 81.

with his constant over-exaggerated frown, his eyes looking to the heavens and holding a tiny cup of water. He has been told off by a woman and is now being made to drink water out of what he feels is a feminine cup. He wears his frown constantly throughout the film, showing his constant displeasure and distaste for everything. He throws the cup of water away in anger and then marches over to the fireplace where he sits down. He reaches out his arm and sticks his thumb out to make a point to Araminta. The title-card of his declaration reads “Beer drinking don’t do alf the ‘arm of love making”. Araminta smiles at him in almost a mocking fashion and then after he speaks again, she just waves him away. Churdles’ beer drinking line is the same as in the play, yet the semi-seriousness behind it is lost. Rather than being Araminta’s intellectual equal and moral opposite, he is presented as a dishevelled drunk who is seemingly under the watch and care of Araminta placing him lower on the class pecking order of the house. The line from the play is also spoken in reference to other suitor’s to Sweetland’s daughter. In the film Churdles Ash uses it to defend his actions, as though he is some kind of alcoholic grabbing at straws.



Figure 29.



Figure 30.



Figure 31.



Figure 32.



Figure 33.



Figure 34.

Figures 32 to 34 show Churdles Ash as Durgnat describes the characters of Hitchcock's film: clumsy and bulky, out-of-place, but likeable. In act two of Phillpotts' play, as they prepare for the party, stage directions note:

Enter Churdles Ash, in the green livery and brass buttons. The coat, which is far too large, is worn over a pair of black trousers.¹²⁵

In the play Churdles' only response to this is "Tis too big yet". The party soon begins and guests arrive so Churdles directs them to the room and announces their arrival. Hitchcock expands on this to full effect, using the ill-fitting clothes to such an extent that Churdles is forced to wear a costume that is hopelessly too big for him. His trousers are too short and too wide, thus he is constantly having to hold them up, while his livery is too short and extremely filthy. Figure 32 shows him sliding off a step on the stairs as he attempts to fix his shabby shoes with string while figure 33 shows him comically holding up his trousers while he wears his 'disgusted-with-the-world' face. Figure 34 shows him slouched down in a chair, slurping tea from a saucer, exhausted and tired. In all of these incidents he is accompanied by playful, mischievous music that emphasizes the likeability of his character. Hitchcock has created his own Churdles Ash, a loveable, bumbling fool whose actions are slapstick to the extreme and who clashes with everyone and everything with which he comes in contact. He is the gamekeeper with no game, the gardener who never seems to be gardening. As well as comic relief he is a constant reminder of Durgnat's notion of awkwardness and everything that is disjointed with Sweetland's world.

¹²⁵ Phillpotts, p.44.

The adaptation of Churdles Ash is important when looking at Hitchcock as adaptor because he is arguably the first truly comedic character within Hitchcock's work. Within Phillipotts' play he is comedic, yet with his actions come words of moral standing and warning. As already stated, a silent film needs to essentially do more adapting than just pointing the camera at a stage play and thus words become actions, audio signifiers become visual and in this case, what they signify, changes. Comedy is a very important aspect of Hitchcock's work, with a touch of comedy affecting nearly every one of his films, no matter how serious. From the comedic narratives of *Mr and Mrs Smith*, *To Catch a Thief* and *The Trouble With Harry* to more questionable comedy such as in *The Birds* with the swaying caged lovebirds and their intrinsic link to the violence of the avian attackers that remain uncaged, or the detective in *Frenzy* who every night suffers through his wife's cooking after a day of trying to catch a violent murdering rapist. Theorists often view Hitchcock's use of comedy as sign of his authorship. Robin Wood in his argument for Hitchcock the auteur discusses the importance of *North by Northwest* as a light-hearted comedy, suggesting that it betters previous narrative-like efforts *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and *Saboteur* (1942) by improving on character complexity but also by not taking itself too seriously.¹²⁶ Wood goes onto describe a particular scene:

One of the film's funniest and most uncomfortable moments comes when, descending from the exploration of Kaplan's rooms in the hotel lift, Thornhill's mother remarks gaily to the two men who almost sent her son over a cliff the night before, "You gentlemen aren't *really* trying to kill my son, are you?", and the whole lift load – mothers, killers, other passengers – laugh uproariously at the joke while Thornhill stands helplessly in their midst.¹²⁷

It is the outrageousness of the situation that Wood points to, the mixture of comedy and tragedy that Hitchcock embellishes his films with that adds to that 'quality' that is identifiable over his body of work. Yet this quality of comedic tragedy is not only present and relevant within the British films that Wood once denied, but with also within the adapted texts as shown with Phillipotts' play and Coward's *Easy Virtue* which is laced with witty one liners that lend themselves to both Larita's happiness and sadness.

¹²⁶ Wood, pp. 131-133.

¹²⁷ Wood, p. 135.

Returning to *The Farmer's Wife*, the neutering of Churdles Ash as a character of narrative relevance, turns Phillpotts' play into a romantic tale between Sweetland and Araminta. The play offers no clue to their potential reunion, but Hitchcock, as mentioned before, shows Sweetland from the onset as a character that will garner viewer empathy, while Araminta is presented as his keeper and the only person that could really make him happy. He is blind to this, but the viewer is not and thus the narrative becomes about when he will finally open his eyes.

As mentioned previously, Hitchcock uses the same technique as he does in *Easy Virtue* with the opening scene, which in the play is an event only mentioned and not shown, being one that has occurred in the distant past. In the case of *The Farmer's Wife*, the opening out of the play concerns the passing of Sweetland's wife. In the first act of the play both Araminta and Churdles Ash discuss the master being a widow, and eventually Sweetland brings it up to Araminta:

Sweetland: I must take time by the forelock myself, Minta, else I'll be a lonely man in a minute. There's no harm in being fore-handed – eh?

Araminta: Tis a wise man's place to be.

Sweetland: How long have my Tibby been gathered home?

Araminta: Two years and a month.

Sweetland: Twas her dying gasp, you may say, that I should take another, though she didn't name no names.

Araminta: Too clever for that, poor dear.

Sweetland: But we be up against it now. Set down that tray and help me. There's no more understanding woman than you, when you like. Us will run over the possibles and impossibles, Minta. There's a female or two be floating round my mind, like the smell of a Sunday dinner. Of course the first I offer for might say 'no'.¹²⁸

The memory of Sweetland's wife does not overshadow the play, instead it is used as almost a cue-card to the reader to say that Sweetland's thinking of marrying again, but it is all okay because he has received the blessing of his dying wife. Phillpotts does not linger on this memory either, as Sweetland and Araminta soon begin discussing possible marital candidates as though they are putting together a shopping list. Hitchcock takes this memory and uses it as the main focus of the film,

¹²⁸ Phillpotts, p. 28.

as Gottlieb comments, the absence of Sweetland's wife dominates the narrative.¹²⁹ The opening scenes depict a busy working farmland and solemn household.



Figure 35.



Figure 36.



Figure 36.



Figure 37.



Figure 38.



Figure 39.

¹²⁹ Gottlieb, p. 262.



Figure 40.

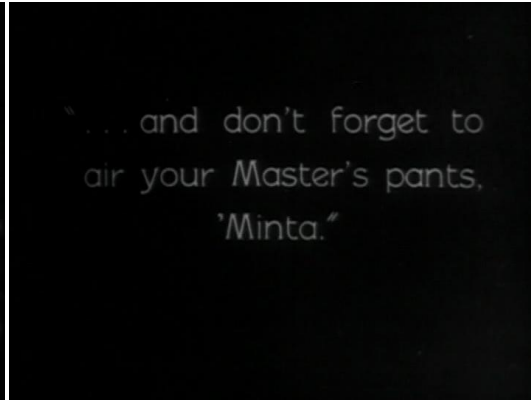


Figure 41.



Figure 42.



Figure 43.

The film opens with an extreme wide shot of the English countryside (figure 35). This fades into a sign that reads Applegarth Farm. The sign is pointing to its left and the camera duly complies by panning to its left where it passes endless trees and fields to reveal a long winding country road (figure 36). In the distance is a large house that one can assume is Applegarth Farm but the road to it is dark with the shadows of the trees above. It is meant to be a beautiful, yet ominous sight. The camera then cuts to a wide shot of the house where we see an individual (Churdles Ash) moving slowly, obviously dejected, towards the doorway. The camera cuts to a shot of a man looking out of the window above. He is smartly dressed, and has a neat appearance to his face and hair (figure 37). He is looking out of the window across his domain. Figure 38 shows the working farm that he is viewing, while figure 39 shows two spaniel puppies who have trudged into the house from the outside, plodded upstairs and have come to rest on the top of the stairs. Their faces express sadness, suggesting that even the farm animals can feel the misery in the air.

Figures 39 and 40 show Sweetland and other mourners, including Araminta, circled around the deathbed of his wife. They all know that her time has come and Sweetland projects a man who has resigned himself to this tragedy, distancing himself from the bed as though if he is not close, it somehow will not seem real. His wife's final words are shown in figure 41, "and don't forget to air your master's pants Minta." Hitchcock does away with the play's dying request that Sweetland finds a new wife, and instead places the emphasis on Araminta. She is being asked to look after her master. The pants are symbolic of Sweetland as he cannot look after himself, he needs help. Figure 42 is the first of many images that are of the master's pants being hung up to dry, first by the fire, then on a line outside, then inside, before they are laid on the bed by Araminta with the rest of his outfit as shown in figure 43. The repeated depictions of his pants being hung up in different locations are meant to give the impression of time passing. Thus when we next see Sweetland who strides into the room after figure 43 to find Araminta with his clothes ready, for a couple of seconds they appear almost as husband and wife. She has replaced his wife in every sense but the physical. This is apparent to the viewer and Araminta, but not Sweetland. This scene is followed by his daughter's wedding and this rekindles the idea of marriage within him. His daughter has left home and he is once again alone. The viewer remembers his wife's final words and the washing of the pants that Sweetland is now wearing yet the metaphor is lost on him.

Peter Conrad views the washing of the pants as the first of many sexual metaphors that build throughout the narrative until the climax when Sweetland finally sees Araminta as his companion:

The...scene narrates Minta's ventilation of Sam's [Sweetland's] long johns, which prepares him for sexual rejuvenation. He woos a series of potential bedmates, who are discussed as if they were items of domestic linen. His third choice is a plump ageing nymphet, whom he fancies because he likes 'pillowy women'; Minta warns him that if she is a pillow at thirty, she'll be a feather bed at forty. We clutch pillows as replacements for an absent body, and after the death of her mistress, Minta arranges a single pillow in the middle of the double bed the couple shared. While her employer is courting, Minta stifles her own love for him but longingly studies his vacant chair. She caresses its wooden back, then nervously settles into it, crushing his crumpled jacket to establish her ownership. To sit there and face the corresponding chair on the other side of the fireplace is tantamount to marriage.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Conrad, p. 335.

The vacant chair that Conrad talks of is the film's ultimate symbol of marriage. It is not present within the text of the play but it would fit right at home on stage. At one point during the film, after Sweetland has said goodbye to his daughter and all of the wedding guests, he stands in front of his fireplace looking forlorn. He watches as the servants clear things away, and he looks slowly around his abode and he feels alone. Araminta comes into a view a few times, but he is oblivious to her presence. He looks up above the fireplace and his eyes fall upon a wedding picture of himself and his wife from years ago. His eyes drop to an empty rocking chair in front of the fire and he sits in it, he then looks across from himself to another rocking chair. It is clear from their positioning in front of the marital picture that this would have once have been the seat of his wife. He realises there and then that he must fill this chair. The film is similar to the play in the sense that Applegarth Farm relies on a sense of order. There is a balance to the household that goes beyond a class structure. Sweetland is the master, those around him are his employees and they need him, but more importantly he needs them. The airing out of the pants suggests that Sweetland's wife used to look after him. While the play and the film may differ on her last words, they both agree on the dying wife's final words being for someone to take care of Sweetland and in turn the farm. The empty chair across from Sweetland is the void that must be filled. Gottlieb suggests that it represents the "patriarchal misogyny"¹³¹ that rules Sweetland's thinking and it is this that must be broken. As it stands it is a black hole that can suck in its surroundings, bringing the farm down around Sweetland. This is the unspoken possible future that hovers over both play and film.

The filling of the empty chair is an amusing process within both play and novel. In both mediums Sweetland and Araminta draw up a list of women for Sweetland to work his way through. Within the play Araminta is very co-operative and helpful. She agrees with three of his choices, yet provides a critique on each. She says nothing negative, but just strives to give her master all the facts. She is fulfilling the dying wish that hangs in the air. There is not a hint of romance between them. In fact Araminta even reassures Sweetland that the women will want him and that they would be lucky to have him. While this could be construed as a compliment on her part, it is more in a bid to give her master confidence.

¹³¹ Gottlieb, p. 262.

Hitchcock uses this scene to cement the marital connection between Sweetland and Araminta. Much like the play she helps her master with the list, however he suggests two women and while the critiquing of the women is the same, in the film's case, Araminta uses the playful 'critiques' as insults against the women, consequently warding Sweetland off the idea of them. For example, this is the interchange within the play:

Sweetland: ...Set down Louisa Windeatt.

Araminta: Ah, I thought so – clever man!

Sweetland: Strong, hearty, always cheerful, well preserved. A thought too fond of fox-hunting, perhaps. What's her age?

Araminta: Fifty, I reckon.

Sweetland: Her back view's not a day more than thirty.

Araminta: You'll live with her front view, however. She's a lucky women, I'm sure.¹³²

Araminta thinks Louisa Windeatt is a good match for Sweetland. He asks about her age and they lightly joke about her appearance. It is not a ringing endorsement, but it is still an acceptable proposition to Araminta. Within the film, Sweetland suggests Louisa Windeatt and Araminta offers him a puzzled look. She then asks, without the use of a title-card, "Don't you think she's a bit old?" Sweetland then uses the line from the play concerning her 'back view' and Araminta then immediately hit's back with the 'front view' barb. Both these lines are on title-cards. Sweetland then waves his hand towards Araminta as if to say, 'Put her down anyway.' She shrugs her shoulders and writes down the name of Louisa Windeatt. The film's Araminta does not want her master to find love and neither does Hitchcock. As Araminta makes a list for her master, she sits opposite and to the left of him as shown in figure 44 below.

¹³² Phillpotts, p. 29.



Figure 44.

In front of Sweetland is the empty chair. Hitchcock fills this chair with each of the women. One after the other they fade into the chair and then out again, all the while silently laughing and smiling, like playful ghosts. Hitchcock deliberately places Araminta next to the empty chair, making it blindingly obvious to everyone but Sweetland that she is the one that should fill it. Each of the women that he envisions are physically flawed and out of place with the chair that they are momentarily sitting in. To go back to Durnat's description of the film's characters, the women are either "bulky, clumsy or rigid". Araminta in comparison is relatively flawless. She is prettier than the three women, she already looks after the master and she is the heartbeat of the farm.

The chair scene is revisited towards the end of the film when Sweetland prepares to ride off on his horse to try his luck with his final marital candidate. He rides away, seen off by Araminta who has lovingly placed a flower in his jacket. She watches him leave, her hand moves to her chest as if to caress her aching heart and then she slowly walks back into the house where she is confronted by the empty chair. As quoted by Peter Conrad earlier, she looks towards the chair that is no longer completely empty. Her master's jacket is lying upon it. She walks over to the chair and slowly caresses the wood. She looks up at the wedding picture, and then sits down on top of the jacket and onto the chair. The jacket disappears beneath her, as though it is now a part of her. She has now physically bonded with Sweetland and thus she now awaits his return for when he will finally recognise his love for her and take his place opposite her in the matching chair. Hitchcock has prepared the viewer for this moment. The film's narrative has built towards Araminta's taking of the empty chair and it is her fulfilment of this void that Sweetland has been desperately

trying to fill that can bring about the climax of the play and Sweetland's proposal to her. The outcome is the same in the play, yet it is Sweetland that comes to the realisation that he wants to be with Araminta. She is overwhelmed by his offer and accepts immediately. In its own subtle way, it is expected.

In 1929 Hitchcock wrote an open letter to the London Evening News (see Appendix I). Referring to the difficulties of making a film and asserting his stamp on proceedings, it is a clear indication of Hitchcock's firm belief in storytelling as a medium distinct from other narrative forms. From early on in his career he understood the importance of the camera, and as he writes, the value in nouns, verbs and adjectives. This use of film language is what makes a film something more than just pointing a camera. Film adaptation is the study of this language as it journeys from page to screen and Hitchcock understood this transference, especially when he dealt with silent films. Having to make use of visual space, especially when adapting a pre-conceived text, meant that the language of the page had to evolve but yet still had to maintain its functions. Hitchcock could have adapted Noel Coward's *Easy Virtue* and just changed anything and everything to fit his cinematic medium, but he didn't. Both *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmer's Wife* were theatrical successes and thus this became their main selling points, the subject of narrative faithfulness consequently becomes one of importance because that is what the viewer may be paying to see. Yet faithfulness to an idea that a reader or viewer may have, does not mean it has to be restrictive or prohibitive. Stripped of the very words that make a text, an adaptation of a popular play could be difficult with the transference of signifiers from textual and audio to that of the visual, ultimately leading to adapted meanings being lost in translation, yet Hitchcock uses the freedom of the silent stage to change and manipulate the texts into something that while remaining faithful to the original authors, that becomes part of a larger picture. As will be discussed next, Hitchcock's British films are full of textual appropriations, influences and intertextualities that are all continually found throughout his career, directly defining his choice of texts to adapt and how he adapts them. His manipulation of the silent theatrical adaptation forms part of the bedrock for his true status as the 'Master of Adaptation'.

2.6 The Talkies

Huw Wheldon (BBC Interviewer): When you talk about putting bits of film together and then creating, in terms of what you call “pure cinema”, the sequence that you’re going for, I can imagine that it must have been a bit of a shock to you personally when “talkies” came?

Hitchcock: Well, the only thing wrong with the silent picture was that mouths opened and no sound came out. Unfortunately, when talk came in, the vulgarians -- the money-changers of the industry – immediately commenced to cash in by photographing stage plays. So, that took the whole thing away from cinema completely.¹³³

With the advent of sound, cinema changed. As Hitchcock himself states 'photoplays' suddenly became even more popular, suggesting that film studios understood the economic importance that theatrical adaptations could now play. Hitchcock’s bitter description suggests that he was a victim of this practice, which subsequently suggests that theatrical adaptations *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Skin Game*, *Number Seventeen* and *Waltzes from Vienna* were not products of the “pure cinema” of which Hitchcock speaks. This is represented within the Hitchcock literature that exists concerning his early sound period. While the four theatrical adaptations each enjoy more critical work than *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmers Wife*, it still pales in comparison to the critical work afforded to the likes of *The Lodger*, *The Ring* and *Blackmail*, all of which predate *Juno and the Paycock*.

Within the twenty-six collected essays of *The Hitchcock Journal: Second Edition*¹³⁴, bar *Blackmail*, not one of them is centred on a theatrical British adaptation. In Raymond Durnat’s collected works on Hitchcock he devotes ten pages to *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Skin Game*, *Number Seventeen* and *Waltzes from Vienna* while *Blackmail* alone gets twenty. These are examples of the importance often denoted to the films in question, which is not merely just linked to auteur theory, but rather with ‘Hitchcock theory’ that appears to take Hitchcock at his word when he says that they were not ‘Hitchcock films’, suggesting that ‘Hitchcock’ films lend themselves more to narrative than to textual origin. What *Blackmail* shares with the other theatrical adaptations in terms of adaptation, it differs vastly in subject matter, with the narrative containing overt links to the ‘Master of Suspense’ moniker. Concerning the other

¹³³ The interview between Alfred Hitchcock and Huw Wheldon was filmed for the BBC television program "Monitor" and was first broadcast on 05/Jul/1964.
[http://www.hitchcockwiki.com/wiki/Interview:_Alfred_Hitchcock_and_Huw_Wheldon_\(BBC,_05/Jul/1964\)](http://www.hitchcockwiki.com/wiki/Interview:_Alfred_Hitchcock_and_Huw_Wheldon_(BBC,_05/Jul/1964))

¹³⁴ Deutelbaum, M. and Poague, L. (eds.), *A Hitchcock Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, 2009.

theatrical adaptations Hitchcock believed he had no room to be an auteur and instead just had to adapt. Both *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Skin Game* (like *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmer's Wife*) were successful plays that were known to the public while in the words of Charles Barr, *Number Seventeen* and *Waltzes from Vienna* were “more ephemera.”¹³⁵ Hitchcock worked under constraints that meant that the narrative and dialogue of each had to remain largely untouched. Sound brings with it a greater fidelity to the stage play, where a novel can still be adapted in the sense that there is room to manoeuvre and manipulate when transferring the narratives. A theatrical adaptation using sound can essentially capture the working functions of a stage play, of course by the very definition of appearing on film, it is no longer a play yet some theatrical adaptations are so close to their literary origins that both play and film become synonymous with each other. As a result, even Hitchcock himself saw them as nothing more than ‘photoplays’ and felt ashamed when films such as *Juno and the Paycock* received so many plaudits.¹³⁶ The success of these films is important because over time their credibility amongst Hitchcock’s body of work has decreased, or at least has been forgotten. It also constitutes a change in what was considered a ‘good’ adaptation. Hitchcock is praised in many circles for transforming certain texts into films, placing his stamp on them and turning them into ‘Hitchcock’ films, yet in the case of *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Skin Game*, we have two adaptations that were deemed commercial and critical successes at the times of release, yet now they are looked back upon as anything but, with Chabrol and Rohmer claiming *The Skin Game* to be Hitchcock’s worst ever film¹³⁷ while Spoto refers to *Juno and the Paycock* as two steps backwards.¹³⁸

This section will deal with the films *Blackmail*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Skin Game* and *Number Seventeen*, examining their relationship to their literary origins, their place within Hitchcock criticism and their relationship with Hitchcock the auteur, the later dealing more with the theatrical adaptations that are often ignored

¹³⁵ Barr, p. 99.

¹³⁶ “Years ago I made a movie of Sean O’Casey’s play *Juno and the Paycock*,” Hitchcock told me, “and I could not for the life of me find out what to do except to photograph it in one room, with a few exterior shots that aren’t in the play. The film was successful, and I was ashamed to read those laudatory notices I had nothing to do with, except just to photograph the Irish players doing their job.” Charlotte, p. 74.

¹³⁷ Rohmer, and Chabrol, p. 30.

¹³⁸ Spoto, p. 123.

when Hitchcock's authorship is called into question. *Blackmail* will be used more as a barometric gauge to show how one particular adaptation can be viewed very differently by theorists, while the remaining films will be shown that they are more than merely footnotes within the filmography of Hitchcock and actually, through their use of adaptation, will be shown to have direct bearing on Hitchcock's status as an auteur, while also equally lending themselves to Hitchcock the 'Master of Suspense'.

2.7 The Lasting Success of *Blackmail*

In Charles Barr's *English Hitchcock* he looks at the influence of Bennett's play and examines it in relation to Robin Wood's reading of the film which discusses the sexual politics and culture of the time that would have influenced Hitchcock's film "drawing out a subtext to do with sexual fear and repression." Barr explicitly states that the film is not "all there" in the play and states that Bennett is not the "dominant author"¹³⁹ of Hitchcock's film, yet in referring to Wood's reading, he does recognize a certain importance to the text:

As Wood and others argue, the importance of Hitchcock derives, in large part, from his sensitivity to the social and cultural currents of the time and place in which he is operating, and from his ability to dramatise these at a profound level, particularly in terms of sexual politics, then it should be recognized that a text like Bennett's *Blackmail* is itself an important document of, and about, that culture, and has a crucial intermediary function.¹⁴⁰

Barr recognizes the importance of the text but keeps it at a deliberate distance. It seems, to discuss the film as an adaptation would lead, as Barr comments, to discussing how Hitchcock improved upon it, a notion Barr openly tries to avoid.¹⁴¹ This is a case of placing importance on the film over the novel and not questioning the work of Hitchcock, yet it is hard to attack Barr as at least he does recognise the importance of the source text and understands that it is a part of the genesis of the film. It is not the aim of this thesis to place novels and plays upon the same level as

¹³⁹ Barr, pp. 80-81.

¹⁴⁰ Barr, p. 81.

¹⁴¹ Barr, pp. 78-79.

the films or indeed above them as adaptation studies has often done in the past, but instead to relocate their place within the work of Hitchcock.

Both Bennett's play and Hitchcock's film share the same narrative structure. A young lady, Alice, while spurning the affections of her possessive policeman boyfriend, accompanies a young artist to his studio where his intention to draw her soon turns to seduction which once failed turns to attempted rape. Alice kills the artist with a bread knife and flees the scene. The action then moves to Alice's family shop where she eventually breaks down and tells her boyfriend Webber what she has done, this coming after he confronts her as he happens to be investigating the case. He has removed evidence from the scene to protect her but before they have time to plan they are approached by a man called Tracey who we know is a witness to Alice being at the scene of the crime. He blackmails the couple. Alice however is soon wracked with guilt when Tracey becomes the hunted suspect and thus she feels the need to tell the police what she has done.

The endings of both texts are not only quite different but also present dramatically different character implications. In the play Alice begins to confess her crime to the police when they apprehend Tracey, yet her brother appears and explains that an autopsy has revealed that the artist in fact died of heart failure and that the knife wound was not deep enough, leading police to believe that he had a heart attack and then fell onto the knife, allowing Tracey, Alice and Webber all to go free, leaving the play to have an ambiguous ending towards the character's actions. In the film Tracey is chased by police until he falls to his death through the roof of the British museum, a climactic narrative change that is only really accessible through cinema and a process that Hitchcock would repeat throughout his work (see Appendix I for more information on the different endings of Hitchcock adaptations). Webber then prevents Alice from telling the police and while she breaks down to Webber explaining that it was self-defence, ultimately they both go free.

Robin Wood's reading of sexual fear and repression within *Blackmail* is discussed in conjunction with the film's use of symmetry, such as Alice's two visits to Scotland yard (the first being an innocent meeting, the second an attempted confession), her response to a joke at the start of the film and then the picture of the

laughing jester at the end and then the symmetry of the men in her life, the artist, Webber and Tracey, all of which mirror the control that each of them has over her. Wood suggests that the symmetry frames Alice, bookending her actions. She is both framed by the narrative and the camera, as shown in the shop when she is pinned between Webber and Tracey and then again in Scotland Yard between Webber and the police constable. Like the use of framing in *Easy Virtue* and Larita's isolation, the symmetrical framing is used to silence Alice. The men in her life control her and talk over her and the only time she is able to act involves a murder. When she finally tries to confess her crime, she is once again silenced by a man and the camera compounds her repression by showing the laughing clown, completing the symmetrical joke that bookends the play:

She sees the jester as laughing at her as she is now, finally trapped within the male order, subordinated to Frank (Webber) by the role she has played in his own corruption.¹⁴²

The repression felt by Alice is absent from the play and is instead replaced by confusion, impotence and guilt. The rendering of the artist's death as a murder takes away the validity of the actions performed by Alice, Webber and Tracey. By taking away the guilt that is either felt or handed out, the characters are left lost. Bennett leaves the reader/playgoer wondering about the fate of Alice from a moral standpoint. She is free, yet her actions lead to the artist's death and her testimony is contradicted by police evidence. As opposed to the framed symmetry of Hitchcock's film that renders Alice silent, Bennett's society allows Alice to have a voice, yet it is unheard while her questions go unanswered. A reason for this deliberate change in the structure of the play and subsequent different reading may lie in the reception that the play received:

Blackmail's opening night at London's Globe Theatre on February 18, 1928, was marred by riotous scenes before, during, and after the show. A rush to the doors left many ticket holders crowded out of the theatre. The police were called to quell the fracas caused by Tallulah Bankhead worshippers – mostly young women – who had queued up for hours and resented the fact that after the long wait, they were unable to get in. Come intermission, there was a protest in the foyer. At the curtain call there came both cheers and boos. Some people in the stalls refused to believe the play was over; they were sure that following the heroine's confession to murder there must be another scene.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Wood, p. 274.

¹⁴³ Kabatchnik, A., *Blood on the Stage, 1925-1950: Milestone Plays of Crime, Mystery, and Detection*, Scarecrow Press Inc., Plymouth, 2010, p. 161.

Despite being hit and miss with the critics¹⁴⁴ Bennett's *Blackmail* was a commercial success and thus a film adaptation was a logical move, yet as illustrated above, the play was criticised for its morally questionable ending. Adaptations are often effected by public and studio opinion as there is usually a desire to either see a re-creation or a change with a particular text. In this case, a re-creation was clamoured for yet with a different ending. The finale provided by Hitchcock is in keeping with many of his other adaptations such as *The Lodger* and *Suspicion* which both see the villains of the novels revealed to be innocent within the adaptations. In both instances, the potential villains were played by notable actors Ivor Novello and Cary Grant, both of which are subjects of different on-set stories that suggest that narrative changes were made because audiences would not want to see either as a villain. This is an adaptive issue that will be discussed later in conjunction with the Daphne du Maurier films, but for now what it does prove is that the success of a film or novel does not guarantee adapted fidelity, which is often argued as the reasoning behind the lack of criticism on Hitchcock's next two theatrical adaptations.

2.8 *Juno and the Paycock* – The Play

The job Hitchcock had been given called for absolute fidelity; it was impossible to undertake the usual reconstitution, the usual polishing, impossible to make the story his own. Under these circumstances, the director carried out this assigned task as just that...*Juno and the Paycock* is not an Alfred Hitchcock film.¹⁴⁵

Harsh words from the French critics Rohmer and Chabrol, but while their final proclamation is heavily exaggerated, they are correct when they state that Hitchcock was unable to carry out his usual 'reconstitution' of the text. As it stands, concerning narrative, characters and dialogue, with the possible exception of *The Skin Game*, the play and film are more similar than any other Hitchcock adaptation. Hitchcock described the process as difficult:

¹⁴⁴ Kabatchnik discusses reviews by *The Express* and *The Bulletin* which were favourable while presenting damning pieces from the *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Express* and even the play's lead actress herself Tallulah Bankhead who was apparently very glad when her role within the play came to an end, "I always think a bad play is like a new dress that fits badly in parts and has to be altered."

- Kabatchnik, p. 162.

¹⁴⁵ Rohmer, and Chabrol, p. 26.

Juno and the Paycock was made with the Irish Players. I must say that I didn't feel like making the picture because, although I read the play over and over again, I could see no way of narrating it in cinematic form. It's an excellent play, though, and I liked the story, the mood, the characters, and the blend of humour and tragedy very much.¹⁴⁶

Hitchcock here is quite complementary about O'Casey's text, contradicting his view where he apparently just looks at the source text once. It is also an omission by Hitchcock of how interlinked his adaptations sometimes are. The main outside factor with the closeness between the two texts is undoubtedly the success of the play¹⁴⁷ and the standing of Sean O'Casey¹⁴⁸, both of which factor in to why Hitchcock was contracted to film the play¹⁴⁹ and ultimately shoot it as a 'photoplay' yet despite Hitchcock's misgivings and the dismissals of Spoto, Rohmer, Chabrol and even Barr who describes the film as "hit-or-miss" and as a "learning process", looking at *Juno and the Paycock* as an adaptation allows us to highlight numerous elements of the film that bear relation to Hitchcock's work as a whole. *Juno and the Paycock* is in this way quite unique, as opposed to the numerous Hitchcock adaptations that masquerade independently from their source texts and revel in their 'Hitchcockian' status, *Juno and the Paycock* is openly aware of its close adaptive origins and is often subsequently dismissed for not being a 'Hitchcock' film.

Sean O'Casey's play tells the tale of the Boyle family in Dublin who are on the verge of monetary ruin. The Juno of the title is the mother who through everything tries to hold the family together, while the Paycock is the father, the Captain to his friends, Boyle to others. He is a drunk who spends his days drinking away the family's money with his friend Joxer. Their son Johnny is a shell of a man, crippled in war and now living in fear. Their daughter Mary is the opposite of her brother, feisty

¹⁴⁶ Truffaut, p. 69.

¹⁴⁷ In London alone *Juno and the Paycock* ran for over 250 shows initially at the Royalty Theatre, Soho, from November 16th 1925 to March 5th 1926 where it then transferred to the Fortune Theatre in London's West End from March 6th 1926 until May 7th 1926. - [http://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Juno_and_the_Paycock_\(1930\)](http://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Juno_and_the_Paycock_(1930))

¹⁴⁸ Sean O'Casey's work was revered because of the authenticity that his work depicted, a factor that was possible because of his own experiences. After becoming influenced by Irish Nationalism Sean O'Casey changed his name to its Irish form, learned Gaelic, followed the teachings of Irish Labor leader Jim Larkin, wrote for the *Irish Worker* and then joined the Irish Citizen Army where he drew up their constitution. He was a first-hand witness to the poverty that had beset Dublin and he was incredibly passionate about the Irish cause, but eventually he became disillusioned with those around him and instead focused his anger, energy and literary skills towards play-writing.

¹⁴⁹ Spoto, pp. 122-123.

and proactive, yet young and naïve. The play tells of the family's brief rise from poverty as the Captain is told of a coming inheritance that he is set to receive and thus the opening gloom of the first act is banished as they dream of riches and start to spend the money they have yet to receive.

The Irish Civil War forms the backdrop of the play and thus many conversations are loaded with references to such things as strikes, fighting, Trade Unions, and Diehards. This creates a nervous tension within the atmosphere, which is juxtaposed with the humour of the Captain and Joxer, two men who appear not to be able to take anything seriously. The first act is filled with these conflicting feelings of terror and comedy. It is hard not to laugh at the Captain whose drunken ramblings are amusing and philosophical in nature. The alcohol he consumes is a means of escapism from the world around him and thus his character is detached from the play. He is meant to be the provider for his family, and the comforting father to his children, yet he is penniless and without prospects, and he is unaware that his son is responsible for a man's death and subsequently awaiting his own.

It is the downfall of the children that resonates throughout the play. O'Casey uses their tragedies as a metaphor for the real children of Ireland, as they are the ones who are suffering as their leaders fight. The inheritance that the Captain believes he is going to get disappears because of a technicality with the will. It is this that he is focused on, causing him to drink out of happiness and sadness. Juno is pre-occupied with him, trying to bring him back to the fold, running back and forwards to the pub where he spends his days, which leads to constant fights. It is the children that suffer. Mary Boyle is shown to be interested in two different men early on in the play, Jerry Devine who is a part of the Labour Movement and involved with the ongoing strikes that occur off stage and Charles Bentham who is the lawyer that brings the will to the family. Mary rejects the advances of Devine and in between acts two and three she has a relationship with Bentham that results in her falling pregnant. Bentham flees to London escaping responsibility. To add insult to injury the family soon realise that he has also absconded with the money from the will. Mary is left ashamed and ruined. The downfall of Mary's brother is even more tragic:

Mary: The full details are in this morin'; seven wounds he had – one entherin' the neck, with an exit wound beneath the left shoulder-blade; another in the left breast penetratin' the heart, an'...

Johnny: (*springing up from the fire*) Oh, quit that readin' for God's sake! Are yous losin' all your feelin's? It'll soon be that none of you'll read anything that's not about butcherin'!
[*He goes quickly into the room on left.*]

Mary: He's getting' very sensitive, all of a sudden!

Mrs. Boyle: I'll read it myself, Mary, by an' by, when I come home. Everbody's sayin' that he was a Diehard – thanks be to God that Johnny had nothin' to do with him this long time... (*Opening the parcel and taking out some sausages, which she places on a plate*) Ah, then, if that father o' yours doesn't come in soon for his breakfast, he may go without any; I'll not wait much longer for him.¹⁵⁰

Unbeknownst to Juno, her son Johnny *was* involved in the man's death and is haunted throughout the play by visions. He is a nervous wreck, scared of noises from the outside, of knocks at the door and of the thought of being alone. At the end of act two as Johnny's family are attending the funeral of the man who was killed, Johnny is visited by a young man whom he refers to as 'The Mobilizer'. Johnny is told that he has to attend a Battalion Staff meeting in two night's time:

Johnny: Where?

The Young Man: I don't know; you're to meet me at the Pilar at eight o'clock; then we're to go to a place I'll be told of to-night; there we'll meet a mothor that'll bring us to the meeting. They think you might be able to know somethin' about them that gave the bend where Commandant Tancred was shelterin'.

Johnny: I'm no goin', then. I know nothing about Tancred.

The Young Man: (*at the door*) You'd better come for your own sake – remember your oath.

Johnny: (*passionately*) I won't go! Haven't I done enough for Ireland! I've lost me arm, an' me hip's destroyed so that I'll never be able to walk right agen! Good God, haven't I done enough for Ireland?

The Young Man: Boyle, no man can do enough for Ireland!¹⁵¹

At the end of the play two men appear, again when the parents are absent. They are armed with revolvers and they take Johnny away. Juno is soon called to come and identify a body. She knows its Johnny without going. She weeps and cries to the heavens, cursing then asking for help. She vows to leave her home with Mary, where they will then go to seek refuge with family elsewhere. She says that Mary's baby will have two mothers and no father. She casts aside the Captain who is out

¹⁵⁰ O'Casey, S., 'Juno and the Paycock' in *Three Plays*, Pan Books Ltd, London, 1980, p. 6.

¹⁵¹ O'Casey, p. 50.

drunk somewhere and leaves with Mary. The final scene of the play involves the return of the Captain and his friend Joxer. They are both completely drunk and completely unaware of what has happened. In amongst their drunken ramblings the Captain recalls a man dying in his arms years ago when he fought for Ireland. He then curses the ‘terrible’ state of the whole world.

2.9 *Juno and the Paycock* – The Film

It is not an exaggeration to say that Hitchcock’s film follows exactly the same narrative as just outlined. What the characters stand for, the atmosphere created, the political ideologies behind the text, all of these are a part of Hitchcock’s film. There are a few differences, but these are minor and the additions that are made add to O’Casey’s work rather than develop the text into work that Hitchcock can call his own. The two main differences with Hitchcock’s adaptation are how he chooses to open the film and how he decides to end it. Rather than introducing the viewer to the Boyle’s in their own home with Juno discussing events outside their four walls and the whereabouts of her drunken husband, instead Hitchcock opens up the play and the viewer thus finds themselves in the streets of Dublin.

The film opens with a black screen and a voice (The Orator if we go by the cast list that appears seconds before) that loudly speaks of the continual struggles of the people of Ireland. The screen then fades into the image of a man standing in the middle of a crowd. He stands upon something unseen so that he is taller than everyone around him. He delivers a rousing speech about the Irish Civil War that is consuming Dublin, and thus explains the current state of affairs to the viewer. He talks of staying together, fighting as one and that history tells us that whenever the people of Ireland have been divided, they have lost. The camera pans out to show that they are in an alleyway, and it then focuses on a sign that informs the viewer that this is in fact Dublin. The Orator then proclaims that the only way for Ireland to overcome these troubles is if they forget about the different parties, the Diehards Republicans and The Free Staters, and come together as “broad shouldered, deep chested, hardy hearted men”.

Despite playing on stereotypical images of Irishness, the film displays the political background of the play in a different form. Rather than learning the back-

story through conversations between family members, Hitchcock instead immerses the viewer within a political forum that the play only briefly discusses. By playing on stereotypes, whether accurate or not, the film is deliberately planting an image within the viewer's mind. As he says the words 'broad shouldered' the camera cuts to a close up of a face in the crowd. It is Joxer, he is wide eyed and looks frail, yet he rolls his shoulders back at the mention of 'broad shoulders'. The camera then cuts to a close up of two very serious looking men as the words 'deep chested' are mentioned. We then cut to another close-up, this time of the Captain, who closes his mouth in agreement with the words 'hardy hearted'. The camera then closes up on another man as the word 'men' is uttered. As The Orator continues to speak machine gun fire erupts and he falls backwards. The camera cuts to a shot of two men in a broken window firing a machine gun. The crowd scatters and we get an amusing shot of a cat running up a lamppost to escape from being trampled. This shot is out of place in context with the play and the subject matter with which the film opens, it is likely to pertain to two things, the first being that the political situation itself is farcical and two, the more likely, that this is what would often be referred to as a 'Hitchcock' moment. His use of comedy amongst the tragic has already been discussed and this scene is no different. It is one of those moments where you can look at a film and say to yourself 'that's a Hitchcock film'. These particular points are a part of the 'Hitchcock structure' that structuralists would point to when examining the work of Hitchcock. These points of black comedy are part of the many motifs found throughout Hitchcock's work so by this definition alone, *Juno and the Paycock* becomes a 'Hitchcock film' and as will shortly be discussed, this often disregarded 'photoplay' contains many Hitchcock motifs.

Following the cat that runs up the tree, many of the men scatter and seek refuge in a nearby pub and after falling about over each other on the bar floor, two men stand up. It is the Captain and Joxer. Before we hear them speak, we recognise the two men from the crowd outside. Their close-ups and explicit connection with the descriptions 'broad-shouldered' and 'hardy hearted' suggest that these are strong noble men, the type of men that need to band together to bring peace to Ireland. Yet when they speak we realize that this is not the case. They are drunkards who are unable to pay for their drinks. Mrs Madigan who runs the bar has a drink with them and explains that there is trouble afoot in the streets as Mrs Tancred's son has been

murdered and it is believed that somebody informed on his whereabouts, leading to his death. The informant is believed to be in the area around the building in which the Captain and Joxer live. Mrs Madigan also says that the Republicans are raging and are after this informant.

This beginning is not in the play. It does not change anything to the tone or characters that O'Casey has created, but it does follow a pattern that Hitchcock seems to be following when adapting plays. The murder of Tancred that is mentioned at the start of the play foreshadows the events that are to come, yet the idea of an informant is never mentioned, nor the wrath of the Republicans. We are merely left with the puzzling behaviour of Johnny. Questions are raised but nothing is answered until *The Mobilizer* appears. Hitchcock adopts the same practice that he uses in *Easy Virtue* and *The Farmer's Wife* but to a lesser extent. He takes an element of the play's narrative and starts the film with it. He deliberately puts importance on the murder of Tancred. The knowledge that an informant may be nearby suddenly becomes a hook to the audience, and thus when we are introduced to Johnny, his erratic behaviour is immediately recognisable as guilt. We understand why he acts the way he does in the play, thus the appearance of 'The Mobilizer' is expected, rather than surprising.

Hitchcock apparently had help with this new opening from Sean O'Casey¹⁵² and thus, while we do not have an exact breakdown of what O'Casey provided, it is interesting to note that the scene itself revolves around two Hitchcock motifs, one obvious and one not, the first being the moment of black comedy and second being the change to the narrative structure that involves the movement/removal/expansion of a particular element that specifically effects the beginning of the adaptation and ultimately placing the viewer in a different frame of reference to that which they would be in with the original source text. This second motif is only noticeable when the film in question is viewed as an adaptation but it is still there. From *Easy Virtue*,

¹⁵² "Sitting with Eileen O'Casey, the widow of Sean O'Casey at London's Savoy Hotel many years after the death of her husband, I was told about his happy reaction to Hitchcock's *Juno and the Paycock*. The original play had no greater supporter than O'Casey's widow, who said the play had been a prime reason she fell in love with Sean – 'For me, any change to the play was sacrilegious, but Sean was very cooperative and even wrote some new material for the opening scene. It was important that Hitchcock was the kind of director he was because there were some who wouldn't have gone back to Sean to make certain every word was his and to have him approve it.'" - Chandler, p. 74.

to *The Farmer's Wife* to *Rope* to *Psycho*, if we are looking for a structure within Hitchcock's work, and we are accepting that adaptations are a part of this structure then this identifiable adaptive technique becomes a part of that structure. What is then interesting about *Juno and the Paycock* and O'Casey's involvement with a new beginning is that these two motifs, may actually be the product of another author.

It is not only the film's opening that distinguishes Hitchcock's adaptation from the play, but two other noticeable changes. The first deals with Mary and almost occurs as a direct consequence of the Captain and Joxer's conversation with Mrs Madigan concerning the dead young man. In the play this conversation occurs between Juno and Mary and it leads to Mary discussing politics, and specifically striking. O'Casey portrays her as spirited and politically minded, yet this is lacking from Hitchcock's version as the groundwork for her character is formed in the play's opening scenes. In the film she does not appear for twenty-seven minutes, thus there is no mention of the strike or of her admiration for Jeremy Devine with whom she seems to have much in common. In fact in the film, we see Devine arrive at the Boyle household looking for Mary but to no avail. His political importance is thus cut from the film and his role becomes merely that of a suitor, yet one that never really stands a chance as he tells Juno that he has seen Mary recently with another man, which he never discloses within the play.

In spite of the film's American title, *The Shame of Mary Boyle*, Mary is to a surprising extent decentred in Hitchcock's adaptation. She opens the play, and is keenly involved in strike action at work; in the film she doesn't appear for fifteen minutes¹⁵³, and all reference to the strike was gone. Nor does Hitchcock find any means of inwardness with her...¹⁵⁴

Charles Barr brings up the interesting anecdote of the film's American title, which is an unusual choice considering the film only implies that she is pregnant. Her actual pregnancy is not made verbally explicit because of BBFC regulations about sex, and as her character is rather scarce within the film, it is a rather odd choice for a title. As Barr says, Hitchcock presents no inwardness to her. Her role becomes

¹⁵³ Charles Barr in his book *English Hitchcock* specifically states that Mary is absent for the opening fifteen minutes of the film *Juno and the Paycock*. He does not mention which print of the film he is referring to, but the copy that has been used for this study does not have Mary Boyle appear until twenty-seven minutes into the film. Whether this is a case of multiple film prints or just a mistake on Charles Barr's part, either way, for the purpose of this study, Mary Boyle does not appear until the twenty-seventh minute of *Juno and the Paycock*.

¹⁵⁴ Barr, p.100.

merely the focal point of a love triangle that itself never really plays out on screen. Her relationship with both men, her doctor's appointment to discover her pregnancy and the subsequent announcement, all take place off camera. O'Casey presents a woman with high aspirations and a will to change the local political landscape who then falls into scandal. Her fall from grace is not as high as her counterpart within the play, but the 'shame' that befalls her, is almost expected.

The setting of O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* is confined to the living room of the Boyle's flat. Hitchcock uses the same setting and other than in the opening scene, we rarely leave the confines of the suffocating living room. Hitchcock does however make use of two shots that show the world immediately outside of the flat and what would have been considered 'off stage left' and 'off stage right' within the play. Figure 45 below shows the Captain standing on the landing of the dark stairwell where characters come and go throughout the film to enter and leave the flat, while figure 46 shows the view from the window on the opposite side of the flat. Both shots are used sparingly throughout the film but with purpose.



Figure 45.



Figure 46.

Concerning *Juno and the Paycock*, Peter Conrad writes:

...the stairs are a chute leading directly to perdition. Opening out the theatrical enclosure of Sean O'Casey's play, he gave the staircase in the Irish tenement an almost choral function. It tallies and equalizes comic mishaps and tragic falls...A staircase may be inert, but for Hitchcock it was the motor of drama. It facilitated quests, encouraged competitions for pre-

eminence, and yet finally demonstrated that all our vertical striving leads us to the same place, dizzily poised above a gulf.¹⁵⁵

Staircases are a visual motif that appear throughout Hitchcock's body of work. As Conrad states they are Hitchcock's 'motor for drama'. Within *Juno and the Paycock* the Captain and Joxer run up and down the stairs either towards the pub or away from each other in jest. It is their means of escape yet it also the gateway for the funeral procession as the family leaves to pay their respects to Tancred. Bentham appears from the depths of the stairwell and enters the Boyles' lives, eventually taking their money and their daughter's virtue and most tellingly Johnny's killers emerge from there and then drag him away kicking and screaming, down the stairs to his own hell:

Stairs compel movement and with it, fear, as in Constance's ascent to Murchison's office in *Spellbound*, and Bates' in *Psycho*. The camera (the maker) has a liberty over space and stairs that the character has not. Hence the open, expressionistic staircase in *The Lodger* and the brittle one in *No.17*. Hitchcock's stairs image both man's compulsion and rigors and fears of his rise or plunge to awareness. The danger that always lurks around the stairs is the anxiety that undercuts all confidence (in the Hitchcock vision), all sense of secure footing, and that provides central metaphor for *Downhill* and for *Vertigo*.¹⁵⁶

In *Juno and the Paycock* the staircase is a fixed and ever present reminder of the dangers that Yacowar above discusses. Unlike the films mentioned, which can easily be extended to the staircase that Alice descends after murdering the artist in *Blackmail*, the stairs that Johnnie Aysgarth climbs holding the possibly poisoned drink in *Suspicion* or the stairwell that Melanie Daniels ascends to check on noises heard in *The Birds*, the stairs in *Juno and the Paycock* are almost always on camera. Every other film mentioned involves the camera finding the stairs and positioning them in a particular way that relates to the action needed. Yet as in *Easy Virtue*, the staircase of *Juno and the Paycock* is fixed, the threat is always there, a fact that is present within the plays of both Coward and O'Casey. In *Easy Virtue* the staircase dominates the stage while in *Juno and the Paycock* the stairwell entrance is off to the side of the stage with the echoing sound of the steps being used periodically throughout the text.¹⁵⁷ Both plays use the stairs as a constant reminder throughout the

¹⁵⁵ Conrad, pp. 345-346.

¹⁵⁶ Maurice Yacowar, 'Hitchcock's Imagery and Art' in Grant, B.K., (ed.) *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2008, p. 205.

¹⁵⁷ "[The steps of two persons are heard coming up a flight of stairs. They are the footsteps of Captain Boyle and Joxer. Captain Boyle is singing in a deep, sonorous, self-honouring voice.]"

narrative suggesting that every time they are used, whatever awaits at either end, danger, tragedy or ecstasy, the reader/playgoer is forewarned and it this ever present feature that Hitchcock not only adapts in full with the two theatrical adaptations but instils within his work with every use of a staircase. When Lila Crane climbs the outside steps and the inside stairs of the Bates house in the finale of *Psycho*, it is not just the repetitive use of the stairs and the danger they symbolise within the film that instils fear and suspense (which itself links directly to that used within the theatrical adaptations) but it is what they have represented throughout Hitchcock's career.

Returning to the setting of the Boyle family, figure 46 shows the window that looks out of their flat and down to the street below. In reference to the play, the shot appears where act one and act two would each technically end, acting almost as a curtain for each scene within the film. Johnny Boyle sitting in his chair precedes each shot. He looks towards the direction of the window and we cut to the shot in figure 46. Over the top of the shot is the sound of machine gun fire. Whether the sound is diegetic or non-diegetic is never explained but it does not matter either way. The window is a symbol of hope for Johnny. He looks out upon the world and longs to be taken away, but his hopes are always shattered by machine gun fire that reminds him of what he has done and that death is close. In one scene Johnny looks up to a statue of the Virgin Mary that sits high above him. Later when he is dragged away to his death he prays out loud to the Virgin Mary. After he is bundled into a car that drives him away, the camera cuts back to the statue of the Virgin Mary while a machine gun fires away in the distance, informing the viewer that death has finally arrived for Johnny.

Juno and the Paycock contains many of the hallmarks of Hitchcock's other British films. Themes of class and religion run through Hitchcock's early work because they relate to the audience. Considering the fidelity that Hitchcock had to abide by, his attempts at adding something personal to *Juno and the Paycock* are ultimately successful. The film is judged for being a 'faithful' adaptation of O'Casey's play as shown, but while Hitchcock does not tinker with the narrative or the overall arc of the characters, he does take every opportunity to show how the

medium of film can add to the strict confines of a stage play. Raymond Durnat writes:

Where the stage-play's restrictions start to cabin, crib, confine, bind in, is when the play can't expand to take in action which it would be relevant to see and when unity within the scene requires a stylized concatenation of events. Here again, the distinction is far from clear-cut. The mainstream theatre has subsequently absorbed, from a pre-cinematic avant-garde (and the popular Victorian theatre!), a sufficiently fast and fluid staging. The difference lies not so much between stage and screen as media as between the rules and conventions of the naturalism within which Sean O'Casey worked, and what was required of the mainstream cinema at the time of Hitchcock's adaptation.¹⁵⁸

The strict confines of O'Casey's play allowed Hitchcock no freedom of movement; which Durnat later writes, is evidently absent within the film. Film is anything but restrictive when it comes to setting, and thus when adapting a play that has lived and breathed its life upon the rigid space of a stage, it becomes the challenge of the filmmaker to use the medium of film to give the play a different home. Hitchcock strives to turn *Juno and the Paycock* into something other than just a 'photoplay' and in many ways he achieves this goal, but his achievements here have for the most part gone unnoticed by most Hitchcock scholars, which is a fate that that it shares with another all but forgotten Hitchcock film, *The Skin Game*.

The labelling of *Juno and the Paycock* as a lesser Hitchcock film, or as quoted above, not a Hitchcock film at all, is inaccurate as has clearly been shown with the presence of 'Hitchcock motifs' and its connection and influence to other Hitchcock adaptations. What these comments do however call in to question is what exactly is a Hitchcock film because viewing Hitchcock's films as adaptations complicates the current meaning.

2.10 *The Skin Game* – The Play

Both Charles Barr in *English Hitchcock* and Marc Raymond Strauss in *Hitchcock Nonetheless: The Master's Touch in His Least Celebrated Films* (2007) open their discussions about *The Skin Game* with a list of critics and theorists who disparage it, some of which will be mentioned shortly, but it should be noted that the

¹⁵⁸ Durnat, pp. 105-106.

criticism levelled at the film stops at the play, which, like Hitchcock's *Juno and the Paycock*, when discussed, is often talked about in terms of the play as though that it is all it is, a photoplay. The play itself was very successful as was John Galsworthy who had a very prominent theatrical run in the 1920's which culminated with him winning the Noble Prize for literature in 1932.¹⁵⁹ His writing often attacked the upper middle class in which he was raised and like O'Casey and Coward, his work was tinged with anger and malice towards the society that he depicted.

Much like *Juno and the Paycock*, Galsworthy's *The Skin Game* was a successful West End hit with good reviews¹⁶⁰ and a performance that Hitchcock himself actually saw on stage.¹⁶¹ It dealt with issues of class, standing and ultimately ended in tragedy. Like O'Casey's text, this was a play that Hitchcock had to again adapt faithfully and has subsequently been judged for carrying out that task. Strauss writes that critically the film was derided,¹⁶² mostly because it was compared to Hitchcock's earlier work, specifically *Blackmail*, which until Charles Bennett started to collaborate with Hitchcock, meant that his films were often looked at as though he were taking backward steps.

The play is a simple tale about two warring families, the Hillcrists and the Hornblowers. Hillcrist, the patriarch of his family becomes angry when a rival landowner begins to evict tenants from the property that he sold him in the good faith that it would remain untouched. Instead the rival landowner, Hornblower, makes plans to build further mills for his potteries. Hillcrist is moved to action by the Jackmans who are a couple that are being evicted. Hillcrist and Hornblower argue over the eviction and then about a proposed piece of land called the Centry, which Hornblower is intent on buying. This piece of land is particularly dear to the hearts of Hornblower's family as it is part of a beautiful view from his land. Using his agent Dawker, he sabotages Hornblower's attempts at buying the land and instead the sale

¹⁵⁹ This biographical information is taken from the official website for the Nobel Prize: http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1932/galsworthy-bio.html

¹⁶⁰ "It opened in April 1920 at St Martin's Theatre, and brought Galsworthy, whose plays had tended to appeal mainly to 'advanced' audiences, his first substantial commercial success in the theatre. That should not, however, be held against it, because it genuinely is, as the critic of the Daily Telegraph declared, gripping, truthful and 'quite out of the common run'." – Benedict Nightingale, 'Introduction' in *Five Plays*, Methuen London Ltd., London, 1984, p. xvii.

¹⁶¹ Spoto, p. 62.

¹⁶² Strauss, M.R., *Hitchcock Nonetheless: The Master's Touch in His Least Celebrated Films*, McFarland and Company, Inc., Jefferson, 2007, p. 21.

of the land goes to auction. In the auction, Hornblower outsmarts Hillcrist and he loses the land, however his agent Dawker uncovers a terrible secret about Hornblower's daughter-in-law Chloe and thus a game of blackmail ensues. The allegations suggest that Chloe once worked in a brothel and once Hornblower realises that this is true, he agrees to sign over his land and the recently acquired Centry over to Hillcrist, in exchange for his secrecy about this matter. Hillcrist agrees but Chloe's husband Charles knows something is afoot and after roughing up Dawker he learns the truth. In her despair, Chloe who we learn is pregnant, throws herself into a gravel pit. While Hornblower and Dawker fight over the broken agreement, Hillcrist and Charles enter carrying Chloe's body. Hornblower leaves with his family but curses Hillcrist on the way out. Hillcrist's daughter Jill believes that she saw Chloe move, suggesting that she is not dead when she is carried off stage. The Jackmans eventually show up to thank Hillcrist for his help yet, whether due to shock or stress, he cannot remember who they are, suggesting that this whole ordeal has been for nothing.

Galsworthy deals with class differently to O'Casey, as both the Hillcrist and the Hornblowers are rich landowners. This a case of the rich getting richer on either side, while the lower classes are moved around like pawns. Chloe is from a different world to those around her, marrying into wealth after escaping a life of prostitution yet she is not allowed to forget this life. It is used against her by everyone, from Hillcrist with blackmail, to Hornblower who is more concerned about his son and then to Charles himself who can only see her for what she has done in the past than for who she is now, his pregnant wife:

Charles: [*Turning back to them*] Why do you tell me that lie? When I've just had the truth out of that little scoundrel! My wife's been here; she put you up to it.

[*The face of Chloe is seen transfixed between the curtains, parted by her hands.*]

She – she put you up to it. Liar that she is – a living lie. For three years a living lie.

[*Hillcrist, whose face alone is turned towards the curtains, sees that listening face. His hand goes up from uncontrollable emotion.*]

And hasn't now the pluck to tell me. I've done with her. I won't own a child by such a woman.

[*With a little sighing sound Chloe drops the curtains and vanishes.*]

Hillcrist: For God's sake, man, think of what you're saying. She's in great distress.

Charles: And what am I?

Jill: She loves you, you know.

Charles: Pretty love! That scoundrel Dawker told me – told me – Horrible! Horrible!

Hillcrist: ‘deeply regret that our quarrel should have brought this about.

Charles: [*With intense bitterness*] Yes, you’ve smashed my life.¹⁶³

Hillcrist and his daughter Jill try to convince Charlie that the secret about Chloe is that she stole money from her previous employers but he already knows the truth and vents his feelings about her. She overhears him and then flees to the gravel pit to take her life. It is only at this point that Hillcrist realises the true nature of what he has caused with his selfish attempts to save his land. When the Jackmans first tell Hillcrist of their eviction he is outraged, but when they tell him of Hornblower’s pursuit of the Centry he is flabbergasted because it affects his wellbeing:

Mrs J: [*Bitterly*] He’s no gentlemen, sir; he put it so brisk. We been there thirty years, and now we don’t know what to do. So I hope you’ll excuse us coming, sir.

Hillcrist: I should think so, indeed! H’m! [*He rises and limps across to the fireplace on his stick. To himself.*] The cloven hoof. By George! This is a breach of faith. I’ll write to him, Jackman. Confound it! I’d certainly never have sold if I’d known he was going to do this.

Mrs J: No, sir, I’m sure, sir. They do say it’s to do with the potteries. He wants the cottages for his workmen.

Jackman: [*Heavily*] They talk about his havin’ bought the Centry to put up more chimneys there, and that’s why he wants the cottages.

Hillcrist: The Centry! Impossible!

Mrs J: Yes, sir; it’s such a pretty spot – looks beautiful from here. [*She looks out through the window.*] Loveliest spot in all Deepwater, I always say. And your father owned it, and his father before ‘im. It’s a pity they ever sold it, sir, beggin’ your pardon.

Hillcrist: The Centry!¹⁶⁴

Hillcrist’s feelings for the Jackmans are shown to be trivial at the very mention of the Centry. He is ready to deal with their eviction problems by writing a letter, but once the Centry is mentioned he calls for his wife and for his agent Dawker. The Jackmans clearly bait him with the Centry, reminding him of its importance, its history and its beauty. It is no longer a part of his land, yet it is more important to him than the livelihoods of the Jackmans. When his wife hears this ‘devastating’ news she replies:

¹⁶³ Galsworthy, J., ‘The Skin Game’ in *Five Plays*, Methuen London Ltd., London, 1984, pp. 218-219.

¹⁶⁴ Galsworthy, pp. 167-168.

Mrs H: Never! [*At the window, looking out.*] Impossible! It would ruin the place utterly...¹⁶⁵

After the tragic events have unfolded and the Hornblowers have carried out the body of Chloe, the Jackmans appear:

Mrs J : We're so glad we can go back, sir – ma'am, we just wanted to thank you. [*There is a silence, they see that they are not welcome.*] Thank you kindly, sir. Good-night, ma'am. [*They shuffle out.*]

Hillcrest: I'd forgotten their existence. [*He gets up.*] What is it that gets loose when you begin a fight, and makes what you think you're not? What blinding evil! Begin as you may, it ends in this – skin game! Skin game!¹⁶⁶

The Hillcrests believe that they are innocent victims throughout the play. They do not see it as an issue of class but one of preservation. Yet the problems that they face are inevitable. The industrialisation of the countryside that they hold so dear is going to happen, but that is not the real crux of their dilemma. It is about power and control. Hillcrest is the landowner, the one who is used to wielding his power, and Hornblower is a threat to this. The Centry represents the control for power, and as the saying goes, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is this absolute power for which Hillcrest strives and it is only when he achieves it that he realises the damage that he has done.

2.11 *The Skin Game* – The Film

In *Hitchcock – The First Forty-Four Films*, Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol discuss why Hitchcock may have decided to make *The Skin Game* and what they think of it:

The only apparent reason would seem to be that Galsworthy's considerable literary reputation would provide Hitchcock with an opportunity to demonstrate the magnitude of his ambition. The play was bad and already dated, but perhaps Hitchcock thought he could 'make something of it'. If this was the case, he was soon brought down a peg, because *The Skin Game* is the worst film he has ever put his name to – a botched job in which the auteur seemed totally uninterested.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Galsworthy, p. 169.

¹⁶⁶ Galsworthy, p. 222

¹⁶⁷ Rohmer, and Chabrol, p. 30.

This depiction of Hitchcock's film, while not representative of the general consensus towards the film by critics, does come close. With Spoto referring to the film as "endlessly talky" and revealing of a director "detached from his project"¹⁶⁸ while even Charles Barr writes little to defend the film, allowing others to speak for him from the venomous critiquing of Rohmer and Chabrol to the slightly more positive approach concerning the representation of the class system within the film as put forward by Yacowar and Thomas Leitch.¹⁶⁹ Like *Juno and the Paycock* before it, *The Skin Game* is often judged on its almost absolute fidelity regarding Galsworthy's play. Like *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Skin Game* does not fulfil the proposed requirements of a 'Hitchcock film'. Personal opinions towards films are understandable and concerning adaptation it is to be expected because traditionally, as mentioned, the process of adaptation often calls into question the element of expectation. Yet in this case, unlike other adaptations where the expectation of the critic and viewer is dependent on the adaptation of a source text, the unfulfilled expectations levelled at *The Skin Game* are in relation to Hitchcock. Like *Juno and the Paycock* it is praised for its fidelity to Galsworthy yet chastised for its infidelity towards the 'Hitchcock' model. What is needed is, as shown with the other theatrical adaptations is a model akin to the structuralist approach of Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Peter Wollen, where a body of work is viewed through a system of structures so that each film can be accounted for and analysed without fear of fitting into a particular set of standards set by the auteuristic elements of the director. In the case of adaptation this model would allow for the directors work to be viewed amongst the original sources and influences, whether cultural, cinematic or economic, while looking at what is influenced by the adaptation, whether it is the later work of the film maker, sequels, remakes or further adaptations by someone else. By positioning a filmography within this model, we are no longer restricted by the common conventions of auteurism as we are able to view films and sources that are often ignored, while also still accounting for the skills and techniques of the auteur, although the filmmaker is no longer an auteur, but instead an adaptor.

Returning to the adaptation of Galsworthy's play, there is much more to *The Skin Game* than just absolute fidelity. Charles Barr states that the film "stays as close

¹⁶⁸ Spoto, p. 128.

¹⁶⁹ Barr, p.104.

to its source text as any Hitchcock film ever made,”¹⁷⁰ but to say, in the words of Rohmer and Chabrol, that it is a “botched job” is to be ignorant of the technical aspects of the film:

The exuberant swinging between two stylistic extremes demonstrates, at the least, that Hitchcock is not simply fulfilling a chore in a cool and detached manner, but taking the chance to push further the formal experiments of *Juno and the Paycock* in the filming of a play text. The element in this film that seems to engage him at a deeper level than the power-struggle itself, as it surely does the modern spectator, is the suffering of the main pawn in, and victim of, the struggle, Chloe Hornblower.¹⁷¹

The ‘stylistic extremes’ that Barr refers to are the different camera angles that Hitchcock uses to show the interaction between Hillcrist and Hornblower, firstly in their opening confrontation and then secondly within the auction scene.



Figure 47.



Figure 48.

Figure 47 is a shot from the first time that Hillcrist and Hornblower see each other in the film. When Hornblower enters the house and says “Haven’t seen ye for a long time, Hillcrist” to the arrival of Jill four minutes later, the scene is one continuous shot. The camera tracks the movement of Hornblower as he moves restlessly back and forth from an empty chair to Hillcrist who sits opposite. For the first half of the scene Hornblower stands above Hillcrist, only for Hillcrist to eventually rise (see figure 48) and appear taller than Hornblower. Hillcrist is a man who was born into wealth, and he projects his natural power when he stands and physically towers over his rival. Hornblower however is a self-made man as he declares in his speech to Hillcrist, promising to continue with his growth in power.

¹⁷⁰ Barr, p.100.

¹⁷¹ Barr, p.106.

Hillcrest sits at first because of gout, which does not affect Hornblower. He does not need a seat, he may not be as tall as Hillcrest but he has endurance and that is what is important. It is a game between these two men, they quarrel over agreements and land but in the end it boils down to power and pride. Hillcrest is angry that Hornblower is gaining land and property while Hornblower is angry that his daughter-in-law has not been welcomed by Mrs Hillcrest into the local society. Hitchcock's use of the continuous take shows that both men, while at odds with each other, are not yet at war. They can be in the same shot together and for a substantial amount of time, yet the divide that is coming is clear to see, perhaps most obviously within the simple nature of their names:

The Skin Game shows Hillcrest ¹⁷² the gentlemanly landowner at bay against Hornblower the course pushing industrialist. The names couldn't be more appropriate: lyrical rolling countryside, essentially modest – hills not mountains, versus the clamorous and militant bragging of own-trumpet-blowing.¹⁷³

This scene is also a perfect example of the use of the play's dialogue. The film opens with an interesting title card that reads 'A Talking Film By John Galsworthy' which is a rare example of Hitchcock acknowledging the authorship of another. This is followed by 'Adapted and Directed by Alfred Hitchcock'. This long continuous shot between Hillcrest and Hornblower is the perfect example of the relationship between Galsworthy and Hitchcock. Every word spoken within Hitchcock's scene is found within the same scene in the play:

Hornblower: And how have ye tried bein' neighbourly to me? If I haven't a wife, I've got a daughter-in-law. Have ye called on her, ma'am? I'm new, and ye're an old family. Ye don't like me, ye think I'm a pushin' man. I go to chapel, an' ye don't like that. I make things and I sell them, and ye don't like that. I buy land, and ye don't like that. It threatens your view from your windies. Well, I don't like you, and I'm not goin' to put up with your attitude. Ye've had things your own way too long, and now ye're not going to have them any longer.¹⁷⁴

This speech by Hornblower from Galsworthy's text encompasses the differences between the two men and the reasons that they are ready to do battle. The dialogue is taken from the play verbatim. The rest of the scene is the same as the play, with only the odd line removed. Some would argue that this is just Hitchcock pointing

¹⁷² Raymond Durnat for some reason spells Hillcrest, *Hillcrest*, with an 'e'. Within both play and film, if one uses Hitchcock's opening cast list as gospel, the spelling should be with an 'I', Hillcrest.

¹⁷³ Durnat, p. 116.

¹⁷⁴ Galsworthy, p. 173.

the camera at a collection of stage actors, but that, as mentioned before, would be ignorant. This, like *Juno and the Paycock*, is a case of a director adapting the text of a play as faithfully as possible when concerning the dialogue, but then using the medium of film to bring it to life visually, while adding little nuances and additions. In this case, Hitchcock's additions are to help the narrative adapt to its new medium. The long continuous take between Hornblower and Hillcrist is deliberately shot in this way to not only show their current relationship, but to deliberately contrast with their next encounter within the film.

The auction scene, like the courtroom scene within *Easy Virtue* and the party scene within *The Farmer's Wife*, is usually the only celebrated shot within the film. Hitchcock scholars and critics have traditionally jumped on this scene because it stands out from the rest of the film with its quick cuts and human-like camera movements. Hitchcock has fun with this scene, using the camera to maximum effect and taking advantage of the subtle yet frantic gestures of an auction.

He certainly scores some cinematic six-hits – notably the auction, with the cutting flashing and the camera zip-panning from one bidder to another.¹⁷⁵

In terms of narrative, the auction scene is nearly exactly as it is written in the play, yet Hitchcock's exemplary work with the camera is in free-flow, moving with a greater freedom than in any of his previous stage play adaptations. Concerning Alonso de Santo's explanation of the difference between theatre and film as the sea appearing "in the theatre as a blue cloth" and "in the movies as the sea"¹⁷⁶, suggesting that cinema creates a visceral realism that is not present within theatre, here Hitchcock uses the camera to show the auction scene in a way that a stage play could not. The urgency, speed and inventiveness of the camera convey a real courtroom as opposed to a staged one.

The scene has three particular functions, the first and least important being of brief comedic value, the second is its presentation of the escalating feud between the

¹⁷⁵ Durgnat, p. 117.

¹⁷⁶ Alonso de Santos, J. L. 'De la escritura dramática a la escritura cinematográfica.' *Cine y Literatura*, Monographic issue incorporating papers from X Ciclo Escritores y Universidad, 7 November–5 December 1995. *Repubblica de las Letras* 54, 1997, p. 77–82, cited in P.Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*, Multilingual Matters Ltd., Clevedon, 2005.

landowners and third being the introduction of Chloe. The comedic element of the scene is very important as it relaxes the viewer into the frantic auctioning process and creates a false sense of security, distracting one from the tragedy that awaits Chloe.

Surrounded by straight faces and serious looks is the auctioneer who is a jittery and nervous wreck. He is constantly trying to crack jokes and get a smile from his audience, while all the time wiping his brow, blowing his nose and coughing, more out of nerves than any lingering ailments. He is a larger than life character who is out of place amongst the stifled upper class that we have met so far. At one point he turns to the solicitor next to him and quickly skipping an introduction as his name escapes him, tells his audience that the solicitor will now read out the conditions concerning the property and that “They won’t worry you, I’m sure”. The solicitor then proceeds to read from a paper except he is so quiet that he is practically silent, prompting someone to shout, “speak up”. This is to no avail and instead the only sound is coughing from the audience. The conditions of the property are unimportant to the buyers as this is about more than just land. This abuse of sound is a running tactic that Hitchcock uses throughout the film. Peter Conrad comments:

Hitchcock did his best to drown the dialogue in noise, more eloquent and compelling than reasoned speech. A car, the symbol of Hornblower’s economic ‘go’, exchanges un verbal abuse with a herd of sheep in a narrow village street: an angry klaxon loses its temper, and the sheepdog hurls back insults of its own. At the auction to settle ownership of the land Hornblower wants to develop, legal property is overruled by the eruptive, incontinent body. The auctioneer coughs and sneezes, and the squire places bids by blowing his nose.¹⁷⁷



Figure 49.



Figure 50.

¹⁷⁷ Conrad, p. 160.

The abuse of sound, like the landowner's names, creates a clear divide between industry and rural, and this divide is cemented by Hitchcock's use of cutting and framing within the auction scene. Figure 49 above shows Hornblower while figure 50 shows Hillcrist. These close-ups are inter-cut between medium shots of the auctioneer. Each time the camera cuts back to both Hornblower and Hillcrist, the close-ups get a little more extreme. Like punches thrown by a boxer, the bids become quicker. Each man appears to violently nod their head as if their verbal replies are not enough and thus they need more physical force behind them. Eventually the camera cuts to a medium shot of Hillcrist who is flanked by his wife and daughter (figure 51 below). His bid of nine thousand pounds silences the auctioneer and seems to stop Hornblower. As the auctioneer's hammer readies to conclude the deal, the camera cuts to a wide shot of the entire room. In the foreground are the shadowed backs of the auctioneer and the solicitor, who dominate the landscape (figure 52 below). The faces of the audience are visible but the only discernable features are that of Hornblower who sits in the front row. A man in the far left corner of the shot, deliberately unrecognisable to the viewer, has outbid Hillcrist, which is fine by him because it means that Hornblower has lost out on the property and Hillcrist himself has not lost a penny. Hornblower sits between the two large figures, alone yet triumphant for it is his agent who has secretly bid. This wide shot trumps the medium shot of Hillcrist bidding. The first battle of the war is over and it has been won by Hornblower.



Figure 51.



Figure 52.

The third function of the auction scene is that it acts as an introduction to the tragic figure of Chloe who from here dominates the focus of Hitchcock's film. Her

role at first appears no different to that of the plays, yet while to Galsworthy Chloe is collateral damage caused by the war between the landowners, to Hitchcock she is a victim. Before the auction begins, Hitchcock shows both families arriving. It is one of the few scenes that does not appear in the play, and with this scene, Galsworthy's Chloe, becomes Hitchcock's.



Figure 53.



Figure 54.



Figure 55.



Figure 56.



Figure 57.



Figure 58.

The above shots show Chloe being systematically shunned by Mrs Hillcrist. She arrives with Rolf Hornblower, stepping out of the car after him, where she is greeted by her husband Charles and her father-in-law. She then leans against the automobile as another car arrives. The camera cuts to the newly arrived car that is carrying the Hillcrist. As the family step out, Jill Hillcrist notices Chloe and informs her mother. Figure 53 shows Chloe explaining to Rolf Hornblower that she is going to stay for a minute. She indicates towards the Hornblowers, informing Rolf that she is waiting for them. Figures 54 to 57 show Chloe readying herself and then smiling. She looks towards the Hornblowers who are walking in her direction and as she opens her mouth to greet them (figure 54), we cut to Mrs Hillcrist who gives her a look of contempt and then turns away from her. Figure 56 shows Chloe's bewilderment and as the family passes, bewilderment becomes sadness. In figure 58 she cuts a lonely figure, dressed in expensive clothes, cast off to the left of the screen. Hitchcock attempts to draw as much sympathy as he can from the viewer, so that whatever follows, as with Larita in *Easy Virtue*, there is an emotional connection between Chloe and the viewer.

Just before the auction takes place, Hillcrist's agent Dawker moves through the crowd and talks with a man. He deliberately catches the attention of Chloe who looks on in shock at the individual with Dawker. She drops her head and looks away. When the camera finds her again she looks faint and is given smelling salts by Jill to wake up. Eventually she looks back at the man with Dawker and when she does a face floats towards the camera. When it fills the screen it seems to almost evaporate before appearing again in the distance and then zooming forward once more.



Figure 59.



Figure 60.

Figure 59 shows the face in the distance while figure 60 is the face in an extreme close up. It is not the face of the man with Dawker, but of the individual who will appear later in the play to confirm her dark secret. He is a ghost from Chloe's past who will bring her world crashing down. The camera work used by Hitchcock here is not only technically inventive, but also physically enthralling. The point-of-view shot means that the ghost is coming towards the screen, towards the viewer. We are meant to feel Chloe's fear and disorientation.

Chloe becomes the central figure within the film now, with Galsworthy's narrative revolving around her. Rather than what Hitchcock adds to the narrative, it now becomes about what he takes away, in order to keep the viewer's empathy with Chloe intact. Within the play Chloe meets secretly with Dawker to try and convince him to keep his secret. After trying everything she can think of, Chloe resorts to desperate measures:

[Chloe's passion fades out as quickly as it blazed up. She sinks down on the sofa, shudders, looks here and there, and then for a moment at him.]

Chloe: Is there *anything* you'll take, not to spoil my life? *[Clasping her hands on her breast; under her breath.]* Me?

Dawker: *[Wiping his brow]* By God! That's an offer. *[He recoils towards the window.]* You – you touched me there. Look here! I've got to use you and I'm going to use you, but I'll do my best to let you down as easy as I can. No, I don't want anything you can give me – that is – *[He wipes his brow again.]* I'd like it – but I won't take it.¹⁷⁸



Figure 61.

¹⁷⁸ Galsworthy, p. 202.

Hitchcock's film presents the scene in the same way, with almost the same use of dialogue. Chloe comes out to meet Dawker. She is dressed in a tight and shiny light coloured dress and her cleavage is deliberately prominent. Like the play she tries to convince Dawker to change his mind and when he refuses she moves closer to him. She is clearly nervous and desperate. After calling Dawker a coward, she leans back up against the wall behind as shown in figure 61. She repeats the line from the play 'Is there *anything* you'll take, not to spoil my life?' and even clasps her hands to her breast. She holds her breath, but she never says the word 'Me'. She is kept from saying the word, and asking the question, because to do so would create the impression that she is willing to sell her body, as in the play. Hitchcock's Chloe is scared and desperate and above all innocent. She cannot bring herself down to this level, and in doing so it saves Dawker from sinking to the same depths.

Hitchcock employs this tactic numerous times as the film progresses but it is in two particular situations where it has the most profound effect on the viewer's relationship with Chloe. In the play, after finding out about his daughter-in-law's past, Hornblower is shocked and eventually overcome with anger:

Hornblower: My God!

Chloe: [*With an outburst*] Don't tell Charlie! Don't tell Charlie!

Hornblower: Charlie! So that was your manner of life!

[*Chloe utters a moaning sound.*]

So that's what ye got out of marryin' into my family! Shame on ye, ye Godless thing!

Chloe: Don't tell Charlie!

Hornblower: And that's all ye can say for the wreck ye've wrought. My family, my works, my future! How dared ye!

Chloe: If you'd been me – !

Hornblower: An' these Hillcrist's. The skin game of it!

Chloe: [*Breathless*] Father!

Hornblower: Don't call me that, woman!

Chloe: [*Desperate*] I'm going to have a child.

Hornblower: God! Ye are!

Chloe: Your grandchild. For the sake of it, do what these people want; and don't tell anyone – *Don't tell Charlie!*

Hornblower: [*Again wiping his forehead*] A secret between us. I don't know that I can keep it. It's horrible. Poor Charlie!¹⁷⁹

Hornblower is irate and Chloe has to plead for his help, using her unborn child as leverage. He accuses her of being godless and of wrecking his life. He shows no sympathy towards her and ultimately cares only for his son and his land. These words of Galsworthy are nowhere to be found in Hitchcock's adaptation. The scene in the film is almost identical, beginning with Hornblower arguing with the Hillcrist's over Chloe, only for two men to appear and confirm the deeds from her past. Yet rather than launch into a tirade, Hornblower says nothing. He merely looks towards Chloe and then hangs his head in despair. The camera then cuts to Chloe who looks to her side, away from everyone and slowly brings her handkerchief to her mouth as if she is readying to suppress her grief (figure 62).



Figure 62.

There is complete silence within the room. The Hillcrist's walk past Chloe, momentarily blocking her from view but they are out of focus and thus unimportant. The camera then slowly zooms out, at first revealing Chloe by herself (figure 63) and then after a few more seconds, Hornblower is revealed (figure 64).

¹⁷⁹ Galsworthy, p. 210.



Figure 63.



Figure 64.

Chloe looks to the heavens and cries “Don’t tell Charlie”. She then turns to face Hornblower and the camera closes in on them together. She calls him “father” and rather than the play’s response in which he cries “Don’t call me that, woman”, Hitchcock’s Hornblower looks at her, shakes his head slowly and then brings his hand to his face to catch a falling tear (figure 65).



Figure 65.

Hornblower then says that he’s “all at sea” and asks Chloe to go back to wait in the car, which is exactly what happens within the play. Hitchcock resumes with Galsworthy’s dialogue once he has transformed the scene and particularly Hornblower into a sad grandfather-like figure as opposed to the hot-air blowing land barren that he has portrayed so far. By removing the venomous arguing and pleading from both characters, and resorting to the silence that only until recently held cinema captive, Hitchcock’s creates a sombre mood that is meant to elicit sympathy and compassion. We are meant to feel for both Hornblower and Chloe, and when she utters the word “father” it is both touching and heart-breaking.

The elimination of Galsworthy's text by Hitchcock is most noticeable within the film's tragic conclusion when Chloe's limp body is carried out of the house. In the play, after Hornblower has cursed Hillcrist and then left, Jill comes running back onto stage and says, "she's moved; she's spoken. It may not be so bad."¹⁸⁰ This is absent within the film as is Jill's run into the house. She instead stands outside of it, holding hands with Rolf Hornblower, both with their heads held low. Chloe has died and because of Hitchcock's manipulation, her death is even more tragic. It is then compounded further by the final image of a tree being cut down, implying that industrial work on the Centry will go ahead anyway. Change was inevitable, and Chloe has died for nothing.

As shown with the theatrical adaptations, even those described by others as 'photoplays', Hitchcock's camera was always aware and on the move. By analysing the films as adaptations we are able to understand the choices made by the camera, with the similarities and differences between play and film acting as a natural framework for the camera to be viewed within. Points of authorship suddenly become points of adaptation, and then one can logically begin to question whether these texts were picked because of these points. Rather than Hitchcock's adaptation process being looked upon as a case of a director adapting any text that he is either given or that he has chosen due to the narrative or elements contained, it instead becomes a more detailed process. The text is suddenly viewed in the light of if it will fit into the body of work. For example, Robert Bloch's text bears striking similarities with the films that Hitchcock produced previously, with points within the novel lending themselves to these films and the original sources that inspired them. This framework is built up over time and in retrospect where films such as *The Farmer's Wife* and *The Skin Game* are often ignored when looking at Hitchcock as an 'auteur', as a framework of adaptations, these two theatrical adaptations are not only found within this structure but are a part of its foundations.

¹⁸⁰ Galsworthy, p. 221.

The changes and alterations that Hitchcock made to these films show a director eager to test himself and stretch his boundaries. By adapting these British stage plays, Hitchcock was able to learn how to work closely with a text, understanding it and appreciating what it stood for. While this process is often described as limiting his 'authorship', it undoubtedly helped him grow as a director and thus he was able to move onto the next stage of his career. It is no coincidence that *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, which followed *Waltzes From Vienna*, the last stage play adaptation of the British period, is often discussed as the first true Hitchcock film. From here Hitchcock becomes synonymous with adventure thrillers, repeating the same format throughout the thirties to great success. Yet it is not simply a switch of genre that brings about this change, but a refinement of his adaptation process and the switching from plays to novels:

This move from theatrical to novelistic adaptations is even more pronounced if it is defined as a move from adapting works from the stage to adapting works on the page (novels, short stories, stories written directly for film studios without going through an earlier theatrical incarnation). Not only does Hitchcock shift from depending primarily on theatrical sources to depending primarily on prose fiction, but that shift corresponds precisely with his identification in the later 1930s with the thriller as his chosen medium.¹⁸¹

This switch in his adaptation process was brought about by the confidence that he took from his theatrical process. His change to novels will be discussed with Daphne du Maurier, but for now we will remain with the theatrical, jumping forward fourteen years and crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

¹⁸¹ Leitch, Hitchcock from Stage to Page, p. 13.

3. Theatrical Adaptation: Part 2 - Hitchcock's American Theatre

3.1 The Evolution of *Rope*

Hitchcock's British theatrical adaptations are a significant part of the structural model of adaptation that is found within the director's work. They are as much a part of the foundations as the adapted novels of *The Lodger* and *Murder* and the original screenplays of *The Ring* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. As shown so far, by using this adaptation-structuralist approach we are able to not only bring in often disregarded texts into critical discussion concerning the Hitchcock canon, but are also able to examine the origins and influences of the 'Hitchcock' motifs and traits that auteurism holds so dear. Through looking at fidelity, cultural and economic issues, as well as author status and reader/viewer expectation we allow for a much wider net to be cast over Hitchcock. If we imagine Hitchcock's filmography and brand to be contained by a two-dimensional structure then that structure would be auteur theory. Now if we surround that two-dimensional structure with a larger three-dimensional structure that intertwines itself with everything within it, then that structure would be adaptation theory. Everything within that structure is relatable and dependant on adaptation in some form and a part of the brickwork that forms this structure is the 'meta-text' theory. It is championed by Sarah Cardwell, amongst others, in relation to the classical texts of Shakespeare, Dickens etc., and Will Brooker with his work on the 'Batman-meta-text'. The theory concerns the evolution of a text from adaptation to adaptation, essentially being recorded in the form of a sprawling timeline. Lending itself to Robert Stam's view of adaptation as an "endless process of recycling, transformation and transmutation, with no clear point of origin,"¹⁸² as well as Gerrard Genette's description of 'hypertextuality', the 'meta-text' allows for the mapping of multiple intertextualities across a wide platform.

In *Adaptation Revisited* Sarah Cardwell looks at the adaptation as a point on the timeline of the 'meta-text' thus allowing her to look at multiple adaptations of the

¹⁸² Robert Stam, 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation' in Naremore, J., *Film Adaptation*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2000, p. 66.

same text, acknowledging that a new adaptation would draw upon the adaptation before it, just as much as the source text. Both film and textual adaptations would thus represent “points on a continuum as part of the extended development of a singular, infinite meta-text.”¹⁸³ Her work focuses on historical dramas such as Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Daniel Defoe’s *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders* as these are texts that have been continually adapted for both television and film. One adaptation builds upon the next and so forth:

A valuable story or myth that is growing and developing, being retold, reinterpreted and reassessed.¹⁸⁴

She comments that this notion can be applied to problematic cases such as Shakespeare, where each adaptation of the same play can vary wildly. It is a means of tracking the historicity of each text and thus understanding how and why particular adaptive changes occur and what they mean. The idea of the ‘meta-text’ can be applied to all texts, yet it is understandably more fruitful with those that are steeped in history. However, every text is an adaptation of something and thus the concept of an original piece of art is a false one.

Hitchcock’s *Rope* is important in relation to adaptation because of several reasons. Firstly, it is a deliberate return to the theatrical adaptation; secondly, its origins can be traced through multiple texts lending itself perfectly to the ‘meta-text’ theory and thirdly because unlike many of the previous theatrical adaptations, *Rope* has been extensively studied,¹⁸⁵ often cropping up in different Hitchcock anthologies and even has whole books devoted to it. Lending itself to suspense and thriller writing, star studies, queer theory and all manner of critical work concerning the inventive use of the camera, *Rope* has been studied in relation to most facets of film theory and as such its status as the stereotypical ‘Hitchcock’ film is considered untouchable, yet, despite its lofty status above the likes of *Easy Virtue* and *Number Seventeen*, it is still first and foremost a theatrical adaptation.

¹⁸³ Cardwell, S., *Adaptation Revisited: Television and the Classic Novel*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002, p. 25.

¹⁸⁴ Cardwell, p.25.

¹⁸⁵ Examples of *Rope* commentary include David Sterritt’s ‘Morbid Psychologies and So Forth’ which looks at *Rope* as an adaptation, Robin Wood’s ‘The Murderous Gays: Hitchcock’s Homophobia and Amy Lawrence’s ‘American Shame: *Rope*, James Stewart, and the Post-War Crisis in American Masculinity’ found in *Hitchcock’s America*...three examples in amongst a sea of many.

Between *Waltzes from Vienna* and *Rope*, Hitchcock made seventeen films, thirteen of which were adaptations. Novels and short stories served his ‘action-adventure-Charles-Bennett’ influenced period, his move to America and working with David O. Selznick, RKO, Universal and MGM but it was with *Rope* that Hitchcock finally produced and directed under his own banner. Concerning the production of Hitchcock and Selznick’s last collaboration *The Paradine Case*, Donald Spoto writes:

From the start the project was in disarray, and it engaged no one’s interest very passionately. That it was finished at all was a little short of miraculous, for it was certainly a lame-duck enterprise, a work assigned to a departing director by his increasingly neurotic and unselfconfident producer. Selznick’s worried and worrisome attitude and Hitchcock’s disgust with the content and method that were forced upon him conspired to produce an uneasy atmosphere from which Hitchcock could scarcely wait to extricate himself.¹⁸⁶

It was during the troublesome production of *The Paradine Case* that Hitchcock formed Transatlantic Pictures with fellow Englishmen Sidney Bernstein. Their aim was to make films alternately between Britain and Hollywood and more importantly, this venture would allow Hitchcock the freedom to work, something he could not do with Selznick. The first film produced under the banner of Transatlantic Pictures was meant to be the adaptation of Helen Simpson’s novel *Under Capricorn* but Ingrid Bergman whom Hitchcock wanted for the lead role was unavailable so both Hitchcock and Bernstein turned their attention to the adaptation of Patrick Hamilton’s stage play *Rope* which according to Donald Spoto had impressed them both in its West End premiere.¹⁸⁷

In retrospect when looking at Hitchcock’s career, *Rope* fits in perfectly with his love of the macabre. The premise of a dinner party taking place in the same room as that of a recently committed murder, with its guests being served food from atop the coffin of the victim as the two murderers parade their self-confidence as though it were a parlour trick, is what many would describe as being very ‘Hitchcockian’. Hitchcock brought in his friend Hume Cronyn to work on a script treatment for the film before the playwright Arthur Laurents was brought in to produce a script from Cronyn’s prose. This was a normal process for Hitchcock concerning the production

¹⁸⁶ Spoto, D., *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*, Plexus Publishing Ltd., London, 1994, p.294.

¹⁸⁷ Spoto, p. 302.

of one of his films but in the case of *Rope*, the work of both Cronyn and Laurents are further points on the *Rope* timeline.

Using the model of the ‘meta-text’ we will look at the timeline that *Rope* finds itself a part of, and by analysing particular points of this timeline, the adaptation process undertaken by Hitchcock will become clearer. The four textual points that will be examined will be: 1) *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe; 2) Nietzsche’s theory of the Superman; 3) The Leopold and Loeb murder case; and 4) *Rope* by Patrick Hamilton. Each of these four elements contributed to each other and ultimately Hitchcock’s text. There are, of course, many different influences that could be argued as points on the *Rope* timeline. Durgnat, for example, comments:

Throughout *Rope* there runs a strong undertone of Gide’s *The Vatican cellars*, in which a young man attempts to prove his emancipation from traditional morality, his spiritual freedom, by committing motiveless murder...¹⁸⁸

If we are willing to take the time to research the origins of a story, then we would undoubtedly find many influences. If one does not believe in ‘original art’ then the meta-text timeline could be tracked back throughout history, but for this current argument these four texts will provide enough evidence of the ‘Rope-meta-text’.

1) *The Tell Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe (1843).

This short story details one man’s slow descent into madness after he plans to kill an old man that he is living with for no real reason other than he cannot stand his ‘vulture’s eye’. He murders the old man in his sleep and then conceals the body under the floorboards. The police arrive following reports of a ‘shriek’ emanating from the house. The man explains away the old man’s absence and then calmly entertains the officers in the very room with the body, placing his own chair upon the grave. The man lauds his own intelligence and ingenuity, yet as the police remain, the man begins to hear a tremendous thumping sound, which grows louder and louder until he cannot take it any longer and thus gives into the madness. He tears up the floorboards beneath him, screaming that he can no longer stand the noise of the old man’s beating heart.

¹⁸⁸ Durgnat, R., *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1978, p. 203.

2) Fredrick Nietzsche's theory of the Superman.¹⁸⁹

Amongst his many philosophical musings, Nietzsche believed that for man and society to live up to its true potential then they must shake off the shackles that the morals and laws of religion, specifically Christianity, has bestowed upon society. In rejecting the idea of God and the values that he has given us, which Nietzsche refers to as changeless and transcendent, he proposes the Superman whose values and beliefs change as the world changes. The Superman will trust his own sense of what is right and wrong and good and evil. Under this system, power and strength are able to flourish. The Superman knows that everything in life must come to an end and thus be overcome, thus it is his task to overcome it, ever improving himself: 'I teach you the Superman. Man is something that should be overcome.'¹⁹⁰

3) The Leopold and Loeb Murder Case.¹⁹¹

Illinois vs. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb shocked America in 1924. In this case two young men of wealth (Leopold was nineteen and Loeb was eighteen) conspired to and carried out the killing of a younger boy Bobby Franks, aged fourteen. Their reason for the crime was simple; they wanted to commit the perfect murder. Loeb was a law student at the University of Chicago while Leopold was a student of philosophy, specifically the teachings of Frederick Nietzsche. After months of planning, the young men lured Bobby Franks into a rented car where he was killed with a chisel. They stripped him naked, attempted to destroy his distinguishing features with hydrochloric acid and then stuffed his body into a concrete drainage culvert. They then set out to extort a ransom from the victim's wealthy family, only to fail in this attempt and be arrested. The trial is most famous for their lawyer Clarence Darrow's twelve hour summation at the end of the hearing (Loeb and Leopold pleaded

¹⁸⁹ Nietzsche's theory of the Superman is more commonly known as the 'Übermensch', which is German for the 'overman'.

¹⁹⁰ This is a famous quote from Nietzsche. In this instance it has been translated and reprinted by R.J Hollingdale within 'Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy, page 162.

¹⁹¹ The information concerning the Leopold and Loeb case was examined and checked on many different websites but this particular description is based upon <http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/leoploeb/leopold.htm>, which is a site that describes famous trials from around the world in great detail. The site is run by the School of Law at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC).

guilty so they faced a judge's hearing as opposed to a jury) where he argued extensively against the death penalty and that the boys were victims of, amongst other things, their sexual longings, their insecurities and their obsession with crimes and the teachings of Nietzsche.

4) *Rope* by Patrick Hamilton.

The play of *Rope* opens in darkness. We learn that two young men, Wyndham Brandon and Charles Granillo, have strangled to death Ronald Kentley. They have then concealed his body in a chest at the front of the stage. They plan and execute a dinner party to commence moments after the murder. Food is subsequently served from Ronald's coffin. Brandon is the confident and dominant personality of the two while Granillo, with his Mediterranean looks and his piano playing skills, is significantly weaker, teetering on the edge of madness for the entire play. Brandon and Granillo kill for the sake of killing. They believe they have committed perfect motiveless murder, and that they are above the law and other people because of their superior intelligence. They secretly gloat over their murder in the company of four guests whom they view as inferior people who between them have 'no ideas' - Kenneth Raglan and Leila Arden who are both young, and Sir Johnstone Kentley and his sister Mrs Debenham. Sir Kentley is the father of the deceased and thus the whole situation is cruelly aimed at him. Their final guest is their eventual downfall. They invite the 29-year-old Rupert Cadell who is a World War One veteran and a poet. He is also an old teacher of both Brandon and Granillo. He is the one man that they believe could understand what they have 'accomplished' and it is Rupert who works out what they have done and as the party ends, he returns and confronts the two killers. Eventually he opens the chest and after telling both Brandon and Granillo that they will hang for what they have done, he opens a window and blows a police whistle to alert the nearby men in blue. *Rope* first played in The Strand Theatre, London in 1929. Later that year it played in Broadway under the title *Rope's End* and in 1939 Hamilton adapted it into a television production.

The Tell Tale Heart is the first piece of the ‘Rope-meta-text’. Poe’s story influences both play and film alike, with the most obvious example being the hiding of the body in plain sight.

In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I bought chairs into the room, and desired them there to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.¹⁹²

In Hamilton’s play the murderers have decided before the opening scene that they are going to dispose of Ronald Kentley’s body within the chest and subsequently serve from it. There is no visible argument concerning this plan and it is only left for their butler Sabot and the guests to comment on its queer use as a dinner table. Hitchcock’s *Rope* differs as Brandon and Philip (whose name is changed from Granillo in the play) originally plan to use the chest as a mini library. After we witness the killers dump the body of David Kentley (another name change in the film) into the chest, they then proceed to place upon it piles of rare first edition books for David’s father Mr Kentley to look at when he arrives. It is only at the last minute that Brandon changes his mind and moves the books to the dining table in the kitchen, and the dinnerware to the chest. Brandon believes that this is the perfect finishing touch to their plan, while it only adds to Phillip’s anguish.

The floorboards and both chests, while representing the obvious in coffins, represent the darkness inside the souls of the men involved. Philosophy aside, these men have all committed murder and whether they believe in their actions or not, everything with which they try to justify it is merely an excuse. Poe’s killer, Brandon/Granillo and Brandon/Philip each brag and boast about their conquests and that they are superior to society, yet they still fear the laws that they are bound to, otherwise they would prop the bodies up in chairs for their guests to meet when they arrive. However, while the use of the metaphorical coffin is similar in all three texts, the murder itself is something very different. Poe’s killer plans for seven days as he enters the old man’s bedroom each day at midnight, so the old man gets used to his brief presence as he checks upon his wellbeing. On the seventh day he enters and stands in the dark for hours, waiting for the old man to fall asleep while ignoring

¹⁹² Poe, E.A., ‘The Tell Tale Heart’ in *The Collected Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, Wordsworth Editions, Ware, 2004, p. 120.

whatever feelings of ominous dread come upon him. Before Poe's killer pounces he throws open his lantern and then strikes, suffocating the old man with his own bed. The darkness in this case is used as a tool to commit the murder, hiding the killer's presence, yet he needs light to work. When we come upon Hamilton's killers, the play is already in the dark:

*Brandon goes over to the window and closes the heavy curtains; the room is now in complete black-out. They continue whatever they are doing.*¹⁹³

The play opens in shadows, with descriptions of silhouettes and faint lights but Brandon soon darkens the room even more and all the audience can apparently observe are two cigarettes glowing in the dark. Crucially here, we have not witnessed the murder. The act that will overshadow the whole play has been hidden from the audience and thus there is an element of mystery to it. Throughout the play they argue about opening the lock to the chest. One of the guests, Leila, jokes:

Leila: Oh, I suspect much worse than that. I think they've committed murder, and it's simply chock-full of rotting bones. It's just the sort of thing for rotting bones, isn't it?¹⁹⁴

Brandon jests with his guests about the contents and it leaves the viewer to wonder if indeed they have actually killed anyone. Yet the darkness at the start of the play foreshadows what is to come. When Rupert opens up the chest at the end of the play, his horrified reaction confirms what we knew in the darkness and what Brandon himself told us:

Brandon: Do I know what I've done?... Yes, I know quite well what I've done. *(His voice becomes rich, easy, powerful, elated and yet withal slightly defiant)* I have done murder

Granillo: Yes.

Brandon: *(continuing in the same voice)* I have committed murder. I have committed passionless – motiveless – faultless – and clueless murder. Bloodless and noiseless murder.

Granillo: Yes.

Brandon: And immaculate murder. I have killed. I have killed for the sake of danger and for the sake of killing. And I am alive. Truly and wonderfully alive. That is what I have done, Granno.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Hamilton, P., *Rope*, Samuel French Ltd., London, 2009, p. 2.

¹⁹⁴ Hamilton, p.21.

¹⁹⁵ Hamilton, p. 2.

The darkness is absent within Hitchcock's opening. The film starts with a view of a normal street and is accompanied by pleasant music, yet this is shattered by a muffled scream. The camera moves like a stealthy snake, turning from the action of the street to a nearby window. It moves through the curtain and we are presented with the death mask of David Kentley. The camera pans out to reveal Philip strangling David with a rope while Brandon holds him still. The curtains are drawn behind and thus the lighting is on the dim side, yet everything and everyone is completely visible. Hitchcock opens with this hideous act to shock the viewer and to make it firmly known from the start that Brandon and Philip are murderers. In 'Morbid Psychologies and So Forth' David Sterrit refers to Hamilton's use of darkness "as a metaphor for death" while Hitchcock's opening "plunges us without warning into explicit visual horror."¹⁹⁶ This change of beginning removes the opening suspense for that of horror, ironic for the 'Master of Suspense', and thus the crux of the narrative becomes something different. The suspense is now about whether they will be caught as opposed to if they did it. In the 2011 documentary *Rope Unleashed*, the screenwriter of *Rope*, Arthur Laurents, describes the effect of the opening murder scene:

I'd tried to make a character of the dead boy who you supposedly never saw, of course Hitch crossed me up 'cause he shot the scene of the actual murder and inserted it into the picture. I think he did it 'cause he had a failure of nerve. I thought the suspense would be 'is there or is there not a body in that chest', well he eliminated that. Once you see it, you know they're murderers, and you know they're going to get caught, and I think it took a lot of the tension out of the picture, at least it did for me.¹⁹⁷

In this instance, Hitchcock adapts Poe more than Hamilton. The murder is both gruesome and visible to the viewer. The image of David Kentley's death is meant to resonate with the viewer throughout the film. This action creates an immediate disconnect between the murderers and the viewer. The tension that Laurent's refers to is the tension that Hamilton's play exploits. It is a narrative hook to the reader/playgoer because the questionable element of 'is there a dead body in the chest?' subsequently blurs the identification with the possible killers. By showing the murder the viewer is never able to understand or identify with the killer's motives. Their talk of Nietzsche and superior intelligence is rendered meaningless, not that

¹⁹⁶ David Sterrit, 'Morbid Psychologies and So Forth: The Fine Art of Rope', in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2011, p. 166.

¹⁹⁷ *Rope Unleashed* - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2001.

there is any meaning to it or that they should be related to in any way, but in a sense Arthur Laurent is right when he says that the depiction of the killing takes something away from Hitchcock's film, or at the very least alters the meaning of it.

The representation of Nietzsche in the court case, play and film will be looked at shortly but first there is another element to Poe's tale that is very relevant to Hitchcock's film and that is the sound of the beating heart:

No doubt I now grew very pale; - but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased – and what could I do? It was *a low, dull, quick sound – much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*. I gasped for breath – and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly – more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased.¹⁹⁸

The muffled sound eventually grows so loud that Poe's killer cannot take it and rips up the floorboards, thus revealing his crime. His guilt is overwhelming, manifesting itself as a psychotic vision of the beating heart, and this same manifestation torments Brandon and Philip, yet Hitchcock's murderers are plagued by flashing lights. This switch from audio to visual is in keeping with Hitchcock's use of light. The film opens with a street shot in daylight, a world that is meant to be removed from the flat, and thus the curtain becomes a barricade separating good from evil. The flat itself is dimly lit and the curtains are drawn as if the murder could only be carried out in darkness. When Brandon moves to turn on the light, Philip tells him 'no'. The light will illuminate what they have done and thus they will have to confront their actions, yet they are meant to be superior intellectuals who in Brandon's words are a part of an elite few who can commit murder. When Brandon finally draws the curtains the apartment is momentarily transformed from a murder scene to nicely furnished abode. The city skyline then acts as the backdrop for the rest of the film. As the tension mounts, as Philip begins to crack and Rupert begins to suspect more and more, the outside world gets darker. Lights are turned on within the flat at different stages as if to keep the upcoming darkness at bay, but it is there in the flat with them the whole time. The chest is closed and thus the body is in turn enclosed in darkness but rather than Brandon and Philip's guilt act like Poe's beating heart it instead manifests as light.

¹⁹⁸ Poe, p. 120.



Figure 70.

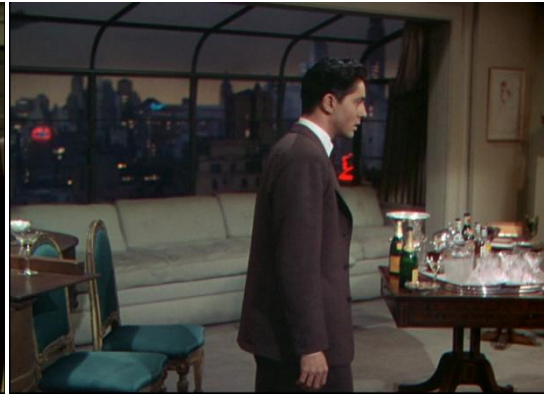


Figure 71.

At the fifty third minute mark, as the guests are all beginning to leave, the sun has set and the lights of the city skyline have begun to turn on. Red, yellow, green and blue lights litter the windowed landscape but it is the flashing red light that appears (see figure 70) as Kenneth and Janet are departing that holds the most meaning. The light itself is closer to the window than the other lights, and appears to be a sign on a nearby building. It flashes on and off in regular intervals, a bright red burst which is then followed by nothing, like a heartbeat. The light is actually an outline of Hitchcock, which was originally going to be the director's way of appearing in his usual cameo role but they discarded the idea.¹⁹⁹ The light is never the focus yet it is continuously present, and like Poe's beating heart it blinks in time to the emotional breakdown of Philip, who like Poe's killer cannot take what he has done.

Rupert's return to the apartment signals the next shift of light effects. Much like the beating heart begins as a low and dull yet steady noise only to rise to a constant violent crescendo, the lighting moves from a small flashing red light, to a manic green and red light display that fills the apartment with hallucinogenic chaos. Figures 72 and 73 below show the source of the coloured lights. They are positioned to the right of the screen and take it in turn to flash.

¹⁹⁹ *Rope Unleashed* - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2001.



Figure 72.



Figure 73.

Figure 74 below shows the green lighting effect, while figure 75 shows the normal lighting and figure 76 shows the red. The lighting strongly recalls Poe's beating heart and as the film builds to its climax; the beating gets stronger and louder.



Figure 74.



Figure 75.



Figure 76.

The green and red colours could have multiple meanings such as good and evil or envy and rage, but whatever their meaning they are fighting to light the apartment,

waiting in anticipation for the darkness within the chest to be unleashed, but when the chest is opened, just as in Hamilton's play, the tension only becomes more smothering. In both texts Brandon tries to convince Rupert that what they have done is justified, while Rupert squirms with the knowledge that it is his influence that has led to this tragedy. It is not justice that the viewer craves, but instead a means to breathe and escape. The flashing lights, the open coffin, the cramped apartment that we have not left for the entire film: it all becomes too much. Edgar Allan Poe creates the same tension and gives his reader relief with his final line:

“Villains!” I shrieked. “Dissemble no more! I admit the deed! – Tear up the planks! Here, here! – It is the beating of his hideous heart!”²⁰⁰

Hitchcock provides the same release when Rupert unlocks the window and fires the gun into the air, an act that Hamilton's Rupert also undertakes but instead with a policeman's whistle. When the window is opened the sound from the outside world enters the room and the viewer can almost feel the air that comes with it. It is as if a cork has finally popped out of a bottle. As Robin Wood writes:

...the moment when he flings open the window and fires the shots is among the most liberating in all of Hitchcock's work: the fresh air, after the moral, psychic, and physical claustrophobia of the preceding narrative, seems almost tangible.²⁰¹

In both play and film, the characters all become mute and physically dejected. James Stewart's Rupert slumps into a chair next to the chest and rests his arm upon its closed lid, while Brandon pours himself a drink and Philip leans over the piano. They know their fate and wait to accept it. It is important to note that it is the murderer who relieves the tension in Poe's text, the beating heart has worn him down, yet in the play and film it is Rupert, as if the flashing lights have finally illuminated for him what he has suspected throughout. Brandon and Granillo/Philip accept their fate but it is not remorse they feel, just resignation. They are still proud of their accomplishments. Before the film fades out the final light colour that flashes over the three men is red.

²⁰⁰ Poe, p. 121.

²⁰¹ Wood, R., *Hitchcock's Films Revisited: Revised Edition*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, p. 357.

The tension may have gone, the façade is now at end, but David Kentley is still dead and evil has still won.²⁰²

Frederick Nietzsche's theory of the superman runs through the Loeb and Leopold case, Hamilton's play and Hitchcock's film. As Poe's short story precedes Nietzsche, the theory is of course not a direct influence, yet the killer's boastful tactics are comparable to the Nietzsche inspired Brandon:

You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded – with what caution – with what foresight – with what dissimulation I went to work!²⁰³

Within the court case, play and film, Nietzsche's theory causes the killing of innocents and creates monsters that believe that they are above the rest of humanity. Loeb and Leopold set out to commit the perfect murder, a notion that both Brandon and Granillo, as well as Brandon and Philip set out to do. It is alleged that Loeb and Leopold were homosexual and this is again another notion that runs through both play and film, yet is never actually uttered. Hamilton rejected the suggestion that his play was based upon the Loeb and Leopold murders, but the number of similarities between the two, coupled with the idea that to admit such a notion in 1929 could have been the death knell of his play, suggests that the two are strongly linked. Arthur Laurents²⁰⁴ also comments that the Loeb and Leopold murders were never mentioned on the set of *Rope* and when he himself brought them up, the topic was dismissed. It was too damning for the court case to be linked with both play and film at the time of the productions. The American people were shocked and appalled at the idea that two young, wealthy, educated, homosexual Jewish men could commit such a heinous crime. The murder of a child, the homosexual undertones and the wealthy status of the murderers would have been a shock to the system in 1924 and once transferred to Britain five years later, attitudes were no different and the same can be said for Hollywood in 1948.

²⁰² The image then cuts to a green credit screen, yet this green is just another façade, probably for Hollywood's sake.

²⁰³ Poe, p. 118.

²⁰⁴ *Rope Unleashed* - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2001.

It is currently worth mentioning two very different cinematic accounts of the Loeb and Leopold murder case, *Compulsion* (Fleischer) in 1959 and *Swoon* (Kalin) in 1992. First of all, both of these films are a part of the ‘Rope-meta-text’ but have not been mentioned until now because they appear *after* Hitchcock’s film. This section of the thesis is specifically looking at the influence of multiple texts *upon* a Hitchcock film, while later we will discuss the ‘Psycho-meta-text’ and will be looking directly at the sequels, remakes and influences that Hitchcock’s film spawned.

Both films deal with issues that Hitchcock’s text does not touch, at least not in any overt way. *Compulsion* is a Hollywood produced film that deliberately promotes a very strong anti-capital punishment message which specifically contradicts the words of James Stewart’s Rupert:

It’s not what I’m going to do, Brandon. It’s what society is going to do. I don’t know what that will be, but I can guess, and I can help. You’re going to die, Brandon. Both of you. You are going to die.

In *Compulsion* the lawyer of the killers, Arthur and Judd, is played by Orson Welles who spends the entire second half of the film trying to convince the Judge, court and viewer that no matter what the two men have done, their murder by the state is not the answer. Welles’ Jonathan Wilk is meant to be Clarence Darrow who apparently argued, in essence, the same points for twelve hours in the real case, ultimately convincing the judge. This message is lost on Hitchcock, who instead sides with Hamilton:

Brandon: (*pale and frozen*) What are you saying? What are you doing?

Rupert: It’s not what *I* am doing, Brandon. It is what society is going to do. And what will happen to you at the hands of society I am not in a position to tell you. That’s its own business. But I can give you a pretty shrewd guess, I think. (*He moves forward to the chest and swings back the lid*) You are going to hang, you swine! Hang! Both of you! Hang!²⁰⁵

Here Hamilton and Hitchcock are both in complete agreement with each other about what the consequence of the killer’s actions should be. In *Swoon*, which deals with the same events and characters, albeit using their real names, we have a queer reading of the murder case, which firmly re-establishes the love affair between

²⁰⁵ Hamilton, p. 65.

Leopold and Loeb which previous texts have all failed to address due to censoring issues. *Swoon* however, while presenting the same scenario, omits Darrow's anti-capital punishment speech and instead sets its finale within the prison where the killers are sent. We watch as Richard Loeb is assaulted and murdered by an abusive inmate while Nathan Leopold serves over thirty years in jail before real-life news footage shows us that he moved to Costa Rica where he continually violated his parole with petty crimes before getting married, having a family and with his death donated his body and organs, which led to a successful eye-transplant. Kalin does not call for sympathy for his killers but does attempt to ground them within society. They are not the monsters of Hitchcock and Hamilton, but rather confused, young and reckless. Their actions are heinous, but to Kalin they ultimately face the consequences. They are not sentenced to death by the state but it is still society that kills Loeb and with him a part of Leopold.

Returning to the actual murder within the 'Rope-meta-text', the motives behind the killings are handled quite differently by Hamilton and Hitchcock. Both sets of killers are similar in their actual beliefs and philosophies, as both believe that intellectually, they are superior to everyone around them and thus the rules that control society do not apply to them. The difference with the two sets of killers is that while Hitchcock distances himself and the viewer from these dangerous notions, Hamilton does not. In the play as they are awaiting the arrival of their guests, Brandon openly boasts about their actions while simultaneously attempting to calm Philip down. They discuss their guests and their plan to flaunt the murder in front of them. To Brandon and Granillo, Sir Kentley, Mrs Debenham, Raglan and Leila are all too stupid to realise that a murder has been committed and more importantly, too stupid to understand the 'genius' of it. This is fairly similar to the film, yet when Hamilton describes Raglan as he enters the scene, the position of Hamilton becomes very different to that of Hitchcock:

*Raglan is very young, fair, simple, good-looking, shy, foolish and good. He has no ideas whatever...In the presence of Granillo and Brandon he is merely, of course, tentative and hopeless.*²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Hamilton, p. 9.

Before Raglan has spoken, Hamilton has placed him within the confines of the perimeters that Brandon has already established, those of an inferior being. Hamilton employs the same action with Leila as she enters the fray. After describing her as having “no ideas” he continues “in this way she never actually commits herself to any emotion or feeling, and might even be thought deep. But she is not.” Hamilton sabotages the characters within the play, deliberately putting them on a lower level to Brandon and Granillo and thus there is no emotional connection for the reader to make, and therefore the reader is at the mercy of the killer’s philosophies, which is the one thing from which Rupert cannot save them.

Hitchcock distances the viewer from the philosophies of Nietzsche by first and foremost depicting the murder. Unlike Hamilton’s audience, the post-war viewers of *Rope* would have been much more familiar with the notions and beliefs put forward in the film, which could also explain why Brandon and Philip are not Jewish like Leopold and Loeb, so a distance between the murderer’s ideologies and the viewer was essential. As mentioned earlier, the viewer witnesses the murder and immediately recognises Brandon and Philip as killers. From this point, everything they say will be lack meaning. The characters of Kenneth and Janet are also stronger and show more free will than those of Raglan and Leila, yet the most telling aspect of Hitchcock’s representation of Nietzsche’s Superman theory occurs when the topic of murder is discussed. Both Rupert and Brandon discuss the positive aspects of murder and how it can be effectively used in society, but their difference in explanations is where the line is also drawn between the viewer and the killers. James Stewart’s Rupert explains the benefits of murder:

Rupert: Personally, I think a chicken is as good a reason for murder as a blonde, a mattress full of dollar bills or any of the customary, unimaginative reasons.

Janet: Well, now, you don't really approve of murder, Rupert? If I may?

Rupert: You may... and I do. Think of the problems it would solve: unemployment, poverty, standing in line for theatre tickets.

Rupert continues to joke about stabbing waiters to get a table in a restaurant, or bludgeoning a landlord to get an apartment, but while he is talking about a theory that he himself would have taught as a teacher, he laughs and jokes with the guests,

because it is just that, a theory. It is Brandon who then takes the subject of murder too far, thus further alienating himself from Rupert, his guests and the viewer:

Rupert: Murder is, or should be, an art, not one of the seven 'lively' perhaps, but an art nevertheless and as such the privilege of committing it should be reserved for the few who are really superior individuals...

Brandon: And the victims inferior beings whose lives are unimportant anyway...

Rupert: Obviously.

From here Brandon discusses (with a stern nature that has evaded Rupert) how murder is a privilege for a few individuals, such as himself, Philip and possibly Rupert. He explains that not only should the chosen few be allowed to murder, but that they would have the intellectual right to choose who is inferior enough to *be* murdered. However, his voracious rambling over the subject upsets Sir Johnstone Kentley who likens his ideas to those of Hitler and also warrants a disgusted look from Rupert who already has his suspicions that something terrible may have happened. Sir Johnstone tells Brandon off as though he were a child and Brandon consequently obeys like one, thus rendering the whole argument childish as well. Raymond Durnat sums up Hitchcock's approach to Nietzsche's philosophy:

Hitchcock's film is serious enough, but not profoundly so, because there is no case for the murderers to put. We're not to be won over, even for a moment, by any stage in their arguments. We're meant to be chilled by their charm and their elegant pseudo-justifications.²⁰⁷

The issue of homosexuality is another thread that runs through the points of the 'Rope-meta-text' and it is one of the first subjects that many critics often discuss when looking at Hitchcock's *Rope*. Poe's tale is not normally discussed for its homosexual undertones, if indeed there even are any, but if we are willing to look past the idea of murder by madness, then there are definite questions that can be asked. For example, we do not know the relationship of the killer to the old man. All we know is that they live together and have separate rooms, yet when he gives his reasons for wanting to commit murder, he has none, in fact the one thing he knows for sure is that he "loved the old man". His subsequent actions of stealthily sneaking into the old man's bedroom at night before smothering him could be the actions of a sexual predator, yet ultimately all we know for sure is that the man is *just* a predator and

²⁰⁷ Durnat, p. 204.

without further knowledge about the man's motives, his actions depicted do not appear to be of the sexual variety.

The label of a sexual predator could however be given to the killers in both play and film but then we enter a rather dangerous territory concerning *Rope* and homosexuality. Do Brandon and Granillo/Philip kill Ronald/David for some sort of sexual gratification or are they just murderers who happen to be homosexual? Within Hamilton's play, the homosexual element is more visible within the language between Brandon and Granillo and then later with Rupert who it can be assumed has had an affair in the past with one of the killers. Brandon often refers to Granillo as "My dear", they bicker like a married couple "we do quarrel about queer things nowadays," and there are statements littered throughout the text that could very easily have double meanings:

Brandon: Rupert. This is nothing to do with you. Granno and I have a certain trouble between us which concerns no-one else. Will you kindly oblige us by going at once and leaving us to it?²⁰⁸

Within Hitchcock's film the homosexual element takes on a more visual tone, yet arguably loses the Rupert-love-triangle element due to the casting of James Stewart.²⁰⁹ The opening strangulation of David Kentley alludes to erotic asphyxiation while Brandon's attempt at opening up the champagne bottle while discussing how he felt when they committed the killing is best explained by Robin Wood:

Philip asks him how he felt; Brandon, his hands struggling with the cork in a manner that evokes at once strangulation, masturbation, and impotence (Philip eventually has to open the bottom for him), replies that his real excitement came at the moment David's body "went limp" – i.e., at the "evidence" of orgasm.²¹⁰

Hitchcock visualises the homosexuality because it is an important part of the relationship between Brandon and Philip. Robin Wood states that the champagne scene 'vividly suggests the inherent shame and frustration that characterise the

²⁰⁸ Hamilton, p. 59.

²⁰⁹ Hitchcock originally wanted Cary Grant for the role of Rupert and Montgomery Cliff for the role of Brandon. However, both actors (who were actually homosexual in real life) turned down the parts because they did not want to be associated with overtly homosexual roles. Yet John Dahl and Farley Granger subsequently accepted the roles of Brandon and Phillip and both men were also homosexual. James Stewart (who was heterosexual) took on the role of Rupert.

²¹⁰ Wood, p. 353.

relationship – a kind of socially imposed impotence.’ To Wood, Brandon believes that society deems him as inferior because of his sexuality, thus he must become the ‘Superman’ to rise above those that would hold him back, prompting Wood to ask the question “is the film about homosexuality as a perversion, or about society’s perversion of homosexuality.”²¹¹ It could be argued that the casting of James Stewart, who Arthur Laurents describes as a boy scout who never had an affair with anybody,²¹² and the way he subsequently plays Rupert destabilises Hamilton’s love triangle between Rupert, Brandon and Granillo. Within the play Rupert is only a few years older than Brandon and there are numerous suggestions that the two had an affair. Brandon longs to tell Rupert of what he and Granillo have done, and in a morbid way, they have killed for him, as if it to prove his theories true. This is not the same for the film. James Stewart’s Rupert is much older and more experienced than Brandon and Granillo, while he is presented as a previous schoolmaster of not just the killers, but of party guest Kenneth and the recently deceased David. As such Rupert nit-picks at the killer’s actions and faults like a schoolteacher and not one of their peers. Rupert’s profession is also changed. In the play he is an arrogant poet:

Granillo: Writing anything lately?

Rupert: (*reflectively*) Yes...A little thing about doves – and a little thing about rain – both good. Very good, in fact...And then, of course, I’m getting ahead with the big work...

Granillo: That going well?

Rupert: Yes. Very. Indeed, it promises to be not only the best thing I have ever written, but the best thing I have ever read. (*He nods his head to the gramophone*) This is rather nice, isn’t it?²¹³

In Hitchcock’s *Rope*, Rupert is a publisher and his bragging (if we discount his musings on murder) is restricted to his declaration that he may marry the housekeeper, Mrs Wilson. Thus the homosexual love-triangle of Hamilton’s play becomes just an affair between the two killers.

The difference between the film and theatrical version of Rupert is amplified by the similarities between the two killers. If on a basic level we suggest that the body in the chest is attributable most to Poe, while the narcissistic murderous intentions of

²¹¹ Wood, p. 353.

²¹² *Rope Unleashed* - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2001.

²¹³ Hamilton, P., *Rope*, Samuel French Ltd., London, 2009, p. 25.

the killers are the incarnation of Leopold and Loeb then the figure of Rupert is where the real fight for authorship occurs between Hamilton and Hitchcock. Hamilton's Rupert lends himself to the playwright's earlier work such as *Hangover Square* which deals with a anti-hero of sorts who suffers from a split personality and wrestles with notions of love and happiness one minute and then a compulsion to murder in the next, while in *Gas Light: A Victorian Thriller in Three Acts* we have a murderous husband who lies to and manipulates his wife into thinking that she is going mad. Sterritt writes:

One gathers from these works that Hamilton had an almost clinical interest in insanity, especially the criminal kind, and that his interest in crime was, conversely, rooted in a fascination with psychological deviance.²¹⁴

Like the similarities between Hitchcock and the British playwrights, Hamilton and Hitchcock both share a 'fascination' with the psychological and not just the murderous side. Hamilton's Rupert is just as psychologically compromised as the killers, with the difference being that Brandon and Granillo have physically put his theories and notions into practice. The similar age and suggested relationship between Brandon and Rupert also adds another similarity between the men and is a further link to Leopold and Loeb. There is no Rupert within the real life case and his character appears to be more of an amalgamation of the two killers yet tinged with the human conscience that Hamilton's flawed characters all seem to have but are constantly fighting to protect.

As shown Hitchcock's Rupert appears to be completely different in every way, from his age, to his profession, to his relationship with Brandon and Philip. Here he is a publisher, a "more 'masculine' pursuit by the codes of post-war America, since it transforms language into business rather than creative art"²¹⁵ unlike Hamilton's poet. Both characters are lame in one leg, the result of excursions in the two world wars that also influences both characters on their views of murder, the senseless act of war rendering the loss of life almost meaningless to them. Yet it is James Stewart who appears to be the real difference (excluding the use of the camera) and the symbol of what Hitchcock brings to the narrative. As already discussed his casting appears to be

²¹⁴ Sterritt, p. 162.

²¹⁵ Sterritt, p. 168.

an attempt at the deliberate removal of the homosexual element of Rupert's character, a notion that Wood, Sterritt and Laurents all agree with, yet we could call into question the image of James Stewart and what he really means to the text.

In Amy Lawrence's 'American Shame: Rope, James Stewart, and the Post-War Crisis in American Masculinity' she discusses that while Hamilton's Rupert is "straight out of Oscar Wilde,"²¹⁶ James Stewart is often described as the all-American war hero, known for his intelligence as an actor, yet Lawrence's reading of Stewart changes Hitchcock's Rupert. Lawrence comments that Stewart often plays masochistic, subversively masculine roles, often carrying an injury, and often finding obstacles that bar his way to romantic love²¹⁷ and that his characters are often driven from the "fear of the exposure of his masculine insufficiency."²¹⁸ Lawrence suggests that *Rope* sets itself up in both narrative and mise-en-scene to eventually deliver a close up of James Stewart as he is confronted with this insufficiency. When Hitchcock's Rupert opens up the chest, he is confronted with the fulfilment of Brandon and Philip's desires, something that he himself could never attain. In *Rear Window* (1954) Stewart is confined to a wheelchair, unable to be a part of the world outside the window while emotionally unavailable to Grace Kelly's Lisa. It is she that ventures into the world and when the killer eventually confronts Stewart, he is unable to do anything about it, ultimately being thrown out of a window. In *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), Stewart again is emotionally unavailable to those around him and when he finally realises the life he has, he once again cannot touch them as his life never was. When Clarence the angel restores his life, it is the people of the town that save him and bring meaning back to his life, not him. In both these cases it is the lack of his masculinity that hinders Stewart. Thus in *Rope*, Rupert is not only suspicious and wary of Brandon and Philip, but he is also jealous. It is not the act of murder or the fulfilment of his teachings that he craves, but the power behind their actions to accomplish something themselves. When he opens the chest he is once again confronted with his own lack of masculinity: he could not have done what the killers have done and he could not have stopped them. Thus if we return to the basic reading

²¹⁶ Amy Lawrence, 'American Shame: Rope, James Stewart, and the Post-War Crisis in American Masculinity' in Freedman, J., & Millington, R., (eds.) *Hitchcock's America*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 65.

²¹⁷ Lawrence, pp. 63-67.

²¹⁸ Lawrence, p. 64.

of Poe's chest, Leopold and Loeb's characters and Hamilton's Rupert, we could essentially attribute the film's Rupert to the status of James Stewart and not a product of Hitchcock. Thus all Hitchcock is left with is the camera.

The final topic of note regarding the 'Rope-meta-text' is Hitchcock's use of the camera. Early television often shot with three cameras in an attempt to create a natural-real life effect. In 1939 there was a BBC TV adaptation of *Rope* that involved Dallas Bowyer (who was Hitchcock's soundman on *Blackmail*) who used long takes to keep the camera constantly focused on the murder chest. Unfortunately, there is very little other information on this production of *Rope*, so little in fact that the British Film Institute merely have just the cast list on record, and nothing else, but it is interesting to see that this use of continuous action is present across three mediums and has such become synonymous with the text.

The continuous take is an effect that other films and texts have subsequently built on, including Hitchcock himself in *Under Capricorn* (1949) whose own timeline would cross rather neatly with that of *Rope's*. Within the documentary *Rope Unleashed*, Patricia Hitchcock states that her father had always wanted to film a play, and Hitchcock's film is generally regarded as a cinematic retelling of Hamilton's play. The use of the camerawork is the first example that is normally alluded to when arguing this point as the camera's long takes, in the words of Rohmer and Chabrol, "maintain the sense of continuity in both time and space"²¹⁹. The film is confined to the one room and the dialogue, for all its differences, still bears an uncanny resemblance to Hamilton's. Yet it could be argued that the camera removes the sense that this is a filmed stage play, and instead more of a home invasion. A stage play is viewed from a controlled distance by the audience, yet Hitchcock's camera is alive. From the moment it slithers through the curtains at the start of the film to its human head like movement when it turns as though something else has caught its attention:

On a storyboard, the film would read as a conventional affair of close-ups, two shots and deep focus groupings. None the less the incessant visual glissando creates, in this context, an appropriately creepy, slithery and serpentine mood, an unpleasant as a softly excessive attentiveness; a Uriah Heep camera.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Rohmer, E., and Chabrol, C., *Hitchcock: The First Forty-Four Films*, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1979, p. 90.

²²⁰ Durnat, p. 208.

Durgnat describes the camera perfectly. Like Uriah Heep the camera acts as though it is doing the viewer a service, humbly showing them around the apartment, keeping them informed of the action, yet it is too eager in its movements, too quick with its thirst for drama. It pounces on the death-mask of David Kentley, on Philip's bleeding hand when he breaks the glass and on Rupert's wound from the wayward gun shot. The camera has a bloodlust and enjoys what it sees within the apartment and in a way it has a relationship with Brandon and Philip as it knows their secret and is complicit with their actions and thus it completes the Hamilton love triangle. It is Hitchcock's camera that sets his adaptation apart from the play, adding a new focal point to the 'Rope-meta-text' and claiming something of the text for his own.

The use of the camera within *Rope* is often used by Hitchcock scholars to distance the film from the play, but what the camera is in fact doing, while not essentially filming a play, is in fact creating a sense of the theatrical. The camera is inventive and exploratory, moving around the stage in a way the viewer never can and this is Hitchcock showing the theatrical in a different light, one that he can manipulate and exploit, yet no matter what he does, it is still a representation of theatre and this is found throughout Hitchcock's work: a reliance on the theatrical.

3.2 Looking for the Theatrical in *Dial M for Murder*

The influence of the theatre and Hitchcock's adaptation of this medium is undeniable, yet as shown, the relationship between film and play is either often ignored or thrust so dominantly into the limelight that it becomes an excuse to remove the theatrical adaptation altogether from the Hitchcock canon. By using the structure of adaptation to reform Hitchcock's work, much like *Swoon* deliberately re-emphasizes the importance of homosexuality within the 'Rope-meta-text', the influential importance of theatre, as it was in the 1920's, is suddenly re-centred and while this first and foremost accounts for Hitchcock adapting stage plays, it also accounts for

Hitchcock's continual use of the theatrical within his work. Referring to the large number of plays that Hitchcock actually adapted, Sterritt writes that:

This reflects his longtime preoccupation with the blurry lines between reality and illusion, manifested in some pictures (the 1930 thriller *Murder!* And the 1950 whodunnit *Stage Fright* are the most vivid examples) by the filmed 'realities' of cinema and the stylized 'illusions' of theatre. Hamilton's play is a theatre piece *about* a theatre piece – the latter is the highly stage-managed party that the villains throw after their murder – and Hitchcock must have found that doubly alluring.²²¹

Hitchcock's fascination with the theatrical does not stop with the adaptation of theatre. Sterritt mentions *Murder!* and *Stage Fright*, both of which are adaptations of novels to which Hitchcock makes significant changes concerning narrative and characters yet one element that survives the adaptation process of both is their use of the theatre. Sterritt refers to the 'illusion' of theatre and it is with this illusion and the 'blurry lines' that theatre creates, that Hitchcock's work is clearly indebted and in homage of. *Murder!* and *Stage Fright* are two examples of many of the director's films that evolve around the stage, from the Royal Albert Hall in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* to the Mr Memory finale in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, it is the element of performance to which Hitchcock is attracted. One of the many motifs that run through his work and through the adaptation model is the 'performance artist'. Norman Bates in *Psycho*, Madeline in *Vertigo*, Roger Thornhill in *North by Northwest*, Johnnie Aysgarth in *Suspicion* and Alicia Huberman in *Notorious* are all examples of Hitchcock characters that play a role that is not their own, often even literally dressing up in the process. They are all characters who have to act as though they were on a stage, some are good and some are bad, but all are a part of Hitchcock's theatre and it this use of theatre and the 'performance artist' that add another facet to Hitchcock the 'Master of Adaptation', something of which is very relevant to his final theatrical reworking, *Dial M for Murder*.

It is easy to see why Hitchcock was drawn to *Dial M for Murder*. There are numerous suggestions and quotes attributed to Hitchcock's reasoning for turning to Frederick Knott's play, but ultimately, the play appealed to his nature and in retrospect it fits in perfectly within his body of work. Donald Spoto states that after abandoning a potential film project in *The Bramble Bush* he "began poring over

²²¹ Sterritt, p. 164.

recent plays in an effort to find something he could film.”²²² Charlotte Chandler writes that it was Jack Cardiff that alerted Hitchcock to Knott’s play after it was broadcast on the BBC before it even hit the stage²²³. Either way, the film appealed to Hitchcock with its elaborately planned murder, its central terrorisation of the heroine Margot and ultimately the fiendish nature of the chief villain Tony. It is within the character of Tony, who recalls previous Hitchcock villains such as Bruno Anthony in *Strangers on a Train*, Brandon in *Rope* and Uncle Charlie in *Shadow of a Doubt*, that Hitchcock found a character that could be as murderous as he could be charming, as evil as he could be clever. Hitchcock, like Rupert Cadell in *Rope*, believes murder to be an art form and while Hitchcock believes in his ability to film the perfect murder, to do so, he requires a character with a particular murderous charm, someone the audience can almost warm to and support.

When watching *Rope*, the viewer is placed in an uncomfortable position where after watching Brandon and Philip commit murder, Hitchcock deliberately creates tension in the notion that their secret may become public. It does not matter if we do not agree with their actions, the tension is still there. In *Dial M for Murder*, on a socially humane level, the viewer will not want Grace Kelly’s Margot to be murdered and instead will ultimately want Ray Milland’s Tony to be arrested by the police, yet there are countless moments throughout Hitchcock’s film where we find ourselves empathising with Tony and his hired assassin. When it seems that Margot’s murder is actually not going to happen, we essentially feel for Lesgate the hired killer and for the predicament that he is in. Hitchcock’s ability to create this tension will be discussed shortly as will the extreme similarities between Knott’s play and Hitchcock’s film and the subsequent immersion of the theatrical into the text. Within Knott’s characters and plot, Hitchcock saw the perfect murder and perfect murderer to film, and more importantly he saw the character of Tony as the consummate ‘performance artist’.

Knott’s play is about an ex-professional tennis player, Tony, who decides to murder his wife by blackmailing a conman to do the dirty deed. His plan is for the conman, Lesgate, to enter the flat through the front door using a hidden key, murder

²²² Spoto, p. 342.

²²³ Chandler, C., *It’s Only A Movie*, Simon & Schuster UK LTD, London, 2006, p. 207.

his wife, stage a break in and then leave the way he came, all while Tony is at a stag party with his wife's lover, Max. However, the plan goes awry and Tony's wife Margot kills the would-be murderer and after the switching of evidence and sleight of hand tricks by Tony, the police arrest Margot and she is subsequently found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. The police believe that Margot was being blackmailed by Lesgate and thus lured him to her flat to kill him. On the day before her execution, Hubbard the detective in charge of the case, with a little help from the American writer Max, foils Tony's plan and Margot is subsequently found innocent.

To create the perfect murder and then the perfect set-up, the stage and its surroundings become vital to the plot. Knott uses objects such as keys, scissors and handbags to great effect. There are intricate stage directions for each, as though they were characters themselves. *Dial M for Murder* is not just about the mental and moral issues that go into committing a murder, but also the physical and visual actions that are required.

In the documentary *Hitchcock and Dial M*, filmmaker Peter Bogdanovich describes a conversation between himself and Hitchcock. Concerning his choice to adapt a play, Hitchcock stated that “when the batteries are running dry, take a hit play and shoot it”²²⁴. This is exactly what he did with Knott's play but unlike his other theatrical adaptations, concerning set, character and plot, Hitchcock left almost everything untouched. He even hired Frederick Knott to adapt his own play, thus assuring the playwright's touch remained throughout. Bogdanovich spoke to Hitchcock about not opening up the play and Hitchcock replied:

No, you must never do that. You have a hit play – just shoot it. Don't open it up, don't try and make it cinematic, because what you do, what you're buying when you buy a hit play is you're buying the construction. It's the construction that makes it a hit. If you change that, then you're ruining the very thing you bought.²²⁵

These comments about never opening up the play can be filed with other Hitchcock quotes such as that he never reads a novel more than once before he adapts it. As shown with *Easy Virtue*, *The Farmer's Wife* and *The Skin Game*, all were very

²²⁴ *Hitchcock and Dial M*. - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2004.

²²⁵ *Hitchcock and Dial M*. - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2004.

successful and all were opened up. As discussed previously the manipulation of a text, novel or play, is a Hitchcock trait. In fact it could be argued that the obtrusive camera within *Rope* also opens up the play as it shows what a play cannot.

A year before *Dial M for Murder*, another Hitchcock theatrical adaptation was released, *I Confess* (1953). Based on the 1902 French play *Nos deux consciences* (*Our Two Consciences*) by Paul Anthelme, the film (like the play) deals with a priest who hears the confession of a murderer who has recently killed someone, but due to his faith the priest cannot say anything to the police and subsequently he becomes the chief suspect within the investigation. The film contains all the usual Hitchcock signs such as the Hitchcock blonde, the wrongly convicted man and the villain as the ‘performance artist’ but most importantly it is the perfect example of a play that has been completely transformed in terms of geography and spatial awareness. The opening few shots involve the camera panning and cutting through an empty French town. The only person we see is Hitchcock who appears at the top of a stairway as he walks from one side of the camera to another. The opening is deliberately very un-stage-like and Hitchcock’s presence suggests a control over the constantly moving camera. It is as if Hitchcock feels the need to go out of his way to show that *I Confess* is not stage-bound, a theme that continues with the film’s action constantly changing locations and with the utilizing of flashbacks, yet the sense of the theatrical is always there:

Many interior sets, for example, allude to the theatrical origins of the film. Without being locations with a ‘real’ stage, many of them are places for public confessions, testimonies and revelations, such as the courthouse... Basically, *I Confess* highlights the performative nature of confession through muse-en-scene and art direction.²²⁶

I Confess is the very definition of a play that has been opened out yet Bissonnette argues that by using locations that represent some form of confession, Hitchcock is channelling the play’s very meaning. It does not matter if the stage is not physically set. Yet after everything that has transpired within the narrative, when the killer makes his final confession, exonerating the priest, he dies clinging to an actual stage. Echoing the death of Jonathan in *Stage Fright* who in the final moments of the

²²⁶ Sylvie Bissonnette, ‘Adaptation as an act of confession in Lepage’s *Le confessionnel* and Hitchcock’s *I Confess*’ in Housel, R., *From Camera Lens To Critical Lens: A Collection of Best Essays on Film Adaptation*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Newcastle, 2006, p. 81.

film is crushed by a stage curtain, the two villains, who are also the ‘performance artists’ of the narratives, each take a bow and complete their final acts. Death is just another performance to Hitchcock.

Dial M for Murder differs wildly to the production of *I Confess* with the director adhering to his own words of merely shooting the play. The construction of *Dial M for Murder* does not change. Concerning plot and character, there are very little differences at all. Max’s name becomes Mark while his role as a crime writer for television becomes one of a writer in general. Minor exterior shots are added as if a character is looking out of the window, while three exterior locations are shot which are not in the play. The first shows Mark coming ashore from the Queen Anne. He has just arrived from America. The second involves Tony at the stag party, where Hitchcock films Tony as he prepares to phone his wife and this is inter-cut with Lesgate’s attempted murder. In the play we hear the exchange involving Tony over the phone, but here Hitchcock shows it. The third scene involves Grace Kelly’s Margot, as she is found guilty by the judge. Hitchcock films her in a medium close-up shot with differing coloured backgrounds as a judge talks over the top. This creates the illusion of her being in court yet it can also be interpreted as a representation of Margot’s mental state. Other than these obvious differences there are only a few other tweaks that Hitchcock makes, most of which are done for practical filming reasons.

The question here, the lingering question over Hitchcock involving adaptation, is if this film is similar in almost every way to the play, is Hitchcock the author of the text or is it Knott? The adaptation structure repositions Hitchcock as a collector of texts, manipulating and building on them to create the next point in the adaptation chain. Hitchcock’s text would not exist in any way, shape or form without Knott’s, to even suggest otherwise is ludicrous (especially considering that Knott is writing the screenplay based on his own play). This accounts for *Dial M for Murder*’s relegation to the group of ignored Hitchcock texts such as *Easy Virtue* and *The Skin Game*, which only appear to ever find a home amongst the adaptation wing of Hitchcock scholarship, yet a lack of authorship by Hitchcock does not mean that Knott suddenly takes credit. It is Hitchcock the adaptor who is responsible for the film and it is through his acceptance and recreation of the theatrical that his fingerprints become most visible.

Dial M for Murder was originally filmed in 3D. According to Donald Spoto 3D was “inspired by the panic reaction to drastically decreased movie attendance in the early 1950’s after television invaded the American home.”²²⁷ The process was very popular for a short time but after three years it had fizzled out. It was awkward to film as it required two very large cameras to film simultaneously and it was also more difficult for cinemas to show, as it required two projectors to run simultaneously to create the 3D effect. Charlotte Chandler writes that Hitchcock was worried that the 3D ‘fad’²²⁸ would fade and ultimately affect the release of *Dial M for Murder*, while Spoto quotes Grace Kelly as saying:

“We all knew at the time that it would never be shown in 3D. We knew it was a dying fad and the film would be released in a normal flat vision, but this was what Mr Warner wanted.”²²⁹

So Hitchcock filmed in 3D and everyone’s fears were realised. Hollywood’s 3D gimmick faded out and three-dimensional showings of *Dial M for Murder* were short lived. Yet Hitchcock’s film is unlike many of the 3D film’s that were released at the time. The main selling point for these films were usually the scenes where something such as an arm, or a sword would seemingly come through the screen and into the audience. These were the scenes that many 3D horror films were sold on, that moment where the film appears to reach out to you. Whether Hitchcock knew that 3D would last or not, what is evident with *Dial M for Murder* is that it is filmed in a manner that makes it perfectly accessible to a 2D audience. Even the few 3D ‘audience grabbing’ scenes such as Grace Kelly stretching out her hand to the audience for help during the murder scene, or the key in Ray Milland’s hand that comes out to the viewer as though they are in on the murder; both scenes appear perfectly natural with the flow of the film.

The use of 3D can also be read as another attempt by Hitchcock to recreate theatrical space within film. Considering how close the film and play are within the narrative, the purpose behind the adaptation appears to have been one concerned with a kind of ‘total re-creation’, as if the experience of the theatre is something that could

²²⁷ Spoto, p. 342.

²²⁸ Chandler, p. 207.

²²⁹ Spoto, p. 343.

be caught on camera. The purpose behind 3D cinema is meant to be to create a form of interactive-hyper-reality, as if you are a part of the events on screen. When Grace Kelly's hand reaches out to the viewer, it appears as if we can reach out and touch her back. This notion is not too dissimilar to the realm of theatre where actor and viewer share the same space. With *Dial M for Murder* and Hitchcock's other stage adaptations, though many are treated differently, they are all an attempt to recreate the theatrical. Andre Loiselle writes:

Filmmakers, I contend, choose to adapt certain plays rather than others as a means to tackle the issue of confinement and constraint in terms of both dramatic theme and filmmaking practice.²³⁰

Hitchcock picks and chooses the texts that fit into his ideology. The biographies of Spoto, Chandler and others all mention that Hitchcock watched *Dial M for Murder*, *Rope* and *Blackmail* etc., as stage productions and thus their selection, like that of picking a popular novel, is for a specific purpose. By adapting a play, Hitchcock is deliberately choosing to recreate "the confinement and constraint" that theatre breeds. Loiselle is here referring to the influence of theatre on Canadian cinema that he believes has always been an issue, suggesting that theatre has often imposed itself upon Canadian filmmakers whether they want it or not. The point however is relevant to Hitchcock because this is not a case of a director that is trying to escape the clutches of adaptation but one that is embracing it, part consciously, part subconsciously and part secretly. Hitchcock's use of the 3D, the same stage instructions, the same spatial awareness of the play and the use of Frederick Knott, are all examples of Hitchcock's attempt to adapt and recreate "the confinement and constraint" that Knott's play thrives upon.

Hitchcock's use of the camera and his positioning and framing of the lamps are two techniques that lend to both the 3D and 2D mediums, with both having dual roles in their meaning. With almost the entire film shot within the small confines of a flat, Hitchcock utilises the camera to its utmost effect. The camera is either constantly moving or filming from a new angle that it has found. Like the camera in *Rope* it moves through the apartment, desperate to be a part of the action and the subsequent

²³⁰ Loiselle, A., *Stage-Bound: Feature Film Adaptations of Canadian and Quebecois Drama*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Quebec, 2003, p. 11.

crimes, yet unlike the snake like movement within *Rope*, the camera in *Dial M for Murder* is more probing. In *Rope* the camera acts as an accomplice, while in *Dial M for Murder* it is more detective-like, watching rather than following, knowing when to keep its distance (figure 77 below) and when to come in close (figure 78 below). These two images also show Hitchcock acknowledging that he is filming a play, and not removing or breaking the “construct” that he deems so important. Rohmer and Chabrol believe Hitchcock wanted “to enclose the actors in a sealed, theatrical world, to give the spectator – the camera having most often been placed in a pit – the view he might get from an orchestra seat”²³¹ By doing this Hitchcock is blurring the lines between film and theatre. Bazin writes:

What is really in dispute are two psychological modalities of a performance. The theatre is indeed based on the reciprocal awareness of the presence of audience and actor, but only as related to a performance. The theatre acts on us by virtue of our participation in a theatrical action across the footlights and as it were under the protection of censorship. The opposite is true in cinema. Alone, hidden in a dark room, we watch through half-open blinds a spectacle that is unaware of our existence and which is part of the universe.²³²

With the constant adaptation and, in the cases of *Murder!* and *Stage Fright*, the re-creation of the theatre, Hitchcock is attempting to bring about the viewer participation that theatre requires. In his novel *Film and Theatre* Allardyce Nicoll writes “the theatre rejoices in artistic limitation in space while the film demands movement and change in location.”²³³ Nicoll’s believes that the differences between theatre and film are deeply contrasting with the emphasis on location and setting being paramount. With film you have the tools to recreate reality whereas with theatre, the set, whether it is sparse, painted or functional, its inner workings are open to the audience, it is theatrical. This ties in with Bazin’s theory about the awareness of the audience. The camera instantly distances the viewer and creates a sense of realism because they are no longer apart of the production. It is like seeing a magic trick but not knowing how it works and thus you just have to assume it is real. Yet with *Juno and the Paycock*, *Rope* and *Dial M for Murder*, it could be argued that Hitchcock is attempting to recreate this bond with the viewer. In *Rope* the camera moves like a snake, roving through the apartment in what Hitchcock attempts to depict as one

²³¹ Rohmer, and Chabrol, p. 120.

²³² André Bazin, ‘What is Cinema?’ in Braudy, L., Cohen, M. (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Sixth Edition*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 422.

²³³ Allardyce Nicoll, *Film and Theatre*, London, Bombay & Sidney: George G. Harrap & Company, Ltd., 1936, p. 173

continuous shot. The camera creates realism but also has the ability to place the viewer into the real.



Figure 77.



Figure 78.

Figure 77 can be seen as a camera angle from the stalls while figure 78 would clearly be from the orchestra seat. Hitchcock is showing the theatricality of the film within these and other moments, yet the camera is not restricted to these shots. Figures 77 and 78 are taken from the scene in which Tony is explaining how and why Lesgate is going to commit the murder. Like the theatre, he is putting on a show. The scenes prior to this have shown Tony to be in good nature, a man seemingly oblivious to his wife's extramarital affairs, of which the audience and the camera have both witnessed. During these scenes with Margot and Mark, the camera is complicit with their affair. It almost moves in time with the two lovers, dancing with them. After we witness Mark arriving from aboard the Queen Anne, stepping onto British soil accompanied by triumphant sounding music, we fade into a shot of him passionately kissing Grace Kelly's Margot. The music changes to that of a more romantic tone and the camera glides around the couple, slowly, as if it wanted to be a part of the embrace. The previous scene to this depicts Tony and Margot acting very formal with each other in the very same living room. They are clearly established as husband and wife, yet this next scene explicitly shows an adulterous affair. Grace Kelly has changed from white to red, innocence to evil and she is in the arms of another man. Yet the music and the framing contradict what we know is happening. When Margot begins to talk of being blackmailed, the camera draws back a little, almost unsure of itself. It then shifts between quick cuts of Mark and Margot to just holding still on Margot as she explains her dilemma as though it is too shocked to move (figure 79

below). When Margot then exits off screen to retrieve the letter from her room, the camera cuts to a view of her from far away, through the doorway, as if it is too nervous to get any closer (figure 80 below). When Tony soon enters, the camera and Margot both act as if nothing has happened.

The detective-camera appears when Tony is left alone. As soon as he begins to act suspicious, the camera begins watching him from obscure angles, including those of a theatrical nature and it is here where the framing and use of lamps comes into question. The apartment is littered with artificial lights and Hitchcock places these lamps in the foregrounds of shots as “markers of spatial relations”²³⁴ to help create his 3D effect. Yet viewed in 2D format these lamps take on a different meaning. As viewed in the images below (figures 81 to 84) the lamps become more prominent as Tony plans his murder.



Figure 79.



Figure 80.



Figure 81.



Figure 82.

²³⁴ Hark, I.R., ‘Dial M for Murder: The Submerged Televisuality of a Stage-to-Screen Adaptation, in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2011, p. 202.



Figure 83.



Figure 84.

Accompanied by jolly music, he turns on a lamp and sits behind his desk (figure 81). This is the first of his many actions as he prepares the room. His illumination of himself and manoeuvring of objects is similar to Grace Kelly's arrival in *Rear Window* as she moves around the room turning on lamps, letting the viewer and Jimmy Stewart gaze upon her. Like Grace Kelly's Lisa, who holds the viewer's gaze, Tony's control of the lamps represents his hold of the situation. The lamps act as barriers, protecting Tony from the evil that he is creating. The entire first half of the film is shot at night and thus lamps are required for lighting, and Tony controls the lamps. Tony is manipulating the darkness and while the camera watches him at every turn, it is kept at a safe distance by the lamps, as is the darkness, which Tony also keeps at bay, like a man wiping away fingerprints, something that Tony literally does throughout this scene.

His dominance is linked to the night, while Hubbard, committed to bringing the truth to light rather than concealing it, only appears in scenes set during the daytime, which constitute the last half of the film.²³⁵

When Hubbard appears he takes upon the role that the detective-camera has played and thus the camera is eager and willing to follow his lead. Gone are the artificial lights as it is now daytime. The absence of these lights and the darkness that they illuminate is indicative of the loss of power that befalls Tony. He no longer controls the situation. His power comes from his ability to manipulate his surroundings and to talk freely and with charm. This comes to a halt when Hubbard

²³⁵ Hark, p. 208.

emerges onto the scene. Suddenly Tony can only speak when spoken to and it is Hubbard who, like the sun that blocks out the night, blocks out the words and actions of Tony. The camera no longer needs to investigate as Hubbard has arrived with the daylight, thus eliminating the use for lamps and the barriers they represent.

Hitchcock's use of light, spatial awareness and the roving camera are also present and correct within *I Confess*, yet *I Confess* at first look appears to lend itself more to Nicolls' view that film "demands movement and change in location" with, as discussed, its sprawling scenes and restless camera, yet as in *Dial M for Murder*, the theatrical comes through the text in such a dominant way, it is as if the stage is trying to reclaim the text. This is highlighted by Ruth's retelling of her past affair with Father Logan. The use of the flashback within the narrative suggests a slightly untrustworthy and dream-like scenario, but this is compounded by Hitchcock's 'shot from the orchestra pit'.



Figure 85.

Figure 85 shows the moment that Father Logan and Ruth meet on their date. It is arguably the happiest moment of the film and a point in time to which both of them long to go back. Hitchcock films the scene as though the camera, as in *Dial M for Murder*, is placed amongst the stalls in a theatre, which is important because it is the only noticeable theatre-camera shot in the film, suggesting that like Logan and Ruth, the camera also longs for a happier past, in this case one that involves the "confinement and constraints" of the theatrical adaptation. The rest of the film echoes the theatrical with areas such as the rectory, courthouse and police station set up as mock stages for the characters to perform on, yet it is not until the finale when the killer, the 'performance actor' of the piece, makes his way to an actual stage, which

after walking amongst the spotlight for one final hurrah, dies clinging onto its edge (see figures 86 and 87).



Figure 86.



Figure 87.

A final note on Hitchcock's use of the theatrical and his adaptation of Knott involves the props that make the play. The narrative of the film and play is built upon the use and movement of different objects. Scissors, latchkeys, stockings and handbags all play vital roles in the plot and it is the way that they are visually shown and subsequently manipulated that creates tension and intrigue. Concerning the film Peter Conrad states that the "outcome depends on latchkeys" and the plot itself is dependent on the particular movement of different items such as Margot's stockings and Hubbard's moustache comb, being placed into a collage, much like the one that Margot works on before her attempted murder²³⁶. Sarah Street argues that Hitchcock's use of Margot's handbag is another example of a "typically playful Hitchcockian use of female clothing"²³⁷. Tony's constant invasion of Margot's handbag, whether it be for scissors or her latchkey, and then even his use of the handbag to have her embrace him, holding it behind his back so she has to hug him to reach it, according to Street is "typical" of Hitchcock. She sites other instances with handbags, such as Lisa's in *Rear Window*, Judy's in *Vertigo* or Marnie's in *Marnie* (1964), and the fact that in each they represent the very essence of femininity and Hitchcock's invasion of it.²³⁸ Street is of course correct about the meaning behind the bags, as are her and Conrad's theories behind the importance of objects throughout

²³⁶ Conrad, P., *The Hitchcock Murders*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 2000, p. 220.

²³⁷ Sarah Street, 'Hitchcockian Haberdashery,' in Gottlieb, S., and Brookhouse, C., (eds.), *Framing Hitchcock*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2002, p. 148.

²³⁸ Street, p. 148.

Hitchcock's films. In *Dial M for Murder* Margot's handbag is repeatedly invaded by Tony. It is the only way that he can be intimate with her. When he steals from her, whether it is a letter or her key, he is essentially committing a form of rape. She has denied him sexually by sleeping with another man and he must resort to groping her possessions and using them in a way to hurt her, such as the letter for blackmail or the key to her attempted murder. These are very 'Hitchcockian' uses for objects, yet they are also very 'Knottian'. All these objects serve exactly the same purpose within Knott's play and it is not as if Hitchcock is alone in placing particular importance on them.

Knott's play contains specific instructions for how particular objects should be viewed and handled. A production note at the start of his play describes within detail how the scissors should be handled within the murder scene. Knott describes how they should be viewed, what type of contraption should be used for the actual stabbing and then even the sound that should be made when they are dropped into a drawer. This particular passage describes some typical instructions concerning objects within Knott's text:

Tony: (*Putting on raincoat.*) We won't be back till after midnight. You may be asleep by then. (*He crosses to desk, taking gloves from raincoat pocket to put them on.*)

Max: (*To Margot.*) You can always leave the key under the proverbial mat. (*Tony drops his key out of one of his gloves onto desk.*)

Tony: (*Picking it up.*) All right, chaps. Had it here in my glove all the time. (*Puts key back in raincoat pocket.*)

Margot: That settles it. (*She returns her key to her zip purse. She puts her purse back in handbag, closes it and leaves it on oblong table behind sofa. NOTE: The back of the sofa must not obscure handbag from view.*)²³⁹

This sequence of events appear within Hitchcock's film, as does the manipulation of all Knott's objects, and even then if there are any differences, it is Frederick Knott who is the writer of Hitchcock's screenplay. Richard Franklin states that you can understand Hitchcock's craft by watching *Dial M for Murder*,²⁴⁰ yet Hitchcock's craft within this film is to use the 'construction' created by another author. The adaptation structure reclaims Knott's authorship but as shown with other

²³⁹ Knott, *Dial M for Murder*, Dramatists Play Service Inc., New York, 1982, p. 33.

²⁴⁰ *Hitchcock and Dial M.* - Dir. Laurent Bouzereau, 2004.

theatrical adaptations, the text lends itself to Hitchcock's work in multiple ways. The motifs and traits of Hitchcock that auteur theory tries to claim are more a part of the Hitchcock 'brand' than his authorship. *Dial M for Murder* was Hitchcock's thirty-ninth film and as shown it is an extremely close adaptation of a stage play. By this point within Hitchcock's work his traits and motifs were established, thus the selection of Knott's play is a clear example of Hitchcock the poacher. Films were marketed on the Hitchcock 'touch' and Knott's text is used to fulfil a marketable checklist.

To further highlight this checklist, the work of Andrew Sarris will be briefly resurrected as a means of showing how for years Hitchcock's work was viewed as nothing more than auteuristic as has been the case with *Dial M for Murder*. In his essay 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962', Andrew Sarris describes the three premises of auteur theory:

The three premises of the *auteur* theory may be visualized as three concentric circles: the outer circle as technique; the middle circle, personal style; and the inner circle, interior meaning. The corresponding roles of the director may be designated as those of a technician, a stylist, and an auteur. There is no prescribed course by which a director passes through these three circles.²⁴¹

Sarris describes the three basic premises of auteur theory and as such he is stating that a director must be technically gifted and proficient at his craft, while projecting a particular signature; a particular set of identifiable characteristics throughout his filmography. Finally there should be something special about his work that would qualify as "the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art."²⁴² Sarris also explains as what he sees as the main problem with auteur theory, that it works when analysing a director's body of work, like Hitchcock's, but not when isolating particular films. *Dial M For Murder* fits into Hitchcock's body of work when it is viewed as the work of an auteur. The excellent camera work shows Hitchcock's technical prowess in abundance. His personal style is shown within the troubled yet alluring Hitchcock blonde; the spare key as the McGuffin; the Hitchcock cameo; and the stylized celebration of murder amongst other things. Sarris describes the final

²⁴¹ Andrew Sarris, 'Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962', in Sitney, A.P (ed.), *Film Culture Reader*, First Cooper Square Press, New York, 2000, p. 133

²⁴² Sarris, p. 133.

premise, the ‘interior meaning’ as some ‘intangible difference’. It can be a whole film or just a moment. He refers to a little sequence within Renoir’s *La Règle du Jeu* that he describes as merely a ‘heartbeat’ but one that is enough to project ‘ultimate glory’. In *Dial M For Murder* this heartbeat could be Lesgate’s dilemma as he is on the verge of being caught by Margot. For a few tense seconds, Hitchcock manages to create viewer empathy for the would-be murderer. We do not want him to get caught, instead we long for him to sneak back behind the curtain where he can commit the murder. It is worth mentioning that this scene is absent from Knott’s play. Here there is no time lapse between Tony calling and Legate waiting, so the sense of urgency within the film is absent. In Knott’s text, Lesgate simply lies in wait for Margot. From afar, *Dial M For Murder* adds credence to Hitchcock’s status as an auteur as it ticks all the right boxes. Yet when the film is picked apart and Hitchcock’s adaptive progress is laid out on the table, the notion that *Dial M For Murder* is the product of an auteur, suddenly calls into very serious question the legitimacy of auteur theory in general. There are limits as to what auteur theory can explain and it for this very reason that the structural model of adaptation is vital to truly understanding a director’s body of work.

Due to the format of the theatrical script and its adaptive nature to cinema, the room for creative input is often squeezed. Hitchcock himself is quoted as saying that one should not mess with the ‘construction’ of a play, as that is where its success lies. All of the plays that have been discussed were successful when they were in the theatres and thus the ‘construction’ of each has remained nearly intact. Some of the British films in particular are not viewed fondly in comparison with the rest of his work, and in many instances critics and theorists bemoan the failure of Hitchcock’s authorship to shine through. Yet as shown, his later theatrical adaptations in *Rope* and *Dial M For Murder* are looked at in a completely different light. The technical prowess within both films is marvelled at, as is the controversial subject matter that lends itself to Hitchcock’s love of the macabre. The similarities between the films and their literary origins are mildly celebrated but ultimately they are overlooked. By overlooking the adaptive process, the notion of Hitchcock as an auteur is a lot easier to swallow. Thus to discuss the idea of an auteur we must entertain the notion that the very process of adaptation is irrelevant to the auteur’s body of work, yet this work would not exist without the tools and materials that came before it. *Easy Virtue* would

not exist without the work of Noel Coward. *Rope* would not exist without the real life killings of Leopold and Loeb. *Vertigo* would not exist without the writings of Boileau and Narcejac. *Psycho* would not exist without the twisted mind of Robert Bloch. Auteur theory means denying history and acknowledging the brilliance of just one, yet Hitchcock's adaptation of plays shows that this brilliance is not so easily quantifiable.

4. The Adaptation of an Author

4.1 Du Maurier and Hitchcock

Just as this thesis narrows its focus from theatrical adaptation to that of novelistic adaptation, Hitchcock builds upon the theatrical foundations of his work and concentrates his adaptive process on the novel, typifying his approach with the Du Maurier films. As such the adaptation of the novel is the biggest influence to the adaptation structure surrounding Hitchcock. The re-creation of the stage is the most maligned and while its effect is felt throughout his work, with theatrical intertextualities weaving their way through most narratives, it is the adaptation of the novel that is most dominant. Twenty-eight of Hitchcock's fifty-three films are adapted from novels while five find their origins within short stories. While they are all adaptations, these thirty-three films are the adapted products of a different form of text. The script of a play is created for one reason, to be performed. It is the precursor to the visual. Thus despite differing greatly to film in terms of what the 'visual' stands for, the play and film share many similarities in terms of audience and viewer consumption. A novel however is completely contrasting. Its medium is one of words, requiring a different set of signs and symbols and subsequently a different form of assimilation by our brains. A play and a film are both intended to be watched over a particular running time. Their consumption is controlled by the author/director while the time-span of the novel is controlled by the reader.

As noted in the Introduction, Hitchcock's adaptation of the short-story will not be discussed in detail other than that of narrative and content and while *The Birds* does not lend itself to say the legal problems concerning the short-story ownership of *Rear Window* or the unrecognisable origins of *Notorious*, like those short story adaptations, its process can be further blurred by the introduction of a screen writer, script re-writes and the open acknowledgment by director and writer that the origin short story has been abandoned (see Appendix II). Further work is needed on Hitchcock's adaptation of the short story medium but for now we must concern ourselves with the appropriation of the narrative, which concerning Hitchcock short

stories often requires just the extraction of its ideas as opposed to the narrative as a whole.

As discussed in the Literary Review, Seymour Chatman believes that the novel can never be faithfully recreated by cinema because it performs actions that cinema simply cannot do and thus an adaptation is merely the director attempting to bypass literary obstacles. Chatman discusses Jean Renoir's *Une Partie de campagne* (1936) and the short story of the same name by the French writer Guy de Maupassant and concludes that ultimately Renoir is not creating his own work, but recreating another's.²⁴³ With the case of Daphne Du Maurier, we do not have a director adapting one writer's piece of work, instead it is the adaptation of multiple texts, which suggests that it is more than the text itself, but rather the adaptation of another author. To be clear, the adaptation of a singular text *is* the absorption of an author's ideas and thoughts, but it is also just relevant to the one text. We can look at an author's work and see what themes and motifs are consistent and present within said text, but by adapting multiple texts by the same author, with the same themes and motifs that run through their work, all of which are present within the texts that are then adapted, the role of the adaptor shifts from that of a poacher of a single text to the assimilator of many. That the majority of Hitchcock's adaptations are from novels and short stories is of no real surprise as this is a common practice amongst other adaptor-directors²⁴⁴ but by returning to the same author more than once, it becomes less about adapting a novel and more about adapting an author.

It could be argued that Daphne Du Maurier holds a greater influence over the work of Alfred Hitchcock than any other adapted author with her novels *Jamaica Inn* (published 1936) and *Rebecca* (1938), and the short story *The Birds* (1952) each receiving the Hitchcock treatment. Each of the adapted films hold a place in Hitchcock history. *Jamaica Inn* was the last film the director made in Britain before moving to America, *Rebecca* was the only Hitchcock film that ever won Best Picture at the Academy Awards, while *The Birds* is considered by many critics to be one of

²⁴³ Seymour Chatman, 'What Novels Can Do That Films Can't (And Vice Versa)' in Baudy, L., and Cohen, M. (eds.), *Film and Theory Criticism: Sixth Edition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 453-455

²⁴⁴ For example, of the twenty-nine films that Steven Spielberg has directed, seventeen of them are adapted from novels.

his Hitchcock's finest films. These three facts and suggestions may appear arbitrary at first but they are indicators of the importance of the three films within Hitchcock's career. Yet when placed side by side, other than Du Maurier's name, there seems to be very little similarities between the three texts.

Hitchcock had built a successful career within Britain. He followed his silent period with a sextet of thrillers that established his name within world cinema. *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Secret Agent* (1936), *Sabotage* (1936), *Young and Innocent* (1937) and *The Lady Vanishes* all added to Hitchcock's growing reputation as the 'Master of Suspense' and thus it is interesting to note that Hitchcock's last British film was an adaptation of Du Maurier's period drama *Jamaica Inn*. As well as clashing with the modern chase thrillers that preceded it, the film was attacked by critics and eventually rejected by Hitchcock himself. In *The Dark Side of Genius*, Donald Spoto digs up unfavourable reviews of *Jamaica Inn*, ranging from London's *Film Weekly* to the *New York Herald Tribune*²⁴⁵. The reviews on both sides of the Atlantic attribute the film more to its star Charles Laughton than the director himself, while such phrases as 'penny dreadful', 'uninspired' and 'lackadaisical' could have easily have come from the director himself as opposed to dissatisfied reviewers. Speaking to Truffaut about Charles Laughton's involvement with the production of the film, Hitchcock states:

Realizing how incongruous it was, I was truly discouraged, but the contract had been signed. Finally I made the picture and although it became a box-office hit, I'm still unhappy over it.²⁴⁶

As Hitchcock states the film was a hit, at the time earning a profit of over 3.7 million dollars. This could very well be attributed to Du Maurier's novel that was a hugely critical and commercial success three years earlier. The film's appeal would also have been aided by Du Maurier's next novel *Rebecca* which came out just before Hitchcock's *Jamaica Inn*. Commercially both Du Maurier and Hitchcock were perfect for each other but there are various accounts of their working relationship. Jane Dunn

²⁴⁵ Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock*, London, Plexus Publishing Ltd., p. 184.

²⁴⁶ Truffaut, *The Definitive Study of Alfred Hitchcock: Revised Edition*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1983, p. 122.

discusses how Hitchcock was a friend of Du Maurier's father and writes in glowing terms about wonderful Hitchcock was for the family and Du Maurier's work:

Their stars would rise together as he took three of her most compelling works of imagination and turned them into iconic works of cinematic art. Her stories would help propel him into Hollywood and immortality and he would make her one of the most famous and high earning writers in the world.²⁴⁷

The symbiosis suggested between writer and director is backed up by numerical stats where for example it was reported in 2014 that Du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn* still sells on average four thousand copies a month,²⁴⁸ yet to suggest that their careers propelled each other is not entirely accurate as Hitchcock was already on his way to Hollywood and Du Maurier was already a best seller. More telling as well is their current standing. Hitchcock is often considered one of, if not the greatest filmmaker of all time, with his work appreciated by critics and fans alike, Du Maurier is not. There are numerous newspaper articles²⁴⁹ and interviews with her surviving family members²⁵⁰ that all suggest that while her work is, commercially, very popular, she has been ignored by the literature community, never winning any literature prizes and has often been critically mauled such as "a hack-writing, best-selling spinner of yarns."²⁵¹

One of the driving forces of adaptation is viewer expectation so *Jamaica Inn* was hit from both sides with fans of Du Maurier who wanted to see her novel on film,

²⁴⁷ Dunn, J., *Daphne du Maurier and Her Sisters*, Harper Press, London, 2014, p. 203.

²⁴⁸ "Rebecca, published two years after *Jamaica Inn* in 1938, still sells 4,000 copies a month." Padraic Flanagan, 'Daphne du Maurier 'overlooked' by literary critics, her son says' in *The Telegraph*, 15th April, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10766444/Daphne-du-Maurier-overlooked-by-literary-critics-her-son-says.html>

²⁴⁹ Du Maurier's literary standing is examined by *The Wall Street Journal* - 'An Overlooked Literary Genius', Cynthia Crossen, 2nd August, 2008, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121762261685605599> and *The Telegraph* 'Daphne du Maurier: literary genius hated by the critics?', Padraic Flanagan, 14th April, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10765991/Daphne-du-Maurier-literary-genius-hated-by-the-critics.html>

²⁵⁰ Concerning the 2014 BBC television adaptation of *Jamaica Inn*, Daphne du Maurier's son Kits Browning spoke for the first time where he claimed that the lack of critical appreciation for his mother's work was due to her popular success with the reading public, a situation that is similar with many popular best-selling authors – Flanagan, P., 'Daphne du Maurier 'overlooked' by literary critics, her son says', *The Telegraph*, 15th April, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10766444/Daphne-du-Maurier-overlooked-by-literary-critics-her-son-says.html>

²⁵¹ Crossen, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121762261685605599>

and fans of Hitchcock who were eager to see him adapt Du Maurier. Prior to filming *Jamaica Inn*, Hitchcock had signed with David Selznick and while (as he comments to Truffaut) he hoped that his first picture would be about the Titanic, it instead turned out to be *Rebecca*. Although according to Spoto, that almost did not happen and another interpretation of the relationship between writer and director emerges:

Du Maurier let it be known that she was not at all pleased with the screen preparation of *Jamaica Inn* that was about to go before the cameras. She required considerable convincing from Selznick and his London representatives that a Hollywood version of *Rebecca* would be more faithful to the spirit of the novel.²⁵²

Leonard Leff states that Du Maurier wept “bitter tears” when she saw *Jamaica Inn*²⁵³, which is in keeping with how Hitchcock felt, albeit for very different reasons. Du Maurier was disparaged by the unfaithfulness that the film showed the novel while the Hitchcock’s grievances were labelled at the studio and Charles Laughton. He expressed similar dissatisfaction with *Rebecca* after fighting with Selznick for the entire production.

Well, it’s not a Hitchcock picture; it’s a novelette, really. The story is old fashioned; there was a whole school of feminine literature at the period, and though I’m not against it, the fact is that the story is lacking in humour.²⁵⁴

These sentiments are further echoed by Peter Ackroyd:

Hitchcock never had a high opinion of du Maurier’s fiction, despite filming these two novels and a short story; she in turn had no great admiration for his work and was concerned only with the financial rewards it gave her. There was a thoroughly practical arrangement.²⁵⁵

It is interesting to note that the commercial success of both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* clashes with the opinions of the respective authors. Both Hitchcock and Du Maurier were eager to disown both films and happily allow Charles Laughton and David Selznick to take all the plaudits. Who indeed are the real authors of the two films? To answer this question the two films should be viewed as a pair. They are both period films, which Hitchcock disregards. Yet they are two of his most

²⁵² Spoto, p. 183.

²⁵³ Leonard Leff, *Hitchcock and Selznick: The Rich and Strange Collaboration of Alfred Hitchcock and David O. Selznick in Hollywood*, London, Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1987, p. 345.

²⁵⁴ Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, p. 127.

²⁵⁵ Ackroyd, P., *Alfred Hitchcock*, Penguin Random House, London, 2015, p. 83.

successful and two that, unlike the majority of his other films, are just as synonymous with the author of the original texts as they are with the director.

The Du Maurier triumvirate is made up by *The Birds*, yet it could not be viewed more differently. As opposed to the two period piece novels, *The Birds*, is a short story set after World War Two. The film is even more removed from the other Du Maurier adaptations, being produced eleven years later, with its geographical setting changed from post-World War Two Britain to 1960s America. It was embraced by both director and critic as a true and authentic Hitchcock film. Unlike the two novels, Hitchcock's *The Birds* is viewed as his own work, adapted from a short story by Du Maurier as opposed to say 'Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock'. Yet it is this writer's belief that Hitchcock's tale of avian horror is far more closely linked to his other Du Maurier adaptations, the author's novels and her work in general than most critics would like to acknowledge.

The influence of Daphne Du Maurier within Hitchcock's work is to be examined with careful consideration given to the role of the auteur. Instead of analysing each of the films separately, Du Maurier's work will be broken down and examined with the intent of trying to understand what makes Du Maurier an 'auteur' in her own right. *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* will be coupled together as they are often regarded as Hitchcock's only period pieces, both of which were filmed back to back over a year. To understand Du Maurier's authorship, other novels such as *The House on the Strand* (1969) and short stories such as *East Wind* will also be discussed as will Nicolas Roeg's adaptation of the short story *Don't Look Now*. The aim is look for the work of Du Maurier within Hitchcock's films, redefining her status as part of the adaptation structure. By examining her influence and, for example, how they approach the same themes and characters we are able to see what Hitchcock truly brings to his adapted works, whether it is something original or just the matter of building upon Du Maurier's foundations.

Hitchcock's adaptation of the short story will also be examined with *The Bird's* falling into the same category as other texts such as *Notorious* and *Rear Window* where it is often viewed that the adaptation of a short story requires just the extraction of its ideas as opposed to the narrative as a whole. It will also be argued

that *The Birds* is more a product of Hitchcock's adaptation of *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* than from the short story. From a psychoanalytical stance it will be shown that Hitchcock's *The Birds* is heavily influenced by Du Maurier's earlier work while also drawing on elements that the director would have possibly put into his other du Maurier adaptations had it not been for third party interference. Despite being one of his most iconic films, often lauded for its originality, it can be argued that *The Birds* is in fact his most faithful appropriation of the ideologies of Du Maurier.

4.2 The Texts

A brief synopsis of each of the texts is relevant, specifically in terms of character names and dramatic narrative changes so that they can be referenced clearly within the study.

Du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn* follows a young woman, Mary Yellan, who after the death of her mother, abandons her comfortable farm life and travels across England and into the bleak moorland of Cornwall to stay at Jamaica Inn with her Aunt Patience and her drunken thug of a husband Joss Merlyn. Mary soon discovers that Joss is the head of a cutthroat gang that deliberately cause shipwrecks, whereupon they murder everyone on board for the sole purpose of stealing anything valuable. Mary strikes up two relationships of note. The first with Joss' brother Jem who is a horse thief that lives across the moors. She is attracted to him and yet hates him for the similarities he seems to share with his brother. The second is with Francis Davey who is an albino vicar from a nearby town. He provides Mary with comfort and a sense of civilized normality that clashes with the dark and dank Jamaica Inn, yet Francis Davey turns out to be the secret ringleader of Joss' shipwrecking operations, and after murdering both Joss and Aunt Patience, he kidnaps Mary. They flee across the moors but are chased by Jem, the local squire Basset and his men. Eventually Jem shoots the vicar and Mary is freed. After discussing the idea of returning to her old farm life, she decides to stay with Jem and explore the open road.

Hitchcock's film follows the same outline, with Mary's reason for coming to Jamaica Inn, Aunt Patience, Joss and his gang all fulfilling the same roles. The main differences occur with the characters of Jem and Francis Davey. Instead of Joss' brother, Jem is a member of Joss's gang whom they distrust and decide to hang. Mary saves him and escapes with him from Jamaica Inn. Mary then learns that Jem is actually an undercover policeman who has been attempting to find out who the mastermind is behind the shipwrecking. In the film, the mastermind becomes Sir Humphrey Pengallen who is the local magistrate as opposed to a vicar. The film combines the rolls of the vicar and the squire Basset and more importantly his role as the villain is revealed much earlier within the narrative as opposed to the novel where it occurs at the climax. Like the novel, the film ends with the mastermind character killing both Joss and Aunt Patience and kidnapping Mary in the process. As opposed to the moors they flee onto a boat where Pengallen is eventually shot and killed.

It is interesting to note that often changes from novel to film are done because of practical reasons, echoing Seymour Chatman's suggestions that films bypass literary obstacles, yet *Jamaica Inn* has been adapted multiple times for television and for the stage, and in almost every case other than Hitchcock's version, the narrative has remained, to a great extent, intact. This suggests that the changes made to the novel by Hitchcock were done for reasons other than that of practicality, which when looked at in reference to his previous sextet of thrillers shows an attempt to turn a period piece into a film that upholds the codes and conventions of the genre to which Hitchcock had attached himself.

Du Maurier's *Rebecca* is about an unnamed heroine who meets and marries the rich socialite Max De Winter when the two meet in Monte Carlo. They are from different worlds and when they return to his fabled estate home, Manderlay, she is immediately out of place amongst the servants and the surrounding grandeur. Maxim is recently widowed and his late wife Rebecca casts a shadow over the new Mrs De Winter's life. She constantly feels ill at ease, believing that she can never replace the glamorous Rebecca that she is constantly hearing about. Following her every move is Mrs Danvers who was Rebecca's personal maid. Mrs Danvers goes out of her way to embarrass and belittle the new Mrs De Winter before eventually attempting to goad her into suicide. This plan is soon curtailed when a shipwreck occurs and in the

process turns up the grim remains of Rebecca De Winter who died at sea over a year before. Maxim confesses to his new wife that he never loved Rebecca and that she was forever having affairs with other men. He explains that he eventually shot her when she told him of her pregnancy with another man's child. Maxim then put her body in a boat and sank it out at sea. The discovery of the body leads to Maxim and his wife reconciling but also to a court case, which eventually concludes that Rebecca took her own life. Rebecca's cousin Favell, who was having an affair with her, believes Maxim to be a murderer and travels with Maxim, his wife, his agent Crawley and the local magistrate Colonel Julian to London to speak to a doctor that Rebecca visited on the day of her death. They learn that Rebecca had cancer and thus Favell and the magistrate are satisfied that her death was the result of suicide. Maxim and Mrs De Winter travel back to Manderlay discussing their new life together when they come upon a red streaked horizon that they know is Manderlay ablaze and it is assumed that Mrs Danvers is at fault.

Hitchcock's *Rebecca* is quite faithful to Du Maurier's narrative with the major alterations being the elimination of a few minor characters and scenes. Yet as many biographers and critics such as Leonard J. Leff have noted, Hitchcock and Selznick clashed throughout the film with Selznick standing for absolute fidelity to the narrative while Hitchcock was concerned with "the static quality of Du Maurier's work, its limited settings, its monochromatic heroine, and its reliance on vague evocations of the past"²⁵⁶ and thus he wanted many changes. An uneasy compromise was struck over the narrative; Hitchcock convinced Selznick that the novel's first person narrative would not be filmable,²⁵⁷ while other changes involved the explanation of Rebecca's death and the fiery climax. In Hitchcock's narrative Max De Winter explains that he accidentally killed Rebecca. He talks of arguing with her and the camera moves as though her ghost is re-living her final actions. Max says that she backed away from him only to trip and crack her head on the tackle of a ship. As Raymond Durnat points out this was a useful way around the Hays Code.²⁵⁸ The cold-blooded killing of a supposedly pregnant woman could not result with the murderer getting away without punishment so the film suggests Rebecca's death was

²⁵⁶ Leff, p. 43.

²⁵⁷ Leff, p. 42.

²⁵⁸ Durnat, p. 167

accidental. The second dramatic change to the novel's narrative is the depiction of Manderlay. Maxim returns from London with Crawley and sees what looks like a sun set only to find that Manderlay is ablaze. We then see Mrs Danvers running crazed through the house before it collapses upon her. Maxim and Mrs De Winter find each other outside and embrace, while the film closes on a burning R. Du Maurier's text is much more ambiguous with Maxim and Mrs. De Winter returning home in the dark only to see what looks a rising sun in the distance:

The road to Manderlay lay ahead. There was no moon. The sky above our heads was inky black. But the sky on the horizon was not dark at all. it was shot with crimson, like a splash of blood. And the ashes blew towards us with the salt wind from the sea.²⁵⁹

Du Maurier implies that Manderlay is ablaze, something that is further enhanced by the narrator's vision of Manderlay as a ghost house at the start of the novel, yet nothing is confirmed. Unlike the passionate embrace in front of the roaring flames at the end of Hitchcock's film, Du Maurier leaves us with no such warmth.

It is with *The Birds* where there is the most dramatic change. Du Maurier's short story follows a Cornish farmer, Nat, who begins to notice that the birds are acting differently. They soon begin to crash into his house and attack at random. He boards up his home for protection and then with his family, listens to the radio report that birds are attacking all over Britain. Soon the reports cease and it is assumed that the birds are winning. The story ends with Nat wondering about food for the future as the birds continue to peck away at his door.

Hitchcock moves the story to Bodega Bay in California and in keeping with an avian threat (see Appendix II) he isolates the attacks to that area. We follow Melanie Daniels as she comes to Bodega Bay to give a cage of love birds to a man called Mitch whom she has only just recently met. While there she is attacked by a seagull, and this is the first of many attacks that bring Bodega Bay to its knees. Melanie clashes with Mitch's mother who disapproves of her while she strikes up a relationship with the local schoolmaster, Annie, who is an ex-girlfriend of Mitch. The school is attacked and while Melanie manages to save Mitch's sister Cathy, Annie is killed. After the townspeople have to defend an avian onslaught, Mitch boards up his

²⁵⁹ Du Maurier, D., *Rebecca*, The Compact Books, London, 1993, p. 397.

house to protect his mother, sister and new love interest Melanie. The bird's attack is relentless and after Melanie is trapped in a room and almost pecked and scratched to death, Mitch decides to drive everyone out of Bodega Bay. The family all carefully and quietly move through the birds that are waiting patiently outside of the house and then, with the caged lovebirds for company, drive away. Essentially, other than the bird attacks and the barricaded protection of the home, Hitchcock's film appears to be an entirely original narrative.

4.3 Adaptation of the Blind Space

Like any author with a substantial body of work, one can look at Daphne Du Maurier and pick out elements within her writing that she favoured and preferred to use. Much like Hitchcock's cameos, his penchant for blondes and the ever-present MacGuffin, one can clearly apply the same crude practice towards Du Maurier, with her love of Cornwall, respectful fear of nature and sexually naïve characters. To reduce an author to such a set of bullet points is ignorant and ultimately misleading. Yet it does highlight glaring consistencies within one's work. Much like *'La politiques des auteurs'* and the suggestion of an auteur's particular visual style or personal stamp²⁶⁰, reducing an auteur to their ever-repeating artistic consistencies is like putting together a part of a jigsaw by starting with pieces of the same colour. To reduce Hitchcock to having a fetish for attractive blonde leading ladies is counterproductive, but exploring his reason for casting the characters they play and what they represent gives them a new larger meaning. In the case of Daphne Du Maurier, one of the main facets of her work was the use of Cornwall as a setting. Many of her novels, such as *The House on the Strand*, *The King's General* and *Frenchman's Creek* are each set in Cornwall as are a vast number of her short stories. Du Maurier lived in Cornwall for most of her life, was a part of the Cornish political party Mebyon Kernow and often spoke fondly of the county:

²⁶⁰ Helen Stoddart, 'Auteurism and Film Authorship', in Hollows, J., and Jancovich, M. (eds.), *Approaches to Popular Film*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, p. 40.

There was a smell in the air of tar and rope and rusted chain, a smell of tidal water. Down harbour, around the point, was the open sea. Here was the freedom I desired, long sought-for, not yet known. Freedom to write, to walk, to wander, freedom to climb hills, to pull a boat, to be alone.²⁶¹

It is clear that Cornwall had a huge influence on her literary work, but looking at this as purely a setting is tantamount to reducing Tippi Hedren to another blonde Hitchcock actress.

The setting of Cornwall plays a major factor within each of the three texts in question. *Jamaica Inn* is set upon the Cornish moors, while Max De Winter's house Manderlay is a stone's throw from the waters of Cornwall, which also surround Nat's farm in *The Birds*. Each of the texts are set in different times, *Jamaica Inn*, 1820, *Rebecca* in the 1930's and *The Birds* soon after World War Two, yet the setting of Cornwall remains the same. Du Maurier presented Cornwall as a beautiful landscape, something removed from the bustling cities found throughout the rest of Britain, yet her Cornwall, while timeless, is also savage. The moors surrounding Jamaica Inn are vast and barren. Mary Yellan finds herself easily lost upon them, surrounded by deep bogs and crevasses, while Manderlay is surrounded by the woodland that conceals it from the world, hiding its dark secrets. Nat's farm is out in the middle of nowhere along the Cornish coastline; it is miles from help. The Cornish waters surround each of the texts and in each they are treacherous, resulting in death and destruction. Mary Yellan is dragged by Joss Merlyn to watch his cutthroat band of shipwreckers light a beacon to lure an unsuspecting ship to the rocks, while the sea swallows Rebecca after she is murdered only to spit her back out and throw Maxim's life into chaos, while Nat watches as the birds group together in formation upon the surface of the sea, resting before their next attack.

The waters and lands of Cornwall are the physical representation of the human savagery that Du Maurier depicts, and while Hitchcock may dismiss both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* and then claim originality in *The Birds*, he depicts the same human savagery and uses the setting of Cornwall in the same way. Narrative changes aside, both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* are visual representations of Du Maurier's period dramas. The buildings of Jamaica Inn and Manderlay are straight out of Du Maurier's

²⁶¹ Du Maurier, D., *Vanishing Cornwall*, Virago Press Ltd, London, 2007, p. 6.

pages and what they represent is equally intact. While both are very different, physically and visually, from each other, both Jamaica Inn and Manderlay on page and screen, represent isolation. In both mediums Mary Yellan and Mrs De Winter are isolated women who are thrust into a new life that scares and terrifies them. They both choose to voluntarily enter their new homes only to then be bound by a nightmare that they cannot escape, a scenario that Hitchcock later revisits with both Melanie Daniels in *The Birds* and Marion Crane in *Psycho*.

In *Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* Tania Modleski describes the power of Hitchcock's use of 'blind space'. Modleski builds on Pascal Bonitzer's²⁶² theory that an off-screen element, such as the shark in *Jaws*, allows tension to build and never allows the physical threat to be tamed or domesticated. Modleski examines this theory within Hitchcock's *Rebecca*²⁶³, stating that Rebecca hides in the shadows of Manderlay, thus never becoming 'domesticated' by either the viewer or Mrs De Winter. The notion of 'blind space' and the power that it can wield is fundamental to human nature. It is the fear of what might or could happen that is truly terrifying, regardless of anything actually happening. The shark in *Jaws* is terrifying because Spielberg hides it at every opportunity, allowing glimpses of it and daunting orchestral music to remind the audience of its presence, yet it is not just merely blind space that holds the shark. Blind space itself has to be contained within some form of parameters and within *Jaws* it is the ocean. The blind space is formed because the ocean is deep and dark and thus hides the shark from the camera. Rebecca is hidden by Manderlay. Like the shark's menacing tail fin, Rebecca's initials pop up on stationary and clothing all over the house, while her name is uttered by guests every now and again and as if further reminder is needed, Hitchcock uses the same ghostly sounding piece of music over Mrs De Winter as she enters new rooms and finds new things which are in fact old rooms and old things that were decorated and arranged by Rebecca. Like the shark, Rebecca is a menacing presence because she is never seen, and while she never physically appears, it could be argued that Mrs Danvers who appears like a ghost throughout the film represents her. She is never on screen for long, and her appearance usually catches Mrs De Winter off guard. She keeps

²⁶² Modleski, T., *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Second Edition*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2005, p. 50.

²⁶³ Modleski, p. 50.

everything the way Rebecca used to, and speaks about her as though she was still alive. If she was on camera all the time, forever in the presence of Mrs De Winter, then she would become 'domesticated'; the fear would be vanquished.

Modleski's reading of *Rebecca* can easily be applied to Du Maurier's text and her work in general which suggests an intrinsic link between writer and director. The fact that critical work on Hitchcock can be applied to the authors that he adapted suggests not only further importance upon the original texts but it also acts as further damning evidence against Hitchcock as an auteur. Concerning Modleski's work, *Manderlay*, *Jamaica Inn* and *Ned's Farm* are all structures that become parameters for blind space to work within. *Jamaica Inn* becomes a prison to Mary Yellan. Beyond its walls she can often hear the drunken cries of smugglers and thieves. Her abusive Uncle Joss stalks the corridors while her Aunt Patience cries in the night. It is the 'not-knowing' that terrifies Mary and this fear is in the blind space all around her. The situation is the same for Ned and his family. Their boarded up farm starts as a small fortress and mutates into a coffin. Ned boards up the windows and doors to keep the birds out, but they are still there, pecking and scratching. They stop their attacks periodically, presumably to rest and re-group like a pack of hunters and then like a pack of hunters they always return. Ned and his family lie and wait. The majority of Du Maurier's short story involves Ned's family waiting. They listen to the birds outside their walls, while they discuss what might be happening to the rest of the world. Ned thinks about how long the attacks will last and how he will feed his family in the coming days. They are surrounded by uncertainty and fear. If they were attacked by the birds then they would have something to try and control, to harness, to domesticate, but instead they are surrounded by blind space.

In the work of Du Maurier, Cornwall itself becomes an extra parameter for the blind space as well as wielding the terror behind it. Each of the structures from Du Maurier's texts is mirrored in the lands around them. The wild moors and ship-crushing waves of *Jamaica Inn*: the hidden depths of the ocean and the beautiful and dark woods that surround *Manderlay*; and the endless tides of the Cornwall sea that play home to an endless number of birds. As opposed to a fear of the unknown, the use of blind space is essentially a fear of the 'known'. Mary, Mrs De Winter and Ned

all know what is out there beyond the space, waiting for them, yet it is out of their control.

In *The House on the Strand* Du Maurier writes about a man called Dick who is given a liquid concoction that allows him to travel back in time to view the past. Within the past he can only observe events, as if he were watching a film, and in doing this he becomes besotted with the lives of the people that he sees. However his body remains in the present and whenever his past self takes a step somewhere, his present self takes the same step. So if Dick walks across a Cornish field in the year 1300, his physical body in the present could actually be walking across a railway line or a main road. Du Maurier literally presents a Cornwall that is both beautiful and enchanting and yet utterly deadly. Like her other tortured heroes and heroines, Dick knows of the danger that surrounds him on these trips, yet he is powerless to the dangers that could at any moment emerge from the blind space about him.

Cornwall means nothing to Hitchcock. Issues of fidelity mean that both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* are set there while *The Birds* is situated on the other side of the world, however, blind space and the terror it hides is the director's bread and butter. It is not Cornwall that is important with Hitchcock's adaptation of Du Maurier, but instead what it symbolizes.



Figure 88.



Figure 89.

Figure 88 is a picture perfect depiction of Du Maurier's description of Jamaica Inn while the crashing waves (figure 89) that Hitchcock shows before they destroy an unfortunate ship show that like Du Maurier he understands the destructive power of

nature. The waves *are* the ship-wreckers and the ship-wreckers *are* Jamaica Inn. The blind space of *Jamaica Inn* exists within Hitchcock's world, yet the terror that Mary fears is different. As a reader we know that Mary fears the wreckers and her Uncle Joss, but there is also an unknown enemy, someone who seems to walk in the shadows, pulling the strings and controlling the villains. When Mary returns to Jamaica Inn late in the novel to find that both her Aunt and Uncle have been murdered, it is as if the thing that Mary has feared has come out of the shadows, out of the blind space and into her world with a murderous rage only to disappear again. When she realizes that it is the Vicar of Altarnum that is the killer and chief villain, she is kidnapped and dragged across the moors. The vicar talks of disappearing with her and it is as if by taking her across the very Cornish moors that have concealed his crimes, he is attempting to hide back within the blind space.

4.4 Make Way For Pengallen

In the twenty-fourth minute of *Jamaica Inn*, after appearing as a helpful and trustworthy knight of the realm, Sir Humphrey Pengallen is revealed to be a villain. A weary and irritable Mary explains to her frightened Aunt Patience and brutish Uncle Joss that she was deceived by Sir Humphrey who cared for her needs before escorting her to Jamaica Inn:

Sir Humphrey was very kind and most obliging. He knows how to behave towards a woman.



Figure 90.



Figure 91.



Figure 92.

A look of terror appears on Joss' face when he hears what Mary has to say. He runs out of the room, grabs a bottle and cup and runs up the stairs, violently disposing of Mary's chest of luggage as he goes. Mary could barely move her luggage chest when she got off of her horse, but here Hitchcock shows Joss pick it up as if it were weightless, only to launch it up the stairs with ease. As in the novel, we are meant to associate Joss with strength and violence, yet when he enters the room upstairs, his mannerisms change. Upon entering, the camera pans down to a piece of silk-like material, it then pans along the silk where it stops on the rather grotesque close up of Pengallen (figure 90) who instructs Joss to get some scissors. The silk-like material is part of a treasure trove that lines the edges of the room. Joss acts like a servant around Pengallen, fetching things when asked and stuttering and spluttering when questioned. The treasure trove is a product of Joss and his men's wrecking but it is clear that it is Pengallen pulling the strings. This outing as the villain achieves two things: one, it removes any element of mystery from the narrative (mystery that was essential to Du Maurier's text) and two, it destroys the blind space.

Prior to his reveal as the villain, Pengallen plays host to Mary in his mansion. Here we witness him surrounded by servants and luxuries of every variety. We first witness him sitting at the head of a very long table where his obviously very rich and very subservient guests are toasting him. He gorges himself on food (figure 91), while shouting loudly to his servants. He makes crude jokes and shows his absurd power and eccentricity by having his horse brought to the dinner table (figure 92). Everything he does and says is designed to draw attention and this is compounded by his size. He is taller and broader than everyone, and at every opportunity his round fat

face is given a close up. The viewer is meant to remember the name Pengallen and when his villainous role is realised, as a threat he suddenly becomes domesticated. This is not to say that he is not a threat to Mary, but to the viewer, he is no longer swimming in the deep dark waters waiting to attack, he is just there, forever present, and his threat, albeit still very real, becomes ordinary and without suspense.

As mentioned previously, one of the reasons for Hitchcock's dislike for *Jamaica Inn* was his relationship with Charles Laughton²⁶⁴ who played Sir Humphrey Pengallen. Raymond Durnat notes²⁶⁵ that despite Hitchcock's protests about Pengallen's early villainous reveal, narrative suspense need not have been hindered as the heroine Mary, constantly entrusts herself to the villain. Durnat believes that Hitchcock's preferred situation would have involved Pengallen keeping his secret from the viewer and thus we align ourselves with Mary, not knowing whom to trust.

Because suspense involves a careful balance of intimations and possibilities, it is easy to see why Hitchcock's unusually precise style requires deft and docile actors. And Charles Laughton, who was not only Hitchcock's leading man, but, with Eric Pommer, his producer, had artistic interests of his own which ran clearly athwart Hitchcock's, so that he wouldn't let Hitchcock photograph him until he hit on the right walk for his character – a detail which, with a director on his own wavelength, he might have mastered much earlier on.²⁶⁶

Hitchcock is often labelled the 'Master of Suspense' yet in *Jamaica Inn* the clashing of artistic styles leads to the destruction of Du Maurier's blind space and thus the suspense. As Durnat notes, the revelation of Pengallen's true nature does not make suspense impossible to create, as shown in Hitchcock's later films *Dial M For Murder* and *Shadow of A Doubt*, however Laughton plays Pengallen as a comical and jovial rouge, who despite his murderous and sadistic intentions, is never at any point close to getting away with his crimes. Durnat may be right when he hypothesizes what Hitchcock would have preferred from his *Jamaica Inn*, in fact it would have probably been a lot closer to Du Maurier's narrative in terms of fidelity yet instead he counters the Laughton situation by reverting to the formulaic style of his previous films. Before fleeing Jamaica Inn, Mary rescues one of Joss's men who is about to hang. The man in question, Jem, helps her escape and together they go on the run.

²⁶⁴ "To say that he was difficult would be an understatement; Hitchcock joked that he was hired not to be a director but to be a referee, judging the bouts in which Laughton wrestled with himself."

- Ackroyd, p. 81.

²⁶⁵ Durnat, p. 163.

²⁶⁶ Durnat, p. 163.

One of the defining characteristics of the Hitchcock thrillers that preceded *Jamaica Inn* was the unlikely coupling of the hero and heroine to thwart a particular wrong. Throughout his career Hitchcock used the notion of the male/female odd couple fighting crime. Whatever the plot or narrative, the hero and heroine would usually mistrust each other at first and belittle one another, before eventually overcoming their differences such as in *Young and Innocent* and *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. In other films such as *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *Torn Curtain*, the couple is already romantically linked yet broken, and thus they have to overcome their existing notions of one another and come together as one unit to fight whatever evil awaits them. The hero and heroine need each other to survive.

Charles Barr's negative criticism of *Jamaica Inn* is centred on Hitchcock's choice of material that is so far removed from his previous sextet of thrillers but also on his attempt to return to them. He describes the various elements of the film that appear 'Hitchcockian' such as the aforementioned pairing together of a hero and heroine, their tentative romance, the fact that one is rescued at the start by the other, the condensing of narrative time from several months to a few days and the exposure of the villain at the end which is followed by his death from falling from a great height.²⁶⁷ Barr even comments on the familiar actors used, but even with all these 'Hitchcockian' elements, to Barr "it all sounds more interesting on the page than it is on the screen."²⁶⁸ As Yacowar shows in his account of the film, the critical reviews at the time were also all scathing.²⁶⁹ Here we have a case of an incredibly popular director making a film that includes all the 'Hitchcockian' elements that have made his other films so critically successful, yet here fails to hit the mark. Unlike the theatrical adaptations that are often marginalized because of their adherence to fidelity and thus their relationship to the original author, *Jamaica Inn* is often criticized for just being 'bad'. Five of the sextet thrillers were adaptations (*The Man Who Knew Too Much* was an original screenplay) while five of the films were written by Charles

²⁶⁷ Charles Barr, 'Blackmail: Charles Bennett and the Decisive Turn' in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D., (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2011, p. 203-204.

²⁶⁸ Barr, *Blackmail: Charles Bennett and the Decisive Turn*, p. 204.

²⁶⁹ Yacowar quotes *Film Weekly* (May 20, 1939) which refers to the film as a "penny dreadful" that lacks in "accumulative suspense" and "dramatic unity", while the *New York Motion Picture Herald* (May 27, 1939) stated that Hitchcock fans would "find little directional subtlety" and that unlike his other films, *Jamaica Inn* was "rather straightforward." – Maurice Yacowar, *Hitchcock's British Films*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 2010, p. 197-198.

Bennett (the screenplay of *The Lady Vanishes* was written by Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder). All of the original source novels on which the sextet thrillers are based contain most of the elements that are considered to be ‘Hitchcockian’ while it can be argued that *The Man Who Knew Too Much* draws its ‘Hitchcockian’ elements from *Blackmail*, *Murder*, *Number Seventeen* and other previous films, creating a collage of Hitchcock’s best moments and then a narrative to fit them. The point being that Hitchcock picked and chose texts that not only would fit into his growing brand of ‘Hitchcock type films’ but that also already contained ‘Hitchcockian’ elements, thus *Jamaica Inn* is an example of, in the eyes of the critics, poaching gone wrong.

In Du Maurier’s *Jamaica Inn*, Jem is Joss’ semi-estranged brother who lives upon the moors. When Mary meets him she is both terrified and aroused by him. He is a part of the moors and embodies the spirit of Cornwall that Du Maurier presents, deadly but beautiful. He is a horse thief and shares many of his brother’s dark tendencies yet it is he that saves Mary on many occasions, becoming more human with every act. It is he that eventually informs the local magistrate of his brother’s crimes and it is he that fires the fateful shot that kills the Vicar and saves Mary. When the dust has settled Mary decides to abandon her plans of going back to her childhood home where she lived before Jamaica Inn and instead accompany Jem on the road to adventure and uncertainty:

‘If you come with me it will be a hard life, and a wild one at times, Mary, with no bidding anywhere, and little rest and comfort. Men are ill companions when the mood takes them, and I, God knows, the worst of them. You’ll get a poor exchange for your farm, and a small prospect of the peace you crave.’

‘I’ll take the risk, Jem, and chance your moods.’

‘Do you love me, Mary?’

‘I believe so, Jem.’²⁷⁰

Du Maurier’s Jem is from the blind space that Mary finds so terrifying and their eventual union results in the domestication of her fear of the unknown. Hitchcock’s Jem is not a real shipwrecker, instead he is an undercover ‘officer of the law’ intent on exposing the ringleader behind the gang’s murderous crimes. He is another example of the Hitchcock ‘performance artist’, further proof of the influence of the theatrical within the director’s work. Once his true identity is known his class

²⁷⁰ Du Maurier, D., *Jamaica Inn*, Virago Press, London, 2003, p. 301.

status dramatically changes. His clothes and accent both undergo a dramatic shift from Cornish pirate to English gentlemen and his relationship with Mary becomes something different. When Mary rescues him she believes him to be another shipwrecker yet he saves her, fleeing with her to the caves and beaches of the Cornish coast. Despite his help she still does not trust him and attempts to leave on numerous occasions. This is the same odd couple pairing that Hitchcock has used before. Jem and Mary are from different worlds yet they are bound together by the same cause recreating the formula that Hitchcock was comfortable with, a formula that is found throughout the adaptation model. Every text influences the next and the negative criticism of *Jamaica Inn* is arguably the consequence of too many adapted influences.

The death of Pengallen is a further example of Hitchcock's narrative being buried under multiple intertextualities. When Pengallen kidnaps Mary he takes her to the docks as opposed to the moors of the novel. This allows Pengallen the opportunity to show his stupidity on a grand scale. He takes her into the bowels of a ship where he believes they will escape together. While she is tied up Pengallen, while caressing and hugging her, explains that he is going to take her to Paris and shower her with gifts. She begins to cry and Pengallen gets angry, puffs up his chest and says:

Be beautiful. Be as hard as nails if you like, but you must be beautiful. You will have to be hard now. The age of chivalry is gone, the glory of Europe is...

As Pengallen speaks the camera zooms in on him and Mary, who is in tears on her knees, disappears out of picture. His voice builds with anger and as he is in the middle of what appears to be an important speech Hitchcock cuts to the outside where Jem is leading an army of law enforcement to Mary's rescue. Pengallen is cut off mid-sentence yet it feels as if it is Laughton that Hitchcock is actually cutting off. Mary then screams out of the window, enforcing her importance in the odd couple partnership and then flees out of the room. Pengallen eventually ends up atop the mast of the ship where an audience of spectators are gathered beneath him:

What are you all waiting for? A spectacle? You shall have it. And tell your children how the great age ended. Make way for Pengallen!

Pengallen proclaims this from atop the mast before jumping to his death. He has the final word and is the master of his own destiny. His words, coupled with his earlier line about ‘the age of chivalry’ are romanticized notions and are in keeping with his character, yet they are not the final words of the film. After he falls to his death Jem takes Mary in his arms and leads her off the boat and slowly off screen. On their way they pass Pengallen’s long-suffering butler Chadwick who has a look of shock on his face. He watches the young couple disappear off screen, which echoes the departure of Du Maurier’s Jem and Mary who leave together, and then turns towards the camera as he hears, as if shouting from hell, Pengallen’s cries of “Chadwick! Chadwick!” Hitchcock makes sure that the final thing that we remember from his film are the nauseating cries of Pengallen, not Mary and Jem leaving together, not Pengallen’s speech and death, but the loud and obnoxious calls of its main star, which it seems echoes Hitchcock’s own memories of the film. Rather than the deservedly muted death of Du Maurier’s chilling albino sadist, Hitchcock’s finale finds itself at loggerheads with Laughton’s dominant personality, Hitchcock’s need to bury that personality and the attempt at squeezing it all around a ‘Hitchcockian’ ending.

4.5 *East Wind, Don’t Look Now* and the Psychosexual Narrative

An interesting clash that occurs between Du Maurier and Hitchcock is how each of them perceives what is important to their work. Du Maurier’s exploitation of Britain and the rural vastly differs to Hitchcock and his use of the transatlantic and the urban. Yet despite these differences, Hitchcock returned to Du Maurier. Embedded within her love of Britain, hidden upon the moors and within the wild Cornish seas, Hitchcock found characters tainted by danger and usually some form of either psychosis or sexual perversion thus he found a writer that fit his body of work more than any other. In *Daphne du Maurier: Haunted Heiress* Nina Auerbach describes Du

Maurier's literature as filled with "fragile protagonists", "haunted men" and "trapped women,"²⁷¹ she could very easily have been describing the work of Hitchcock.

In the short story *East Wind*, Daphne du Maurier tells of the island of St. Hilda where only seventy people live, undisturbed by nineteenth century society, they live a peaceful life. Guthrie and Jane are a married couple that both long for something different within their lives. Separately they long to leave the island and explore the sea, free of their toil and commitments. One day an East wind begins to blow and with it arrives a brig full of exotic looking fisherman. The entire island is besotted with their very presence and all social conventions break down. Over the next few days the sailors drink and dance with the islanders who have never experienced this carefree way of life. Guthrie loses himself in drink, while his wife is seduced by one of the sailors. She gives herself to him on the cliff top while the East wind savagely blows all around. Guthrie is told by the other sailors of his wife's actions before being beaten by them. Guthrie then runs home where he waits, axe in hand, for his wife. When she arrives in the morning he hits her in the head with the axe and still drunk, he passes out. He awakens with no memory of his actions. He finds the body of his wife nearby and then notices that the ship has gone and with it the East wind.

East Wind is a good example of the sexual fears and dangers that embody Du Maurier's work. Much like the blind space within Hitchcock's films, Du Maurier's texts are filled with characters that long for a sexual connection with another, yet the consequences of this longing are always treacherous. Du Maurier describes Guthrie and Jane lying in bed together:

They undressed quietly and lay beside each other in the narrow bed without a word. He could feel the warmth of her body, but his heart was not with her. His thoughts left his form, imprisoned there at her side, and fled into the night. She felt him go, yet minded not. She put away his cold hands from her, and gave herself to her own dreams, where he could have no entrance.

Thus they slept together in each other's arms, yet separately; like dead things in a grave, their souls long vanished and forgotten.²⁷²

²⁷¹ Auerbach, N., *Daphne du Maurier: Haunted Heiress*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2002, pp. 101-02.

²⁷² Daphne du Maurier, *The Doll: Short Stories*, London, Virago Press, 2011, p. 5-6.

The island of St. Hilda is essentially the 'island of Cornwall'. The people are calm and peaceful, they are all fishermen, and they are surrounded by a wild landscape. In Guthrie and Jane we have two characters who believe that they are missing something from their lives, much like the narrator in *Rebecca* before she marries Max and like Mary Yellan before she sets off for Jamaica Inn. Both Guthrie and Jane look towards the deep blue waters around them for fulfilment, yet the waters turn wild and bring the sailors, ultimately bringing about carnal desires and murderous violence:

'Guthrie,' she screamed, 'Guthrie, let me alone, let me alone.' She spread her hands in supplication, but he pushed them aside and brought the axe down upon her skull. She fell to the ground, twisted, unrecognizable, ghastly. He leant over her, peering at her body, breathing heavily. The blood ran before his eyes.²⁷³

The savage attack is mirrored by the wild winds that rage against the island, which keep up their onslaught while the sailors are ashore, and then dissipate when they leave. The metaphor could not be more obvious and this same situation is illustrated throughout Du Maurier's work. Concerning a Du Maurier collection of short stories that *East Wind* can be found in, Polly Samson writes:

The young du Maurier's preoccupations hang close to the surface in many of the earliest stories, and certainly they're the ones in this collection that I found the most intriguing. The fanatical love of a man for an unattainable woman, sexual shame and sexual exploitation, the opposing needs of solitude and sociability; all the themes of her late great novels in embryonic form.²⁷⁴

While echoing the narratives of *Vertigo* and *Marnie*, this description presents another similarity between the writer and director, namely their use of the psychosexual. Within Du Maurier's work the role of the female and psychosexual problems that she faces are a defining characteristic. Her short stories are often very blunt with their message, with characters facing both sexual gratification and tragedy within the same short space. Her novels in many ways hold the same themes of longing and loss when concerning the sexual development of the main protagonists but much as a novel is more expansive and explorative than a short story, so are her characters. Within this psychosexual structure Du Maurier's characters are never able to achieve a normal relationship without sacrifice, as if the need for another person's

²⁷³ Du Maurier, *The Doll: Short Stories*, p. 12.

²⁷⁴ Polly Samson, 'Introduction' in Du Maurier, D., *The Doll: Short Stories*, Virago, London, 2011, p. viii.

companionship is not a straightforward practice. Mary Yellan must overcome the violent tendencies of Joss Merlyn and wreckers of Jamaica Inn before she can be with Jem, while Mrs De Winter has the spectre of Rebecca and the malicious Mrs Danvers to get past before she can have a fulfilling relationship with Max. It is this structure that will be examined in relation to Hitchcock with particular attention paid to the role of the woman as, like Du Maurier, Hitchcock's treatment of the female and her desires are often the target of major theoretical debate.

In *The Woman Who Knew Too Much* Tania Modleski discusses Hitchcock and feminist theory. Building on Laura Mulvey's essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Modleski uses psychoanalytical feminist theory to deconstruct the work of Hitchcock. Amongst many arguments she examines the role of the female spectator, while also examining the role of male identification to femininity. Like many theorists Modleski is transfixed with Hitchcock's treatment of female characters and the tribulations that they seem to have to go through. There is often a matriarch such as Mrs. Whittaker in *Easy Virtue* or Lydia Daniels in *The Birds* acting as a barrier and suppressing the heroine's sexual desires, while it is often a woman that suffers when the male is both fascinated and threatened by his bisexual desires,²⁷⁵ such as Bruno's affection for Guy Haines and murder of Miriam in *Strangers on a Train*. In the case of Du Maurier, Modleski also discusses the notion of the Electra complex and by association the Oedipal complex, both of which are identifiable within Hitchcock's work. Modleski is in fact commentating on Raymond Durnat's reading of *Rebecca*:

The film is a diffuse, but effective, version of the Oedipus complex, seen through a daughter's viewpoint rather than from a son's. For the heroine fulfils the archetypal female Oedipal dream of marrying the father-figure, who has rescued her from the tyranny of the domineering old woman (i.e. mother). But in doing so she has to confront the rival from the past, the woman who possessed her father first, who can reach out and possess him once again.²⁷⁶

As Modleski comments,²⁷⁷ Durnat is actually referring to the Electra complex which is the daughter's psychosexual battle with the mother for possession of the father. This is an example of a particular psychoanalytical reading that can be found in both Hitchcock and Du Maurier. For all of the disowning that Hitchcock did

²⁷⁵ Modleski, p. 10.

²⁷⁶ Durnat, p. 168.

²⁷⁷ Modleski, p. 44.

throughout his career of both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca*, from a psychological standpoint both films fit perfectly into the Hitchcock canon. What should also be noted as well, which Modleski and other critics have commented on, is that the readings applied to Hitchcock's work, whether it be feminist, voyeuristic or another, are often self-reflexively implied by the director himself. Hitchcock's use of the camera in such instances as the open window in *Rear Window* and the peephole and shower scene in *Psycho*, are deliberate comments on the male gaze and on voyeuristic viewing pleasure. Hitchcock returned to Du Maurier's work more than any other author as he identified with her use of character and sex and this fed into his artistic process.

Concerning Modleski's writing on male identification with female identity, within Du Maurier's short story *Don't Look Now*, the character of John embodies the same problems that Hitchcock's male protagonists often face. John and his wife Laura escape to Venice to recover after the death of their young daughter, however once there they meet two ladies, one of which is blind and claims to be psychic. She tells the couple that she sees their daughter with them and that John also has the power to see her. At the same time there is a rash of violent murders in the city. John laughs off the psychic and instead tries to comfort his grief-stricken wife with shopping and city sights. In 'Don't Look Now: Disguised Danger and Disabled Women in Daphne du Maurier's Macabre Tales' Maria Purves states that within Du Maurier's work, sense deprived women often have psychic powers and within *Don't Look Now* the blind psychic's sense that John has the power is directly related to this own femininity. However, John dismisses Laura's anguish as feminine weakness and in doing so he doesn't embrace his own femininity, thus never embracing his psychic power.²⁷⁸ John misinterprets the vision of his daughter and is instead killed by a murderous female dwarf.

In adapting the short story Nicolas Roeg, while making several changes to the Du Maurier's narrative, embraces the relationship between the feminine and psychic power that Du Maurier depicts. His changes not only emphasise the ideologies within

²⁷⁸ Maria Purves, 'Don't Look Now: Disguised Danger and Disabled Women in Daphne du Maurier's Macabre Tales' in Anolik, R.B. (ed.), *Demons of the Body and Mind: Essays on Disability in Gothic Literature*, McFarland and Co Inc., Jefferson, 2010, p. 190-191.

Du Maurier's text, but build upon them. For example, instead of John and Laura going on holiday to Venice, they travel there for John's work, which is historical restoration:

His concern with restoring cathedrals allows Roeg to extend the decadence to art and religion – the world of the spirit – both of which are more closely connected to the supernatural.²⁷⁹

The restoration of the cathedral ties in with many of Du Maurier's themes while being a symbol for John's lack of foresight. He cannot fix the cathedral, which is the physical embodiment of the spiritual, and thus he cannot fix himself.

Roeg's adaptation of Du Maurier, while adhering to many of the conventions of the horror and suspense genres, is still at heart Du Maurier's narrative. This is not a question of who is the 'real' author, but instead an example of an adaptation that builds on the original text, embracing what it represents and uses cinema to explore and exploit the views of its original author, in this case Du Maurier. This example shows that the adaptation of Du Maurier's work is not just a practice of transferring the motifs and traits of a narrative but instead is about the absorption and manipulation of the author's beliefs. Du Maurier's world which is full of psychosexual problems that are confronted by her "fragile protagonists", "tormented men" and "trapped women" is captured by Roeg and is what attracts Hitchcock. Whether it fits critically or commercially, the work of Du Maurier strengthens the 'Hitchcock' structure because the two artists are of a symbiotic nature, intertwined in the often-dark spirit of their narratives, their depiction of damaged characters and their embracement of the psychosexual.

4.6 Powerless Protagonists

Earlier in the chapter when the difference in narratives are discussed, the murder, or more accurately, the accidental death of Hitchcock's Rebecca is explained,

²⁷⁹ Marsha Kinder and Beverly Houston, 'Seeing is Believing: The Exorcist and Don't Look Now' in Waller, G.A. (ed.), *American Horrors: Essays on the Modern American Horror Film*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1987, p. 56.

including reference to Durgnat's suggestion that it was a useful way around the Hays code to not have Laurence Olivier kill an unarmed pregnant woman. As David Boyd comments, Maxim de Winter was not the first literary character to be stripped of murderous actions:

Maxim is only one of a series of murderers in Hitchcock's sources – along with Mr. Sleuth in Marie Belloc Lowndes's *Lodger*, Johnny Aysgarth in Frances Iles's *Before the Fact*, and Guy Haines in Patricia Highsmith's *Strangers on a Train* – who found themselves exonerated on their way to the screen. None of these changes was Hitchcock's doing; indeed he never tired of complaining in interviews of the decisions forced upon him either by the censors, as with *Rebecca*, or by studio executives, as with *The Lodger* and *Suspicion*, who found it unthinkable that matinee idols such as Ivor Novello and Cary Grant should play murderers.²⁸⁰

Boyd then states that by stripping these men of their 'murders' they then join the group of falsely accused Hitchcock protagonists. Now whether Hitchcock did not have any say within the script changes is unclear however Boyd's suggestion that the literary murderers evolve to join Hitchcock's unlucky gang of protagonists is of sound thinking, but it is not the only reading. Each of the murderers within the novels complete their action of violence for different reasons, but what it ultimately gives all of them, is power.

"If I had a child, Max," she said, "neither you, nor anyone in the world, would ever prove that it was yours. It would grow up here in Manderlay, bearing your name" . . . She turned round and faced me, smiling, one hand in her pocket, the other holding her cigarette. When I killed her she was smiling still. I fired at her heart. The bullet passed right through. She did not fall at once. She stood there, looking at me, that slow smile on her face, her eyes wide open. . . .²⁸¹

Rebecca's constant infidelities and affairs belittle Max in every way. He has no control over her and no power. Her affairs with everyone but him lead to his impotence. Her murder is an explosion of rage that has built up within him until he could not contain himself. By murdering Rebecca he takes back the power that she has taken from him, he cures his impotence and is able to go out and seek a new sexual partner. By removing this act of murder, Hitchcock places Maxim within a state of helplessness. He is unable to take the power back from Rebecca and therefore his burial of her at sea, rather than being an attempt to cover his tracks so that he can begin his new life, is in fact just that, a burial. It is as if Hitchcock's Maxim is still

²⁸⁰ David Boyd, 'The Trouble with Rebecca', in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, Albany, New York Press, 2011, p. 125.

²⁸¹ Du Maurier, Rebecca, pp. 292-293.

under Rebecca's power and still giving her what she wants, a burial in her favourite boat, on the sea that she loved. As briefly discussed in the previous chapter we can view Patricia Highsmith's Guy Haines in the same way. By giving in to the pressure from Bruno and murdering his father, Guy completes the pact with Bruno, consummating their pseudo-homosexual relationship by murdering Bruno's father; he is essentially accepting the murder of his unfaithful wife Miriam as his own. In doing this, like Du Maurier's Maxim, his power is restored and impotence cured. Hitchcock's Guy Haines chooses against murdering Bruno's father and thus the narrative alters and becomes one where Bruno attempts to frame Guy for Miriam's murder, an act that Bruno refers to as 'your murder'. Bruno here is attempting to transfer the power back to Guy who, until he accepts his responsibility, will remain powerless and impotent over the memory of Miriam.

By removing the act of murder from Maxim and Guy, they essentially become a part of that *other* group of Hitchcock protagonists, those who have been castrated. This includes Scottie in *Vertigo*, chasing the memory of a dead woman around San Francisco while attempting to overcome a paralyzing fear of heights and L.B. Jefferies from *Rear Window*, who, due to a broken leg and confinement to a wheelchair, is powerless to stop the murderous actions of his neighbour and is unable to be physical with his girlfriend and thus projects his desires onto the different women that he can see from his window. If we consider the sane side of Norman Bates's personality to be the protagonist of *Psycho* then he could also join this group of damaged heroes.

The male protagonist role within *Jamaica Inn* is in many ways a complete inversion of the adaptation of Maxim de Winter. Within Du Maurier's novel Jem Merlyn would be the closest character to a male protagonist despite not appearing until a quarter of the way through the novel and then only sporadically throughout. When Mary first meets him she does not know that he is Joss' brother and is disgusted by the way he behaves:

What a vile breed they were, then, these Merlyns, with their studied insolence and their coarseness, their rough brutality of manner this Jem had the same streak of cruelty as his brother, she could see it in the shape of his mouth. Aunt Patience had said he was the worst of

the family. Although he was head and shoulders smaller than Joss, and half the breadth, there was certain strength about him that the elder brother did not possess.²⁸²

Du Maurier's Jem is deliberately tarnished with the same abusive and villainous brush as his brother. He is a horse thief that lives alone on the moors, and like Mary, the reader is not meant to know whether to trust him or not. Eventually Mary learns that Jem is not like her brother, he is still a thief, but he appears trustworthy, and ultimately she is attracted to him. The evolution of his character is dependent upon Mary who, viewing him as a surrogate for his brother Joss, can tame the villain out of him. When Mary leaves her home at the start of the novel, she is leaving behind her dead mother. She grew up without a father and when she arrives at Jamaica Inn it is her Aunt Patience's husband Joss who becomes the new father figure. When he becomes violent, emotionally, physically and sexually, she seeks out another father and finds Francis Davey, who at least appears to be gentle and caring until it is revealed that he is the mastermind behind the smuggling ring. When Joss saves Mary from the clutches of Francis Davey, killing him in the process, he achieves the same power that Maxim does and fulfils Mary's need for a father figure.

4.7 Psychoanalytical Theories at War Within *The Birds*

The role of Ned within Du Maurier's *The Birds* is difficult to analyse as the characters in Hitchcock's adaptation, concerning the issue of narrative fidelity, are completely removed from the characters within the short story. However, if we are willing to look past the characters names, profession and location, it is perfectly logical to identify Ned's family and his struggle to protect them and his home with that of Mitch Brenner's. Yet to truly understand the adaptation of Ned to Mitch we must examine the character of Melanie Daniels and thus the role of women within the Du Maurier adaptations.

It will be argued that the character of Melanie Daniels, a figure for which there is no basis within the literary origin, is in essence a product of Du Maurier, not

²⁸² Du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn*, p. 68.

through the short story but through the novels *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca*. She is an amalgamation of Mary Yellan, the narrator in *Rebecca* and lastly, Rebecca herself. Her past is commented on earlier in the film in the bird shop when Mitch explains that he knows her from court where she had ended up after breaking a shop window all for the sake of a practical joke and then later in the film when Mitch and his mother Lydia discuss her character:

Lydia - But she did buy the lovebirds and then brought them all the way...

Mitch - Mother, where did you go to law school?

Lydia - (*laughing*) Forgive me. I suppose I'm just naturally curious about a girl like that. (*pause*) She's very rich, isn't she?

Mitch - I suppose so. Her father owns a big newspaper in San Francisco.

Lydia - You'd think he could manage to keep her name out of print. She's always mentioned in the columns, Mitch.

Mitch - I know, Mother.

Lydia - She is the one who jumped into that fountain in Rome last summer, isn't she?

Mitch - Yes, Mother.

Lydia - Perhaps I'm old-fashioned. (*pause*) I know it was supposed to be very warm there Mitch, but... well...actually... well, the newspaper said she was naked.

Mitch - I know, Mother.

Lydia - It's none of my business, of course, but when you bring a girl like that to...

It is suggested that Melanie has a sexually dubious past, at least in the eyes of the mother, and this is further evident by her willingness to travel all the way to Mitch's hometown, with a pair of lovebirds, after she has just met him. This echoes Du Maurier's *Rebecca*:

She didn't care. She only laughed. "I shall live as I please, Danny," she told me, "and the whole world won't stop me." A man had only to look at her once and be mad about her. I've seen them here, staying in the house, men she'd meet up in London and bring for week-ends. She would take them bathing from the boat, she would have a picnic supper at her cottage in the cove. They made love to her of course; who would not? She laughed, she would come back and tell me what they had said, and what they had done. She did not mind, it was like a game to her. Like a game.²⁸³

²⁸³ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, p. 256.

Melanie and Rebecca share a past, yet as stated before, Melanie is an amalgamation, she is playing all parts. Melanie's integration into the Brenner family is her becoming Mrs De Winter, attempting to shed the image of Rebecca and live in a new environment that immediately rejects her from the start. She is rejected because of the clash of two psychosexual structures that are at work within Hitchcock's film. Mitch's family is the Oedipal complex come to fruition. Mitch's father is dead and he has taken his place by the side of his mother, becoming a father figure to his younger sister Cathy. In contrast, Melanie Daniels embodies the Electra complex, viewing Lydia, the mother, as her threat to sexual possession of Mitch, the father figure. It could be argued that the resulting clash of Oedipus and Electra is the reason for the birds attacking. Many theorists have championed different theories as to why the birds do attack, a scenario that is made all the more difficult by Hitchcock's refusal to give any real reason other than it is an apocalyptic revenge for their treatment at the hands of man.²⁸⁴ In *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* Robin Wood is critical of the many different readings of why the birds attack. After dismissing avian revenge and God's wrath, he questions another suggestion:

The Birds express the tensions between the characters. This is more interesting and seems to gain some support when one considers the original attack on Melanie by the seagull. But objections soon pile up: the birds attack innocent school children and kill Dan Fawcett, of whose possible tensions we know nothing²⁸⁵...The film derives its disturbing power from the absolute meaninglessness and unpredictability of the attacks, and only by having children as the victims can its underlying emotions of despair and terror be conveyed. To demand consistency and any form of divine or poetic justice from the attacks is to miss the point altogether.²⁸⁶

Wood claims that the killing of Dan Fawcett is the killing of an innocent. While this is true in terms of his character being innocent in relation to the actions of the other characters, it could be argued that it is the result of the Oedipal-Electra clash. When Lydia finds Dan Fawcett in his bedroom, surrounded by dead birds, feathers and blood, she sees him at first in profile and then Hitchcock performs two quick cuts, each more extreme than the last, with both centring on Dan Fawcett's head and empty eye sockets, as shown in figures 93 to 95:

²⁸⁴ The original trailer for *The Birds* consisted of Alfred Hitchcock, carefully and sarcastically, explaining the history of man and birds, and how man has used the bird for everything, from food, to tools, to clothes. Thus the motive of the avian attacks is revenge.

²⁸⁵ Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 153.

²⁸⁶ Wood, p. 162.



Figure 93.



Figure 94.



Figure 95.

Hitchcock's use of cutting deliberately focuses the camera on to the empty bloodied eye sockets of Fawcett. The birds have fulfilled Oedipus's tragic destiny of removing his eyes. In the Greek myth, when Oedipus finds out that he has married his mother and killed his father, he takes a sword and heads off to kill his wife and mother, Jocasta. However, when he finds her she has already hanged herself. He then removes two pins from her dress and gouges out his own eyes, blinding himself. Dan Fawcett, does not represent Oedipus, he is as Wood describes, innocent, but his bloody demise is the judgment being cast down upon by the birds that are fulfilling the Oedipal prophecy because Mitch, Oedipus incarnate, cannot. When the birds attack they instinctively go for the eyes as if they are attempting to blind the whole town. When Melanie is trapped inside the phone box a man appears at the glass, covered in birds that are attempting to pluck out his eyes (figures 96 and 97):



Figure 96.



Figure 97.

When Annie is found dead on the stairs, Mitch attempts to shield her plucked face from the gaze of Melanie, attempting to shield the fate they both face (figures 98 and 99):



Figure 98.



Figure 99.

The resolution of both Oedipal and Electra complex's occur when the child learns to identify with the same sex parent. In the case of the Brenner family, this is not possible as Mitch's father is dead, thus he has accepted the pseudo-marriage to his mother. Melanie's introduction, embodying her own complex interferes with Mitch fulfilling his. Mitch and Lydia's pseudo-marriage should lead to a tragic end but Melanie's appearance with a resolvable psychosexual complex alters the dynamic. Melanie at first wars with Lydia over her pseudo-husband Mitch, but once Melanie begins to identify with Lydia, her complex begins to dissipate; this would in turn lead to Lydia relinquishing control over Mitch that in turn would resolve his complex. Before this can happen though the birds attack, as though some ancient force is at

work to have the Oedipal prophecy fulfilled. The destruction of Bodega Bay represents the chaos that follows Oedipus' kingdom while the war on the children is an attack on the unborn progeny that Melanie and Mitch's union would produce.

Robin Wood offers a reading on Melanie's final attack by the birds which unwittingly feeds into this Oedipal war:

Some of Melanie's gestures before the birds are gestures, again, of voluptuous surrender and prostration, her attempts to escape feeble. Her shallow sophistication and brittle smartness have been stripped away, revealing an apparent emptiness underneath; now she is giving herself to the birds as a terrible sort of fulfilment – almost D.H. Lawrence's 'Woman who rode away' accepting the sacrificial knife.²⁸⁷

This fulfilment that Wood speaks of is Melanie's subconscious understanding that the Oedipal prophecy must be fulfilled. Mitch's inability to secure the house properly, protect his family or Annie are all symbolic of his impotence and failure to either resolve his complex or accept his fate. Melanie understands that a sacrifice is called for, she has seen the signs throughout the town and her ascent up the stairs, her entry into the obviously bird filled bedroom and her nonchalant attempts to defend herself is her offering her eyes to the birds. It is however this sacrifice that does resolve both the Oedipal and Electra complex. She is pulled from the bedroom by Mitch who carries her downstairs, discarding his impotence, and then given to Lydia to care for, allowing for an identification between mother and daughter. Mitch then leads them out of the house towards the car where they drive away. The most notable element of this scene is that the birds do not attack at all, they merely watch on as the family moves slowly through them as though they are satisfied with Melanie's sacrifice.

Within Du Maurier's *The Birds* the character of Ned shares with Mitch the urgency and need to protect his family but the family unit presented in the short story is complete and free of psychosexual drama. While Du Maurier's narrative deals with the protection of the family against the unknown, Hitchcock breaks the family unit up. His destruction of the family is mirrored within the attack of the birds and as stated earlier, it is from the adaptations of *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* that this destruction is even possible.

²⁸⁷ Wood, p. 170.

Within Du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn*, the character of Mary Yellan arrives at Cornwall in search for a father figure. After watching her mother die, her journey to Jamaica Inn is twofold, to fulfil her sexual desires and find a new father although, like the Electra complex, these feelings become confused within her. It is her Aunt Patience that she knows, but it is her aunt's husband who holds the intrigue. Yet when Mary meets Joss it is immediately clear that like the moors around him, he cannot be tamed. His brother Jem becomes his surrogate in Mary's eyes, her way of being with the father figure she has longed for. Her experiences with the wreckers and witnessing the murder of an entire ship full of men are symbols of the sexual dangers that Joss represents:

‘Didn’t think to see me, did you?’ he said. ‘Thought I was down on the shore with the landlord and the rest, baiting the pots. And so you woke up from your beauty-sleep, and took a walk up the lane. And now you’re here I’ll make you very welcome.’ He grinned at her touching her cheek with a black fingered nail. ‘It’s been cold and damp in the ditch,’ he said, ‘but that’s no odds now. They’ll be hours down there yet. I can see you’ve turned against Joss, by the way you spoke to him tonight. He’s no right to keep you up in Jamaica like a bird in a cage, with no pretty things to wear. I doubt if he’s given you as much as a brooch for your bodice, has he? Don’t you mind about that. I’ll give you lace for your neck, and bangles for your wrist, and soft silk for your skin. Let’s look now...’²⁸⁸

After Harry the Peddler attempts to rape Mary she manages to fight him off and hide, yet she is drawn to the cliff edge where she witnesses the wreckers causing a ship to crash on the rocks only to then murder any survivors. Du Maurier describes Mary as being drawn by a magnet to the sea. The shipwreck and murder are the psychological completion of the rape and it is this that cements the connection between Mary and Jem. When Jem later kills the Vicar, the secret ringleader of the wreckers, not only does he physically save Mary, he fulfils his role as the father figure, a sequence of events that echoes Mitch's rescue of Melanie.

One of Hitchcock's most dramatic narrative shifts from Du Maurier's text is the removal of Mary Yellan as the narrative voice. The first person account of Mary is what gives her character control but Hitchcock's camera denies her this. Instead it is Pengallen who dominates Hitchcock's film, changing with it the psychology of Mary's character. Earlier in the chapter Pengallen's reveal as chief villain is discussed

²⁸⁸ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, p. 181.

in relation to the removal of the 'blind space'. The scene in *Jamaica Inn*, when Joss cowers in the presence of Pengallen, is also relevant for destroying any power that Joss has over the viewer and subsequently Mary. Prior to this scene Joss is portrayed as the violent domineering drunk of Du Maurier's text but when the power shifts to Pengallen, Joss loses his status as the father figure that Mary has been searching for. As Jem is not the brother of Joss, the role of the father figure falls to Pengallen, which means that Mary's psychosexual complex can never be resolved as Pengallen is a lecherous villain who is doomed to tragedy. Mary comes to trust Pengallen, as do the rest of the protagonists, but the viewer knows the truth, thus Mary's identification is never real. When Jem rescues Mary from Pengallen at the end of the film, it is just that, a rescue. He is Hitchcock's archetypal thriller protagonist, more akin to a spy than the nurturing father that she needs. Instead the completion of Du Maurier's psychoanalytical complex is transported to *The Birds*.

In Du Maurier's Jem we have a mirror to Hitchcock's Mitch while the wreckers are representative of the avian threat of *The Birds*. Du Maurier's birds are described as attacking with the tides and visibly rest upon the sea, as though to emphasize the fact that this is nature rebelling against man, whereas Hitchcock's birds descend from the sky, like predators, picking at what they can find. The explosion of the gas station and subsequent drawing of the birds is more akin to Du Maurier's description of the ship smashing on the rocks and the descent of the wreckers upon the wreckage than to anything within her short avian story. Once there, like the birds, the wreckers kill all of the survivors. It is these elements of Du Maurier's novel that Hitchcock does not adapt within his own *Jamaica Inn* that instead seep their way into *The Birds*, while everything is anchored by the Electra-like complex that Du Maurier creates for Mary Yellan which instead becomes the structure that holds Melanie. It is as if *Jamaica Inn* has to conform to the conventions of the 'Hitchcock' thriller, *Rebecca* to Selznick's whims and then either deliberately or subconsciously it is *The Birds* where Hitchcock finally adapts Du Maurier.

4.8 The Absence and Presence of Sound Within the Du Maurier Adaptations

Throughout Hitchcock's *Rebecca* the music is tailor made for the scene, sounding ominous and mysterious when the narrator dreams of Manderlay at the start, swooning and dramatic when she and Maxim are passionate, pensive and curious when she is exploring the house and ultimately oppressive and monstrous when she is vilified by Mrs Danvers. Like the camera, the music is watchful of the narrator, it anticipates her, expressing her emotions and fears and yet like the camera, it leads her.

It is also through the absence of sound that Hitchcock's films express the feeling and tensions within Du Maurier's narratives. In *Hitchcock's Music* Jack Sullivan discusses scenes in *Rebecca*, such as that of the courtroom and the doctor's office where Maxim is left "shockingly bereft of music" and that this absence of sound after the films careful attention to musical detail emphasises his misery, "making his isolation stark and painfully convincing".²⁸⁹ This absence of music is also used within *Jamaica Inn* where after opening with "stirring title music" Sullivan writes:

This music holds great promise: a tempestuous chromatic idea surges against a sweeping modal melody; orchestral waves crash over a sea montage, then recede for a lyrical meditation over a Cornish prayer for storm victims. The music then vanishes, replaced by the sound of real storms and cries of terror in the first pirate scene.²⁹⁰

Sullivan believes that the sudden absence of music is relatable to Hitchcock's mood on set and his desperation to leave the "sinking ship" that was the British film industry for the bright lights of America,²⁹¹ yet what the absence of music actually represents is the destruction of hope. Novel and film both agree on the depiction of Mary Yellan, a lonely young woman who has come to Jamaica Inn to start a new life. Hitchcock's "steering" music represents Du Maurier's false-hope-filled-beginning for Mary and the sudden removal of the music is Hitchcock pulling the carpet from under the feet of *his* Mary. With the absence of music also representing Du Maurier's Maxim on screen, it appears that this absence music and what it represents is common ground that both Du Maurier and Hitchcock can share,

²⁸⁹ Sullivan, J., *Hitchcock's Music*, Yale University Press, London, p. 78.

²⁹⁰ Sullivan, p. 56.

²⁹¹ Sullivan, pp. 56-57.

Concerning *The Birds*, in *Hitchcock: Suspense, Humour and Tone*, Susan Smith writes:

The absence of the usual musical flourish at the end of the film – following on from the disconcerting sound of the low hum that is first heard when Mitch goes out to the garage – is also especially unsettling for it denies us one of the standard conventions traditionally used to signal a sense of narrative closure. And it is the unresolved nature of the ending itself (as stressed by the withholding of the words ‘THE END’) that encapsulates and sustains (even on subsequent viewings) the film’s overall tone of disquiet.²⁹²

The disquiet that Smith refers to is Hitchcock’s deliberate lack of music throughout the film. Hitchcock uses diegetic sound, deliberately focusing on the sounds of the birds, whose squawks and rustling feathers grow louder and louder with each attack. This is the sound that Ned would have heard throughout his family’s ordeal and while the coastline scenery and Ned’s home defence against the birds are adapted to some extent by Hitchcock, it is the sound of the birds and what it represents that points to another facet of Hitchcock’s adaptation process. In *Avian Metaphor in The Birds*, Richard Allen asks “why birds?” He argues that the birds represent defensive rage brought on by the emotional isolation of the characters, which in turn leads to dehumanization.²⁹³ The birds are chosen as a force of destruction because it is hard to attribute emotional responses to them, thus they symbolise dehumanisation:

Birds occupy a place of particular interest with respect to the grounds upon which we ascribe emotional predicates to animals, for in comparison to other animals of their size, they are unusually rigid: their feathers appear as a kind of armour, and they entirely lack facial expression. If their beady eyes suggest an inside, it is a hollow interior. This animal, whose emotions are utterly inscrutable, is also one that, at least to the non-specialist, seems to exhibit a purposiveness without purpose, in its exuberant song, colour, and flight. Thus birds seem to combine the absence of emotion with irrational drive and thereby epitomize blind nature in contradistinction to the human, and this makes them ideal figures for those forces that are destructive of human social life.²⁹⁴

It is hard not to agree with Allen’s detailed description of the bird and what may or may not hide behind its eyes. It is also perfectly reasonable to read emotional isolation and dehumanization into their motive for attack. What is questionable about

²⁹² Smith, S., *Hitchcock: Suspense, Humour and Tone*, BFI Publishing, London, 2000, p. 126.

²⁹³ Richard Allen, ‘Avian Metaphor in *The Birds*’, in Gottlieb, S., and Brookhouse, C. (eds.), *Framing Hitchcock*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2002, p. 288.

²⁹⁴ Allen, p. 289.

Allen's approach is his original question, 'why birds?'. The answer is simple. Daphne Du Maurier. This is not a flippant answer nor does it render Allen's analysis redundant, in fact his explanation for the birds attack and why it is the birds that carry out these attacks can and should be applied to Du Maurier's short story. As shown from Wood to Modleski to Allen, there are many different readings into why the birds attack within Hitchcock's films, but the actual act of attacking, the very fact that they are attacking, is because of Du Maurier, not Hitchcock and thus the critical work around Hitchcock's motives should be laid at the feet of Du Maurier. The director could have changed the type of animal that attacked, perhaps cows, and he could have changed the name of the story, but he did not. *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* were both well-known novels to the British public, both written a few years prior to their respective adaptations.²⁹⁵ *The Birds* however was not a literary sensation. Written in 1952, and appearing in the short story collection *The Apple Tree*, it was not as prominent with the viewing public, thus whereas many viewers would have watched *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* as Du Maurier adaptations, most would not have realised that Hitchcock's film was even an adaptation, therefore in the eyes of the viewer, he is not beholden to the original author. Because of the reputations of the novels, both *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* are viewed, studied and often judged as adaptations. Many descriptions of *The Birds* still read 'loosely based on Du Maurier's short story of the same name' while theorists such as Wood and Allen devote very little time to the fact that the film is even an adaptation. In Allen's twenty-seven page essay on *Avian Metaphor in The Birds* Daphne Du Maurier is mentioned once. It is perfectly understandable and reasonable to discuss any film without referencing its literary origins but it is much harder to do so when the literary origin is of a particular status. Concerning the question 'why birds?', the answer is always going to be found within the literary source, and as in Hitchcock's film, the reasons for the birds attacking in the short story are just as ambiguous.

Ned's family live on an isolated farm with few neighbours and only the radio to keep him informed about the outside world. The birds are a part of his life, his work and his home. They spread his seeds, attack his crops, provide him with food and litter his landscape. Their attack is sudden and chaotic, yet calculated, as they

²⁹⁵ Du Maurier's *Rebecca* was published in 1938, two years before Hitchcock's film while *Jamaica Inn* was three years previous to its adaptation in 1936.

obey the times of the tide. They are unstoppable and merciless and there appears to be no hope. Hitchcock recognized this hopelessness and waited until he finally had the freedom and technology to turn Du Maurier's short story into a film. 'Why birds?', because one day Daphne Du Maurier was walking on a cliff:

'The idea for it,' she said, 'was born on my daily walks across the cliffs in Cornwall. I would see the farmer ploughing his fields, his tractor followed by a flock of gulls screaming and crying. As they dived for worms and insects, I thought, "Suppose they stop being interested in worms?"'²⁹⁶

A better question than 'why birds' would be 'why no music'? A novel cannot express music in the same way that film can and considering the importance of music throughout the work of Hitchcock, it is interesting to note that it is absent from *The Birds*. One reading of this may be that the absence of music is an attempt by Hitchcock to show the lack of control over the narrative situation. Within Du Maurier's text, ultimately at the end, there is no explanation for the behaviour of the birds and Ned and his family are left without hope. There appears to be no outside force ready to save them. In film, music is a non-diegetic sound that is added to convey a particular emotion or serve a certain purpose. The very fact that it is added conveys a sense of control over the production thus its absence could be read as a symbol for a lack of control. By using no music, Hitchcock is recreating the feeling of helplessness that Du Maurier delivers upon Ned's family. As with Du Maurier's Cornwall, the birds of Bodega Bay appear to attack for no reason and in either text there is no omnipotent author to save them.

4.9 Unresolved Complexes, Possession and The Camera Within *Rebecca*

As discussed earlier, Hitchcock was not a fan of *Rebecca*. In terms of box office takings, audience reaction and awards, it was a success, but this did not matter to Hitchcock who even into his final years never showed any love for the film. Even though we have it from his own mouth, it is difficult not to feel that there was something about Du Maurier's tale that attracted Hitchcock to the material. Not only is it quite possibly his most faithfully adapted film, but also thematically, it is

²⁹⁶ Neil Sinyard, *Neil Sinyard on Film: Daphne Du Maurier and Alfred Hitchcock*, 2013, <http://neilsinyard.britishtelevisiondrama.org.uk/?p=171>

quintessential Hitchcock. It draws upon previous films such as *The Lodger* and *Easy Virtue* and influenced most of his later work, whether technically with *Rope* and *Psycho* or thematically with *Vertigo* and *The Birds*. As such it adds further weight to the argument that Hitchcock's real issue was with the idea of faithfulness. From his British theatrical adaptations through to Du Maurier's work, Hitchcock bemoaned projects where he felt he was beholden to the status of the original text, as if his hands were tied, yet one could argue that it is not fidelity that ties Hitchcock's hands but the circumstances, which in the case of *Rebecca* was Selznick.

Unlike his adaptation of *Jamaica Inn*, Hitchcock remains very close to Du Maurier's narrative, transferring the character of the unnamed narrator, minus the first person narrative but complete with her psychosexual complex onto film. In Du Maurier's text the narrator is a young companion in training to the obnoxious and dominating Mrs Van Hooper before she meets and falls in love with Maxim. Their relationship throughout the majority of the text is that of a father and daughter. The narrator is childlike in her manners, apologizing to Maxim whenever she believes she has stepped out of line or said something wrong and he is equally father-like telling her what to do and how to act such as 'stop biting those nails'.²⁹⁷ This is depicted exactly in Hitchcock's film with Maxim relaying instructions such as when to wear a raincoat, not to wear black satin or how to eat. Like Mary Yellan and Melanie Daniels, the narrator is looking for a father figure and in Maxim she has found him, yet standing in her way are Mrs Danvers and the ghost of Rebecca.

In both novel and film Mrs Danvers is a terrifying presence towards the narrator. She loved Rebecca and will not accept another woman in the house and thus deliberately but subtly criticises everything that the narrator does or says, belittling her at every opportunity. This feeds into the narrator's childlike subconscious and as Tania Modleski notes²⁹⁸ Mrs Danvers takes on the role of the perfectly terrifying parent, who the child fears because she knows all, something that Hitchcock displays with Mrs Danvers very limited movements:

²⁹⁷ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, p. 41

²⁹⁸ Modleski, p. 45.

In psychoanalytic terms, the heroine might be said to be at the Imaginary stage of development – a time when the child’s motor control is not yet fully developed, and the mother’s, by contrast, seems superhuman in its perfection.²⁹⁹

Through the actions and attitude of Mrs Danvers, the narrator is unable to bond with her, thus no form of identification is made, and therefore Mrs Danvers and by extension Rebecca, become rivals to the narrator for the affections of Maxim. This Electra complex is clearly present within Hitchcock’s text and like the birds that haunt Melanie Daniels; the ghost of Rebecca torments the narrator at every turn. Rebecca is one of many dead women that wield power within Hitchcock’s films, with Norma Bates exerting control over her son Norman’s psychosis (*Psycho*) and Carlotta Valdes apparently controlling Madeline and subsequently holding the obsession of Scottie Ferguson (*Vertigo*). The dead woman is impossible to fight, and just as Norman Bates becomes his mother, the narrator sets out to become Rebecca. After walking in her footsteps, using her stationery, keeping to her pre-existing routine, the narrator finally completes the embodiment of Rebecca by unwittingly dressing up as her. Du Maurier writes:

I came forward to the head of the stairs and stood there, smiling, my hat in hand, like the girl in the picture. I waited for the clapping and laughter that would follow as I walked slowly down the stairs. Nobody clapped, nobody moved.

They all stared at me like dumb things. Beatrice uttered a little cry and put her hand to her mouth. I went on smiling, I put one hand on the banister.

‘How do you do, Mr de Winter,’ I said.³⁰⁰

In this moment the narrator becomes Rebecca but it is not a form of identification that could cure her complex, it is instead possession, with Rebecca becoming the narrator. Like Norma and Carlotta, Rebecca is in control and her appearance at the stairs is the ultimate projection of power, a power that she still holds over Maxim. Modleski writes:

In *Rebecca* the heroine continually strives not only to please Maxim, but to win the affections of Mrs Danvers, who seems herself to be possessed, haunted, by Rebecca and to have a sexual attachment to the dead woman. Finally, it becomes obvious that the two desires cannot coexist; the desire for the mother impedes the progress of the heterosexual union. Ultimately, then, the heroine disavows her desire for the mother, affirming her primary attachment to the male.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Modleski, p. 45.

³⁰⁰ Du Maurier, *Rebecca*, pp, 222-223.

³⁰¹ Modleski, p. 49.

In Du Maurier's text the narrator is able to 'disavow the desire for the mother' by learning the truth about her. When Rebecca's secrets are exposed, the mystique is destroyed, as is the hold of Mrs Danvers and thus the power is shifted. She is now able to identify with the mother figure. When the narrator learns from Maxim of Rebecca's fate, she is able to accept him because their union is no longer under attack. This is the narrator's completion of the 'imaginary stage', she is no longer a child; having learned to identify with the mother figure, she no longer needs to fixate onto the father figure, and thus Maxim becomes her lover. Within Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, as described previously, Maxim is exonerated of being a murderer, and this lack of action renders him impotent and thus the narrator becomes a mother figure as opposed to a lover. The accidental death of Rebecca is a questionable subject concerning Hitchcock's adaptation. Raymond Durnat writes:

It's not quite clear whether he did in fact kill her, in rage, thus being morally and legally guilty of murder as she of suicide, or whether he meant to kill her in rage but she died accidentally.³⁰²

The ambiguity is caused by Hitchcock's refusal to show any form of flashback when Maxim discusses Rebecca's demise. He instead allows the camera to retrace her final footsteps as Maxim dictates what happened. The viewer becomes Rebecca and we are left wondering if what he has stated is actually the truth because we experience very little. The visual medium is usually fact because we can see it with our eyes yet as Hitchcock shows with the false flashback in *Stage Fright*, even the visual can be false. Typically when a story unfolds on the screen it is with images, and with only words to back up Maxim's story, we begin to doubt what we cannot see. Hitchcock's use of the camera here is indicative of its behaviour throughout the film, where it appears ghost-like and unnatural. Peter Conrad describes its behaviour as evasive:

The camera in Hitchcock's films is an expert at subterfuge... The barred, rusty gate at the beginning of *Rebecca* cannot deter it. Fontaine's narration, taken directly from Du Maurier's novel, describes her return to Manderlay in a dream. The gate at first blocks her way, but suddenly she is 'possessed of supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me'. The camera makes light work of that ethereal passage. When it draws close to the gate, the barrier simply dissolves. Possessing no body, the camera can easily squeeze through the crevices in the wrought iron.³⁰³

³⁰² Durnat, p. 167.

³⁰³ Conrad, p. 200.

Conrad's description suggests that Hitchcock's camera is one of unnatural movement, it is not meant to appear human, but instead supernatural. This is in keeping with Hitchcock's film as there are moments where it feels that the camera is following the narrator as if to see where it is that she will lead, such as when she is exploring Rebecca's old desk:



Figure 100.



Figure 101.



Figure 102.



Figure 103.



Figure 104.



Figure 105.

Figure 100 shows Frith the butler watching on as the narrator attempts to navigate her way through the house. The camera follows her from a distance as if to watch where she is going. When she cannot find her way, Frith appears and tells her where to find the morning room. The camera then cuts to a low angled profile shot of Frith, (figure 101), who looks on imperiously. He knows everything about the house and the camera angle suggests that he is aware of the camera's presence as well. Figure 102 shows the narrator entering the morning room. The camera follows closely behind, stopping when the narrator stops, moving when she moves. It watches as she goes through Rebecca's old writing equipment, closing in on her name and initials (figure 103). The phone rings and the narrator informs whomever is on the other end of the line that Mrs De Winter is dead only to realize that she is now Mrs De Winter. The sudden entrance of Mrs Danvers (figure 104), making the narrator jump, follows this. The camera then cuts quickly to Mrs Danvers and then back to the narrator, it is intrigued and excited by this development. Figure 105 shows the narrator framed by two large candlesticks and surrounded by china ornaments, one of which she will later break. The narrator is literally dwarfed by the house and its contents. She is out of her depth and the camera knows this. The camera behaves as though it is following the narrator while she is getting used to her new surroundings but after a time the camera begins to anticipate her movements, in some cases even leading her as is visible when she inadvertently dresses as Rebecca:



Figure 106.



Figure 107.



Figure 108.



Figure 109.



Figure 110.



Figure 111.



Figure 112.

After the narrator is dressed and ready for the ball the camera cuts to the end of a corridor while the narrator appears at the end in the distant background (figure 106). The camera is now waiting for her. She runs down the hallway and stops to admire the portrait on the wall on which she has based her ill-fated dress (figure 107). The camera studies her for a bit and shares her view over the balcony (figure 108). The next three images show the next three cuts each positioning the camera a few feet away from the narrator, each beckoning her to come down the staircase. Figure 111 is

a medium close up shot of the narrator as she begins her descent down the stairs. Here Hitchcock does not use any cuts and instead has the camera move backwards, keeping pace with the narrator, taking each step with her, as if she is literally being lead to her fate by the camera. Du Maurier's text is a first person perspective, as is Hitchcock's, but while Du Maurier's is from the view of the narrator, Hitchcock's is of the camera. When she descends the staircase the music is similar to that which would accompany her if she were kissing or dancing with Maxim, yet when he turns to see her and is visibly shocked and disgusted, the music remains the same, constantly playing over the narrator's obvious discomfort as though it were mocking her. Hitchcock's music is a dominant characteristic that spans his entire body of work and as briefly discussed here, bears a relationship to adaptation, especially when the absence of music is considered, as within *The Birds* and the majority of *Jamaica Inn* and though this thesis is not looking at the use of music in connection to Hitchcock's adaptation process, it is worth considering the fact that Hitchcock's use of iconic music which in this instance represents the feelings of Mrs Danvers and if she were alive, Rebecca, are feelings that are present within the novel, but here are expressed by a means that is unachievable by the written medium.

The use of the staircase in this scene, as previously discussed, is another technique that Hitchcock employs throughout his work:



Figure 113. *Easy Virtue*



Figure 114. *Easy Virtue*

Figure 115. *Psycho*Figure 116. *Psycho*

The shots of Larita at the top of the staircase in *Easy Virtue* echo that of the narrator in *Rebecca*. Like the narrator, Larita is shown to be dwarfed by her surroundings and like the narrator, Larita is using the staircase to make an entrance. The narrator is becoming Rebecca while Larita is finally becoming her past self. The images from *Psycho* are even more relevant. Figure 115 shows the detective Arbogast ascending the staircase of the Bates house to an unknown fate. Hitchcock's camera here behaves in exactly the same way to that of the narrator, positioning itself just in front of him, taking each step with him, leading him. Figure 116 shows his arrival onto the landing. As the camera leads the narrator to Maxim, so has this camera lead Arbogast to Norma Bates who will momentarily appear out of the open door to the right. In Hitchcock's films the staircase symbolizes the final journey, from the bell tower staircase in *Vertigo* to the murderer's staircase in *Rear Window*. It signifies either an end, a finality, or transformation and while it is not a symbol that originated within the work of Du Maurier, it is definitely present. It is the staircase in Jamaica Inn that separates Mary from the wreckers while in *The Birds* Ned is faced with several staircases that lead him to danger:

He forced himself to climb the stairs, but halfway he turned and descended again. He could see her legs, protruding from the open bedroom door. Beside her were the bodies of the black-backed gulls, and an umbrella, broken.³⁰⁴

As well as:

Nat looked about him, seeing what furniture he could destroy to fortify the door. The windows were safe, because of the dresser. He was not certain of the door. He went upstairs, but when

³⁰⁴ Du Maurier, D., *Tales of Quiet Terror*, Avon Books, New York, 1976, p.315

he reached the landing he paused and listened. There was a soft patter on the floor of the children's bedroom. The birds had broken through...³⁰⁵

As shown with the theatrical adaptations, Hitchcock identifies parts of the text that align with his own traits and motifs, thus feeding his own brand and building upon what are essentially the codes and conventions of a 'Hitchcock genre'. Whether Hitchcock picks the texts because they contain 'Hitchcockian' elements or he draws them out of each text in an attempt to imprint his own stamp upon them, most likely differs from text to text. What is clear is that these motifs are present throughout both novel and film, yet collated together they make up the Hitchcock brand, thus when we see Melanie climb the staircase in *The Birds* it appears to be another use of a Hitchcock motif as opposed to an adaptation of the Du Maurier staircase that Ned climbs.

Sticking with Hitchcock's use of the staircase, it is often used to represent the approach of fear. The act of climbing stairs to somewhere dark or descending a staircase to face someone, is a primal fear, one that the viewer shares with the character. In the case of the narrator in *Rebecca* and Arbogast in *Psycho*, the viewer literally walks step by step with the characters. The camera is not only leading the characters but the viewer as well. When Melanie Daniels climbs the stairs in the end of *The Birds*, the viewer knows what fate awaits her. To the reader of Du Maurier's novels, and specifically of the short story *The Birds*, we also recognise that the staircase is symbolic of tragedy. It is nothing new that Hitchcock invented, much like the process of adaptation, it is not about creating something new, but about manipulating what you have. The staircase is a simple visual structure that everyone can relate to, yet with the use of the camera Hitchcock is able to project the fears that accompany it.

As shown throughout this chapter, Hitchcock's adaptation of Du Maurier aligns with the conventions of his own 'brand'. The ideologies of both authors are incredibly similar and thus Hitchcock's use of Du Maurier's work is the perfect example of the director collecting texts that improve his own work. Motifs and traits, such as the use of the staircase, are shown to exist throughout the original texts, yet

³⁰⁵ Du Maurier, *Tales of Quiet Terror*, p.311.

have been appropriated by Hitchcock. His camera transforms these into the cinematic, recreating the symbiotic link between the theatrical and film, yet in this case with the novel. It is through this close relationship that Hitchcock has with Du Maurier, that *The Birds* is formed. The distancing of the film from its origins is merely a smokescreen with Hitchcock's film sharing more in common with Du Maurier's other texts than the short story itself. *The Birds* is a product of Du Maurier's earlier work, specifically the psychological elements of the novels *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca*. Through studio pressure and intervention, the films *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* were not what Hitchcock envisioned, yet *The Birds* is considered by many, including the director, to be quintessential Hitchcock and is apparently free of any original text, yet this has been proven to be false. *The Birds* is beholden to Du Maurier's body of work and it is a representation of Hitchcock's deliberate and subconscious adaptation process. The continual adaptation of one author is further proof that Hitchcock's adaptation process was anything but arbitrary. Instead it was a systematic assimilation of texts that could feed his body of work and is representative of his true title, the 'Master of Adaptation.'

5. THE ‘PSYCHO-META-TEXT’

5.1 What to do with Psycho

If we view the structure of this thesis as a pyramid, with the theatrical adaptation as the base providing structure to the face of the pyramid, which is Hitchcock’s use of adapting the novel, then the tip of the pyramid is *Psycho*. The tip could not be positioned as high without the structure beneath it and only exists because of what has been built before, but the tip of the pyramid is also the point of the structure that is seen for miles around. *Psycho* maybe a product of everything that has come before it, but its status and influence arguably reach much farther and wider than the texts that it adapted.

Psycho is arguably Hitchcock’s most iconic picture, forever linked with his ‘Master of Suspense’ moniker, endlessly copied and parodied, and probably ingrained within popular culture far more than any other Hitchcock film. The popular status that *Psycho* has attained has led to many sequels, remakes, spin-offs and television shows, and has even branched out into other artistic fields such as ‘24 Hour Psycho’.³⁰⁶ One of the central functions of adaptation is to recreate and with the ever-expanding legacy of *Psycho*, one of the prominent notions is that it is always Hitchcock’s film that is seen as being adapted as opposed to Robert Bloch’s novel. Consequentially his status as an auteur is intrinsically linked with the film and because of the legacy that his film has created, the status of the film as an adaptation becomes far more intriguing. *Psycho* is not merely just an adaptation of a novel; instead the film itself has been adapted and assimilated into other art forms. Here we have a case of Hitchcock adapting the author Robert Bloch, while he in turn is adapted by Anthony Perkins, Mick Garris and Gus Van Sant to name but a few. The introduction of the

³⁰⁶ ‘24 Hour Psycho’ is an art installation by Douglas Gordon which reduces the usual number of twenty-four frames per second down to just two, thus the film lasts twenty-four hours as opposed to one hundred and nine minutes. The Guardian newspaper writes that it is “A different take on a familiar classic, it introduces many of the important themes in Gordon’s work: recognition and repetition, time and memory, complicity and duplicity, authorship and authenticity, darkness and light.” – ‘Douglas Gordon: What I Have Done’, *The Guardian*, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/arts/pictures/image/0,8543,-10104531576,00.html>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

sequel and the remake into the argument of adaptation is logical because of the similarities between the different processes. James Naremore comments:

Critical discussions of movie remakes have a good deal in common with discussions of literary adaptations. Both deal with the somewhat questionable idea of the original versus the copy, both value the unique work of art, and both treat the 'precursor' text with a kind of deference.³⁰⁷

Naremore states that critically there are many similarities between adaptations and remakes. It could be argued that it is more than just a list of similarities, and rather that they are a part of the same branch of film studies. An adaptation does not have to involve the transference from one media to another, rather just the appropriation of a narrative from one form to another. In essence, a remake is a form of adaptation, thus Hitchcock's own remake *The Man Who Knew Too Much* is essentially Hitchcock adapting himself. A novel to a film, to a remake, is a chain of adaptations that lends itself to Sarah Cardwell's 'meta-text' theory and Genette's theory of 'Hypertextuality' that were discussed earlier in conjunction with Hitchcock's *Rope*. Cardwell's theory originally lends itself to the work of literary classics and is used to track the work of say Dickens' *Oliver*, a novel that is constantly being reinvented within television and film. Rather than an adaptation of the original source, the 'meta-text' theory looks at the adaptation of the previous adaptation. While concerning the 'hypertextuality' Robert Stam writes that film adaptations:

are hypertexts derived from pre-existing hypotexts that have been transformed by operations of selections, amplification, concretization and actualization.³⁰⁸

Thus the approach to this chapter will consist of looking at *Psycho* for what it is, was and will be. As a part of the Hitchcock adaptation structure these theories will be put into practice and expanded upon by incorporating the broad evolution of Robert Bloch's tale. By introducing the remakes, the sequels and the exploitations, Hitchcock's authorship is again further complicated. It is with Hitchcock's gruesome tale of murder that this chapter will be most closely focused. The 'meta-text' theory is prevalent because of the influence of both Bloch and Hitchcock's work on cinema and popular culture, and by examining this adaption as an ever evolving 'meta-text' we

³⁰⁷ James Naremore, 'Remaking Psycho' in Gottlieb, S., and Brookhouse, C. (eds.), *Framing Hitchcock*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2002, p. 387.

³⁰⁸ Stam, R., *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 209.

are able to keep track of and explore such influences. The two sequels that Bloch penned to his own novel, as well as the three cinematic sequels to Hitchcock's film, Gus Van Sant's remake and a few other *Psycho* inspired films and television programs will be examined to track this continual adaptive process, all the while considering if it is even Hitchcock that is being adapted.

Fidelity, the corner-stone of adaptation, whether wanted or not, will be looked at first with Hitchcock's narrative examined in light of Bloch's work. This will be followed by a close examination of Hitchcock's use of the camera and mise-en-scene and what these mean in relation to the literary source. Using this as a springboard, the adaptation of *Psycho* will then be looked at from a psychoanalytical point-of-view, from a cultural standpoint and within the terms of genre theory.

Concerning genre theory, *Psycho* will be discussed in relation to the horror/thriller/American genre in general but also within Hitchcock's own body of work. *Psycho* lends itself to films such as *The Lodger*, *Shadow Of A Doubt*, *Strangers On A Train* and *Frenzy*, a genre of horror within Hitchcock's work. Concerning auteur theory, structuralists such as Peter Wollen see a difference between 'the films of Hitchcock' and 'Hitchcock films.' The structure that defines the body of work has ultimately transcended the status of the director and thus 'Hitchcock films' become a genre themselves which is another factor that clashes with adaptation theory. *Psycho* aligns itself with the Hitchcock films that have gone before it, adding weight to Hitchcock's auteurism, yet *Psycho* is the product of many influences, most notably from Robert Bloch's work, but it was also influenced by films such as Clouzot's *Les Diaboliques*. This in turn opens up another avenue of exploration, for it is not just American cinema that Hitchcock's film is credited with influencing, but also the horror/thriller films of Europe.

Hitchcock's *Psycho* lends itself to so many facets of film theory because of its status within the history of cinema. As well as being an adaptation of a popular novel, and considered by many to be the crowning jewel of Hitchcock's career, it made a huge cultural impact within American society, influenced the 'Psycho-thrillers' of Hammer and had a far reaching effect on other cinematic fields such as the Italian 'giallo' cinema of the 1960's. Critically, when it first opened, reviews were mixed.

On June 17th, 1960, Bosley Crowther wrote in the *New York Times* that *Psycho* was “obviously low-budget”, “very slow moving”, was reduced to “leg-pulling” and concluded that “the consequence in his denouement falls quite flat for us.”³⁰⁹ An even more critical review appeared in *The Observer*, August 7th, 1960:

There follows one of the most disgusting murders in all screen history. It takes place in a bathroom and involves a great deal of swabbing of the tiles and flushings of the lavatory. It might be described with fairness as plug ugly. *Psycho* is not a long film but it feels long. Perhaps because the director dawdles over technical effects; perhaps because it is difficult, if not impossible, to care about any of the characters.

The stupid air of mystery and portent surrounding *Psycho's* presentation strikes me as a tremendous error. "The manager of this theatre has been instructed, at the risk of his life, not to admit any persons after the picture starts." "By the way, after you see *Psycho* don't give away the ending." Signed, Alfred Hitchcock.

I couldn't give away the ending if I wanted to, for the simple reason that I grew so sick and tired of the whole beastly business that I didn't stop to see it. Your edict may keep me out of the theatre, my dear Hitchcock, but I'm hanged if it will keep me in.³¹⁰

These damning reviews could not be more different from the way *Psycho* was perceived by the public, a fact that is evident within its economic success.³¹¹

Financially, Hitchcock's *Psycho* was his most successful film and from a retrospective critical point of view, it is one of his most notable, as shown by its strong appearance within both AFI and BFI film polls.³¹²

³⁰⁹ Bosley Crowther, *Movie Review: Psycho, The New York Times*, 1960, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=EE05E7DF173DE273BC4F52DFB066838B679EDE>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

³¹⁰ Lejeune, C.A., *Psycho: Archive Review from The Observer*, 1960 <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/oct/22/psycho-hitchcock-archive-review-horror>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

³¹¹ *Psycho* cost an estimated \$806,000 to make but went onto gross over \$32,000,000 in America and \$50,000,000 worldwide (*Box Office Business for Psycho*, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054215/business>). If you adjust for cinema ticket price inflation then \$32,000,000 becomes \$347,000,000, which is more than (prices also adjusted) *Psycho 2* (\$89,000,000), the Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* remake (\$36,629,900) and *Psycho 3* (\$31,812,700) - *Box Office Mojo: Psycho*, <http://boxofficemojo.com/franchises/chart/?id=psycho.htm>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

³¹² In the 'American Film Institute's Hundred Greatest Films' poll conducted on June 10, 2007, *Psycho* ranked fourteenth.

- *American Film Institute: Hundred Greatest Films*, 2007, <http://www.afi.com/100years/movies10.aspx>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

The only Hitchcock film to come higher was *Vertigo*, which unlike *Psycho* received much critical praise from reviewers at the time yet financially it was a flop, grossing just \$7,311,013

- *Box Office Mojo: Vertigo*, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=vertigo.htm>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

Within the 'British Film Institute's Top Fifty Greatest Films of All Time' which was compiled by 846 critics, programmers, academics and distributors, *Psycho* came thirty-fifth while *Vertigo* again bettered it, this time topping the poll in first position. These stats show not only the lasting appeal of *Psycho* but also the critical appreciation that has lasted throughout the past fifty years of cinematic history.

5.2 *Les Diaboliques* and the Psycho Narrative

Brian McFarlane's analysis and use of Barthes 'cardinal functions' is an effective way to analyse an adapted narrative. By stripping the narrative down to its bare bones, removing all cultural, historical and sociological implications that the texts in question imply, we are able to focus solely on the narrative in terms of structure, character and linguistics:

It is enough to say that, in terms of Roland Barthes' taxonomy of narrative functions, in which he defines 'cardinal functions'³¹³ as those that 'constitute real hinge-points of the narrative', it could be said that Stefano and Hitchcock offer a virtual palimpsest of Bloch's novel.³¹⁴

It will be with McFarlane's "virtual palimpsest" that the narrative will be looked at but it is worth noting here how McFarlane views *Psycho*. Within his essay 'Psycho: Trust the Tale', McFarlane discusses the apparent disregard for Bloch's novel when concerning Hitchcock's film and name-drops notable theorists such as Robin Wood, David Sterritt and John Russell Taylor, as well as filmmakers Francois Truffaut and Peter Bogdanovich as proponents of Hitchcock the auteur and not adaptor. All of the aforementioned either ignore the influence of Bloch or reference him in name only and as no real significant influence to Hitchcock. McFarlane does not set out to discredit Hitchcock, but rather demand that there is more to the text than just the auteur. He uses D.H Lawrence famous quote "Never trust the artist, trust the tale", and on that advice it is impossible to ignore the influence of Bloch.³¹⁵

Another influence on Hitchcock's *Psycho* is Henri-Georges Clouzot and his 1955 psychological drama *Les Diaboliques*. Though very different in narrative, the

- *British Film Institute: The Fifty Greatest Films of All Time*, 2012, <http://www.bfi.org.uk/news/50-greatest-films-all-time>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

³¹³ McFarlane's brief quotes by Roland Barthes can be found in: Roland Barthes, 'Structural Analysis of Narratives' in Heath S. (trans.), *Image-Music-Text*, Glasgow, Fontana, 1977, p. 261.

³¹⁴ Brian McFarlane, 'Psycho: Trust the Tale' in Palmer, R.B. and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2011, p. 261.

³¹⁵ McFarlane, pp. 255-265.

two films share very similar aspects in tone, style and atmosphere. At a base level the two films are linked through Hitchcock's connection with Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac as authors of the original source novel *Celle qui n'était plus* (*The Woman Who Was No More*). Multiple Hitchcock bibliographies as well as the Truffaut-Hitchcock interview cite the fact that Hitchcock failed in the bidding rights to acquire Boileau-Narcejac's novel, and was then more determined to acquire their work the next time around with *D'entre les morts* (*Among the Dead*) which would later become Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. Clouzot himself was often described as the "French Hitchcock" during his period of making psychological thrillers in post-war France. He was courted by Hollywood but turned them down because he did not want to relinquish control over production and cinematography.³¹⁶

Les Diaboliques is about two women, Simone and Vera, who plot to kill the abusive lover that they share. Vera is married to Paul, who is the director of the boy's boarding school where they all live and work, while Simone is his lover. They hatch a plan to lure him away in secret where they drug him and drown him in a bathtub. Once the crime is completed they return the body of Paul to the boarding school and dump his body in the murky unused swimming pool that is on the grounds. The plan is then to wait for the body to be found, resulting in an accidental death, except Paul's body is not found and instead clues and sightings emerge, suggesting that he is somehow alive. His wife Vera has a heart condition and the stress of everything forces her to be bedridden. It is here that one night she hears noises and eventually finds the body of Paul in her own bathtub. As she screams and grasps at her chest, with white eyeballs bulging out of his body, Paul rises out of the bathwater like a ghost. Vera promptly has a heart attack and dies. Paul then pops out his white contact lenses and embraces with Simone who has been hiding. They are now free to be together and inherit Vera's fortune except their boastful confession of how they have tricked and deceived Vera is overheard by a private detective that has been investigating the case and subsequently they are arrested.

The narrative of *Les Diaboliques* bears little resemblance to *Psycho*, that is of course where Bloch comes in, but it is within Clouzot's film that we find other

³¹⁶ Lanzoni, R.F, *French Cinema: From Its Beginnings to the Present*, The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., New York, 2002, p. 172.

influences that affected Hitchcock. Some of these influences relate to Bloch's text as well, but it is only through Hitchcock's adaptation that they become relevant. Elements such as his use of black and white and the representation of the bathroom are factors that adhere more to Clouzot's text than Bloch's. The shower murder for example, as will be discussed, has striking similarities with Bloch's text, but Hitchcock's use of the bathroom is a detail that is far more pronounced. It is a taboo area on camera, yet a natural one off of it. The murder within the shower is an invasion of a personal space not usually shown on film, not ever related to murder and one whose cleansing purpose is suddenly inverted. When Paul is 'drowned' within the bathtub, the water used for washing away the filth suddenly becomes the very thing that kills him. When the water is released, the noise of the pipes is deafening to the neighbours, much like the roar of the water that swirls away with the soul of Marion Crane in the shower. Like the bathtub, the shower becomes iron maiden-like, enclosing its victim as death creeps near. The roar of the shower disguises the sound of Mrs Bates entry. The symbols of ordinariness and domesticity become symbols of death. Coupled with the deliberate use of black and white, something that Hitchcock had moved away from in the fifties, the ordinariness that *Psycho* shares with *Les Diaboliques* is startling. There is nothing glamorous, nothing 'Hollywood' and nothing over the top about either film. *Psycho* relates more to film noir than 1950's horror. Marion Crane is a Hitchcock blonde in hair colour only. She lacks the bright colour that accompanied Grace Kelly and Kim Novak in the previous films *Rear Window*, *To Catch a Thief* and *Vertigo*. *Psycho* instead draws upon the 'dark' European cinema that has preceded it while harking back to the bleakness of *Easy Virtue* and *Juno and the Paycock*, tortured women trapped in oppressive and dangerous homely locations. It is a domestically gritty and realistic tone that Hitchcock recognizes in Clouzot that Bloch does not provide, but one that Hitchcock has already adapted and used before.

It could be argued that *Les Diaboliques* is what I.Q. Hunter refers to as an 'unacknowledged adaptation', which is essentially an 'uncredited' text that through 'extratextual' sources allows for the audience to approach the film in question, in this

case *Psycho*, as the product of other influences.³¹⁷ When writing, Hunter is referring to *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968) and the ‘uncredited’ Arthur C. Clarke short story *The Sentinel* (1951), a very different example to that of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* which does not hide the fact that it is an adaptation of Bloch’s work. However, Clouzot’s film is an unrecognised and ‘uncredited’ source of Hitchcock’s work and as such by examining and acknowledging its influence, *Psycho* is no longer a straightforward adaptation of a singular text. Concerning the shadowing of Kubrick’s film by Clarke’s short story, Hunter states that with:

...enigmas potentially explained, by other texts, towards which viewers are directed extratextually; texts which, as with any adaptation, precede the film, compliment it and perhaps even complete it...³¹⁸

Les Diaboliques helps to fill in the gaps that Bloch’s text cannot explain, and provides more evidence that the authorship of *Psycho* is in hands other than the director’s. This notion of extratextual sources is further explored within ‘Hitchcock in Texas: Intertextuality in the face of blood and gore’ where Janet Staiger explains that by looking at *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974) through the eyes of *Psycho*, she was able to accept what Hooper was attempting to do. Staiger explains that she disliked Hooper’s film when she first saw it, yet noticed similarities with *Psycho*. After exploring this further and examining *Psycho* as an intertextuality of the film, as well the obvious gruesome similarities and origins within Ed Gein’s crime,³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Hunter, I.Q., ‘From Adaptations to Cinephilia’ in Parys, T.V. and Hunter I.Q. (eds.), *Science Fiction across Media: Adaptation/Novelization*, Gylphi Limited, Canterbury, 2013, p. 44.

³¹⁸ Hunter, p. 43.

³¹⁹ The murders in Plainfield, Wisconsin were utterly shocking. The basic facts of the case are that after investigating the disappearance of Bernice Worden, the local sheriff and his deputies came upon the home of Ed Gein, a fifty-one year old handyman. Within his home they found the body of Bernice Worden. She had been disembowelled and beheaded, and her naked remains had been hung upside down like that of a deer carcass. From here the sheriff and deputies uncovered a true house of horrors:

Gein had a collection of body parts that included a belt decorated with nipples, a box of nine vaginas, several face masks replete with hair, chair seats composed of human flesh, several bowls made from skulls, a torso "vest" with a cord either for hanging as a decoration or donning as apparel, a box of noses, and Bernice Worden's entrails rapped in a suit jacket and her heart in a bag on the floor.

(E. Sullivan, *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media - Ed Gein and the Figure of the Transgendered Serial Killer*, 2000,

<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC43folder/EdGein.html>).

Staiger realised that through *Psycho* a reading of morbid humour became apparent within Hooper's film.³²⁰ *Psycho* here, like *Les Diaboliques*, allows the reader an alternative interpretation of a text that, officially, has no connection to it.

Concerning the two *Psycho* narratives, when placed side-by-side Bloch and Hitchcock are almost identical. A young woman (Mary in the novel, Marion in the film) steals \$40,000 from her employer and plans to relocate to Fairville, California, where her boyfriend Sam Loomis owns a hardware store. On her way there she stops and spends the night at the Bates Motel. Here she meets Norman, who is the custodian. Norman appears to be nice and friendly, discusses his sick and ailing mother who lives with him and after a minor disagreement about Norman's relationship with his mother, Mary/Marion retires for the night, taking a shower first. She is stabbed to death in the shower by what appears to be Norman Bates' mother Norma.

Norman then finds the body, is horrified with what his mother has done but cleans up after her, disposing of the body, the car and, unknowingly, the money, into a nearby swamp. The narrative then shifts to that of Sam and Lila (Mary/Marion's sister) who along with a private detective called Arbogast are all searching for Mary/Marion who has been missing for a week. Arbogast tracks Mary/Marion to the Bates Motel where he is killed in the Bates' house, seemingly, by Norma Bates. After not hearing from him, Sam and Lila head to see the local sheriff where they learn that Norman's mother has been dead for years. They then head over to the Bates Motel where they book into a room. After searching the room that Mary/Marion stayed in, Sam talks to Norman in his office. While this occurs Lila makes her way up to the house to speak to Norman's mother who she believes knows something about

To put together this gruesome collection, Ed Gein dug up multiple corpses, including that of his mother. He is known to have killed at least two people but it is believed that he was responsible for at least fifteen murders. Newspaper reports at the time left out many of the details and instead portrayed Gein as a murderous cannibal, as opposed to a skin wearing, human knick-knack making, sexually confused mass murderer. Still, despite these public admissions, the Ed Gein murders had a profound effect on cinema and American culture in general influencing everything from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* to *The Silence of the Lambs*.

³²⁰ Staiger, J., 'Hitchcock in Texas: Intertextuality in the face of blood and gore', Mathijs, E., and Mendik, X., in *The Cult Film Reader*, Open University Press, Berkshire, 2008, pp. 244-250.

Mary/Marion. In the house she discovers that Norma's bedroom has been kept immaculate as though somebody has been using it. She then searches Norman's room which is akin to a little boy's room. Back in the motel Norman realizes that Lila is in the house so he attacks Sam, leaving him unconscious. Lila then makes her way down to the basement where she finds the skeleton of Norma Bates. As she screams in fear Norma Bates appears with a knife behind her, yet Norma Bates is Norman Bates in his mother's dress. Sam then appears and wrestles Norman to the ground.

The final scene in both texts is an explanation of Norman's actions. Norman had an unhealthy relationship with his mother when he was young and when she eventually married a man called Joe Conside, Norman poisoned and killed them both. To cope with this tragedy Norman's mind split into multiple personalities including that of Norman the boy and Norman's mother. Norman would dress up in his mother's clothing and carry on conversations as though she were alive. Both novel and film leave the viewer and reader with a sense of sympathy for Norman in the sense that his actions were not all his fault.

Norman Bates is the central figure around which both narratives revolve and while his timeline follows the same path, the way he is interpreted, presented and depicted is very different. In both he is a knife wielding murderer who acts and functions as though his deceased mother was still alive. In both texts he dresses in his mother's clothes, runs a motel, kills both Mary/Marion and Arbogast, covers up after his 'murdering mother' and most importantly knows nothing of the actions of his multiple personalities. Yet ultimately the two Normans are different. Bloch's reader perceives Norman in a different way to that of Hitchcock's viewer and one of the fundamental reasons for this is the structure of the narrative.

Hitchcock opens with Marion Crane, while Bloch opens with Norman Bates, thus immediately audience/viewer identification is different.

Table of chapters:

Novel chapters and the character perspectives/Film scenes and dominant character perspectives.

BLOCH	HITCHCOCK
Ch. 1 – Norman Bates	Sc. 1 – Marion Crane
Ch. 2 – Mary Crane	Sc. 2 – Norman Bates
Ch. 3 – Mary Crane	Sc. 3 – Sam Loomis
Ch. 4 – Norman Bates	Sc. 4 – Arbogast
Ch. 5 – Norman Bates	Sc. 5 – Norman Bates
Ch. 6 – Sam Loomis	Sc. 6 – Sam and Lila
Ch. 7 – Sam Loomis	Sc. 7 – Sam
Ch. 8 – Sam Loomis	Sc. 8 – Lila
Ch. 9 – Norman Bates	Sc. 9 – Multiple
Ch. 10 – Norman Bates	
Ch. 11 – Sam Loomis	
Ch. 12 – Sam Loomis	
Ch. 13 – Norman Bates	
Ch. 14 – Sam Loomis	
Ch. 15 – Lila Crane	
Ch. 16 - Narrator	
Ch. 17 - Narrator	

The above table shows the structure of chapters and scenes within both texts. The chapters are all third person perspectives of characters that dominate the text, with each chapter almost exclusively dealing with the thoughts and perspectives of one particular character, while the scenes have been broken down into sections that predominantly deal with the perspective of one character. For example, with Arbogast's scene the camera at first follows the private detective, seeing what he sees, looking where he looks, but, as will be discussed later, the camera at times shifts its focus to that of Norman, or as Arbogast is searching the Bates' house, shifts to an opening door, something which Arbogast cannot see. So without dwelling on the motives of Hitchcock's camera, the scenes can be grouped together into nine main sections. As the table above shows each of the nine sections corresponds to the timeline of the novel's chapters, with two notable exceptions. The second and least notable alteration to the narrative is the film's introduction of an Arbogast perspective, which will be looked at shortly in relation to Hitchcock's use of camera and sound. The first and most notable change is Hitchcock's opening, which unlike Bloch focuses on Marion.

Robert Bloch's novel opens with a very deliberate description of Norman Bates and the life he leads. The opening chapter is a window into his mind that Bloch

wants the reader to look through. The first page describes a man with an “ample lap” who prefers to stay inside with his mother where everything is “orderly and ordained”. He describes a fear of the outside, worrying about “lonely roads” and falling into swamps. Norman as we will come to realise not only fears the idea of isolation, one of the reasons he creates his mother, but he also craves and needs it. On the second page of the novel, two passages appear that define Bloch’s Norman:

The light shone down on his plump face, reflected from his rimless glasses, bathed the pinkness of his scalp beneath his thinning sandy hair as he bent his head to resume reading.³²¹

And:

The drumbeat for this was usually performed on what had been the body of an enemy: the skin had been flayed and the belly stretched to form a drum, and the whole body acted as a sound box while throbbing came out of the open mouth – grotesque, but effective.³²²

The first is a physical description of Norman that paints him in the worst possible light. We know already from his ample lap, living with his mother and fear of the outside world that he is a cliché of ‘mummy’s boy’ syndrome, probably the result of years of over-protective smothering from his mother but then Bloch really stacks the cards against Norman by presenting his physical appearance as plump, pink, balding and short-sighted. For Bloch’s Norman his physical appearance is one of the many factors that lead to his discomfort around women and thus has a direct bearing on his psyche.

The second paragraph is from a book that Norman is reading called *The Realm of the Incas* by Victor W. Von Hagen. The book itself is an archaeological and anthropological look at the Incan culture but Norman reads and absorbs the book like a child, focusing on aspects of murder, torture and tribal nudity. He is excited by what he reads and in a mirroring way the book is dismissed by his ‘mother’ who reduces it to a book about ‘dirty savages’ that Norman will just hide away with his books on psychology. The passage itself details the process in which the flayed skin of a man’s face has being stretched across a drum so that even after death he appears to be

³²¹ Bloch, R., *Psycho*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1997, p. 2.

³²² Bloch, p. 2.

making sounds. This is Bloch describing Norman to the reader while simultaneously making subtle references to Ed Gein. Either the drum face is Norman's mother who he has kept alive after death or the drum face is Norman, and the drummer and the sound that beats through him is his mother. He has no control over the actions; his face is just a mask.

The first chapter is in fact littered with references to Norman's psyche from him discussing the Oedipal complex with his mother (something which he has metaphorically fulfilled), to his inner proclamation of "God, could she read his mind?:"

It was deafening him, the drumbeat of her words, the drumbeat in his own chest. The vileness in his mouth made him choke. In a moment he'd have to cry. Norman shook his head. To think that she could still do this to him, even now! But she could, and she was, and she *would*, over and over again, unless –

'Unless what?'

God, could she read his *mind*?

'I know what you're thinking, Norman. I know all about you, boy. More than you dream. You're thinking that you'd like to kill me, aren't you, Norman? But you can't. Because you haven't the gumption. I'm the one who has the strength. I've always had it. Enough for both of us. That's why you'll never get rid of me, even if you really wanted to.'³²³

This is Bloch playing with the reader, leaving a clue that there is no mother. She *can* read his mind, she *does* have all the strength, his strength. He cannot kill her because she *is* him. This is a tactic that Hitchcock cannot replicate. It is the words that give meaning to the double entendre here. Bloch is able to show us a window into the psyche of Norman's relationship with his mother that Hitchcock cannot.

After the argument the buzzer for the motel sounds and Norman heads off out into the rain to see who has arrived. Norman Bates is the first character with whom the reader connects. He is the sounding board for everything that follows. When we then meet Marion who is in the process of stealing money and making a getaway, our thoughts are not far from *when will she meet Norman; what will happen; how will they interact?* This could not be further from Hitchcock's opening, as through the simple act of removing Bloch's first chapter, Hitchcock completely changes the direction of the narrative. By opening with Marion Crane the audience identifies and

³²³ Bloch, p. 7.

latches onto her and thus becomes invested. Hitchcock told Truffaut that the use of Marion was deliberate, “to distract the viewer’s attention in order to heighten the murder”.³²⁴

When we first see Hitchcock’s Norman he is running through the rain, from the house to the motel. It is almost a continuation from Bloch’s first chapter. Yet when Norman shows his face he is anything but Bloch’s Norman. Hitchcock’s Norman is tall, slim, dark haired and attractive. He is also recognizable as Anthony Perkins who up until *Psycho* had plied his trade as a likeable leading man in Hollywood comedies and romances such as *The Matchmaker* (1958), *Green Mansions* (1959) and *Tall Story* (1960). This is an example of a director using an actor to convey a particular message that is independent to the narrative, as in the role that Anthony Perkins plays in *The Matchmaker* is completely separate from a narrative standpoint to that of *Psycho*, but to the viewer it could be argued that the characters are implicitly linked. When Hitchcock’s Norman places an umbrella over Marion, it is supposed to give the audience the impression that this man might be the hero. In this case the star’s image is used to fool the audience by playing on his existing film persona. In the novel Bloch uses the same scene to induce terror:

And now the darkness was here, rising all around Mary. She was alone in the dark. The money wouldn’t help her and Sam wouldn’t help her, because she’d taken the wrong turn back there and she was on a strange road. But no help for it – she’d made her grave and now she must lie in it.

Why did she think that? It wasn’t a *grave*, it was a *bed*.

She was trying to puzzle it out when the big dark shadow emerged out of the other shadows and opened her car door.³²⁵

This follows multiple hints that not only will something befall Mary but that Norman will have something to do with it. Thus when the shower scene occurs, its build up, while carrying an element of terror, certainly lacks in shock:

The roar was deafening, and the room was beginning to steam up. That’s why she didn’t hear the door open, or note the sound of footsteps. And at first, when the shower curtains parted, the steam obscured the face.

³²⁴ Truffaut, F., *The Definitive Study of Alfred Hitchcock: Revised Edition*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, New York, 1984 p. 206.

³²⁵ Bloch, R., *Psycho*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1997, p. 19.

Then she *did* see it there – just a face, peering through the curtains, hanging in midair like a mask. A head-scarf concealed the hair and the glassy eyes stared inhumanly, but it wasn't a mask, it couldn't be. The skin had been powdered dead-white and two hectic spots of rouge centered on the cheekbones. It wasn't a mask. It was the face of a crazy old women. Mary started to scream, and then the curtains parted further and a hand appeared, holding a butcher's knife. It was the knife that, a moment later, cut off her scream.

And her head.³²⁶

Bloch's shower murder is blackly comic, gruesome and expected, whereas Hitchcock's is serious, gruesome and unexpected. This can be better explained by looking at a table of 'catalysers' and 'cardinal functions':

	BLOCH	BLOCH	HITCHCOCK	HITCHCOCK
	Catalysers (smaller actions that complement the hinge points)	Cardinal Functions (the narrative hinge points)	Catalysers	Cardinal Functions
Chapter 1	Thoughts of loneliness.	Reading book		
	Enjoyment and gratification at the sex and violence of the book.	Argument with mother		
	The mention of psychology and the Oedipus Complex	Answering the motel buzzer		
Chapter 2/Film Opening	The rain	Tommy Cassidy's money deposit	Monetary pressure on Sam	Lunchtime rendezvous with Sam
	Thinking of the past, of meeting Sam	Stealing money	Bumping into Mr Lowry in street	Tommy Cassidy bringing in deposit
	The luck of meeting Sam	Changing cars	Cop pulling over Marion	Stealing Money
		Getting lost	Car salesman's actions	Changing cars
		Stopping at motel	The rain	Stopping at motel
Chapter 3/Second act	Food conversation	Saying yes to dinner	Marion saying that she is from 'Texas'	Choosing room key
	Norman's embarrassment	Angering Norman	Small talk that leads to Norman's bashfulness about the bathroom	Saying yes to dinner
	Norman not eating	Having a shower	Mother's voice	Angering Norman
	Thinking of her actions – ultimate effect on her life		Norman not eating	Undressing
				Having a shower

³²⁶ Bloch, R., *Psycho*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1997, p. 31.

The table shows that the chapter two/film opening and the chapter three/second act both share very similar cardinal functions. The bare bones of the narrative from Mary/Marion's introduction through to her meeting with Norman share the same physical traits such as money depositing, money stealing, changing cars, meeting Norman, having dinner with Norman, angering Norman and taking a shower. The catalysers that complement and connect these physical hinge points are also consistent within both texts. However, the way we perceive these narrative hinge points differs because of Bloch's extra cardinal functions.

Before we get into the different hinge points and meanings within the textual variations, it is worth noting that McFarlane's "virtual palimpsest" is correct and more importantly, in keeping with Hitchcock's adaptation process. The similarities are in fact so striking that the adaptation of *Psycho* links back to Hitchcock's adaptations of his British plays, adapting almost in total the complete narrative, yet manoeuvring a particular background/past activity and bringing it front and centre to manipulate the viewer's thinking, in this case being that of Marion's theft.

Concerning the differing openings of the two texts it is perfectly plausible to fit the opening of Bloch's novel into Hitchcock's text. In the film we see Norman Bates for the first time when he appears through the doorway of his home, running through the rain, adjusting his collar as he moves. This is the exact moment at which Bloch's opening chapter ends and thus it is perfectly plausible to imagine Hitchcock's Norman sitting in his home, arguing with his mother over a book that he is reading. Other than the physical description, it fits into the narrative. However with those opening cardinal functions come the catalysers that shape the opening chapter. The character of Norman is already formed in our minds. It is the same character that will stick with the reader throughout the text. When he meets Mary, there is already a sense of mistrust between both her and Norman. Within the film the character of Norman is formed over his meeting with Marion. There are subtle signs to his dark psyche such as the birds of prey looming over their dinner and Norman's brief hostile outburst, but up until Marion's death, Norman is a potential hero to Marion's heroine.

The most shocking aspect of Marion's death is not the manner in which she is murdered but rather the abrupt suddenness of it. Her removal leaves the viewer in a

limbo state:

the knife that kills Marion Crane in her Bates Motel bathroom effectively cuts the story, if not the screen and the viewer, in two. Thus Norman's story displaces, hence represses and repeats, Marion's story, as if to reverse the film's momentum.³²⁷

It creates a void within the narrative that Norman Bates can step into, a void that never exists within Bloch's novel. The identification that the viewer had with Marion is abruptly cut and then reattached to Norman and thus his motives and actions are always ambiguous. He cleans up the murder scene, disposing of the body and then actively lies to the authorities and Marion's family, all aspects and traits of a 'stereotypical' Hollywood villain, yet in the same vein a 'stereotypical' Hollywood film often has a hero that allows for audience identification, a role that Anthony Perkins himself had fulfilled multiple times before. It is his mother that fulfils the role of the villain, but because of her absence from the camera, the gaze of the viewer that would have fallen on her, falls on Norman.

Bloch's Norman never allows the reader to identify with him as a potential hero. Like Hitchcock's Norman his actions are ambiguous and fluctuate between good and evil, but ultimately he is always an arm's reach away from any form of real reader identification and this is because we learn much more about the psyche of Norman. The logistics of the novel allow for Norman to converse with himself in his mind, and it is a conversation that the reader is privy to. His hatred of women, his dependency on alcohol and his conflicted desires about his mother are all laid bare for the reader. The point of a hero within a narrative is to inspire and lead and whether he comes with these qualities or develops them over time is usually one of the focal points of the narrative. Bloch's Norman however evokes pity and disgust, and while the novel, like the film, distances Norman from the actual murders, Bloch's Norman comes across as helpless and impotent when his mother kills, cowering in his room as she marches off to meet Arbogast for example, as opposed to Hitchcock's Norman who is deceived by his mother while he believes himself to be either sleeping or carrying out other tasks. Hitchcock allows more room for his Norman to appear sympathetic.

³²⁷ Deutelbaum, M. and Poague, L., *A Hitchcock Reader*, Chichester, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009, p. 328.



Figure 117.



Figure 118.



Figure 119.



Figure 120.

Figures 117 and 118 and then figures 119 and 120 both show similar shots of the faces of Marion and Norman. As can be seen, both have angular and pointed features, almost birdlike. Both are slim and attractive. There is a deliberate symmetry that Hitchcock exploits to increase the connection and subsequent transference of identification between the two.

Bloch's Norman refers to Mary as a 'bitch' and a 'tease', he is a drunk and as mentioned previously, Bloch explicitly refers to him as unattractive. In the film Norman watches through a peephole and spies on Marion who undresses before getting into the shower. Other than Norman suddenly pulling away from the peephole, seemingly out of self-knowledge that he should not be looking, no other feeling is obviously conveyed by either Marion or Norman. In the novel we bear witness to their musings:

For a moment she stood before the mirror set in the door and took stock of herself. Maybe the face was twenty-seven, but the body was free, white, and twenty-one. She had a good figure. A damned good figure. Sam would like it. She wished he was here to admire it now. It was going to be hell to wait another two years. But then she'd make up for lost time. They say a woman isn't fully mature, sexually, until she's thirty. That was something to find out about.

Mary giggled again, tossed her image a kiss and received one in return. After that she stepped into the shower stall.³²⁸

And from Norman's point-of-view:

But she did turn away, and Norman almost called out to her, 'Come back here, you bitch!' but he remembered just in time, and then he saw her unhooking her bra in front of the door mirror and he could see. Except that the mirror was all wavy lines and lights that made him dizzy, and it was hard to make out anything until she stepped to one side. Then he could see her...

Now she was going to take them off, and he could see, she was standing, before the mirror and actually gesturing!

Did she know? Had she known all along, known about the hole in the wall, known that he was watching? Did she want him to watch, was she doing this on purpose, the bitch?³²⁹

These two passages represent very different interpretations from that of the film. Firstly, we learn that Mary has never had sex with Sam, an act that the film suggests with its post-coital opening, while her general attitude is one of playfulness, a side that her cinematic counterpart never really shows. In contrast Norman lusts over her through the peep hole, and subsequently express moments of rage, delusion and longing, the last of which is shared with Hitchcock's Norman. Both passages express emotions that could easily fit the cinematic characterisations, but through the use of the camera and music, Hitchcock denies them this expression. It is this denial of sexual expression that again links to *Les Diaboliques*. Both films strongly link sex and death together, with both in essence using the act of sex to be the root cause of death. *Psycho* opens with Marion and Sam in bed together, and if *Psycho* is as Carol Clover describes the "immediate ancestor" to the forthcoming cycle of slasher films,³³⁰ then Marion's death is the result of her sexual encounter with Sam and her rejection of Norman's advances. She is being both punished for her sin and saintliness, a common convention of the slasher genre, though it should be noted that only a part of *Psycho* adheres to what would later become the slasher genre, critics like Clover still openly refer to the film as one of the original founders. This

³²⁸ Bloch, p. 31.

³²⁹ Bloch, p. 36.

³³⁰ Clover, C., 'Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film,' *Representations* 20, Fall 1987, p. 187-228.

punishment for sin and saintliness also applies to Vera in *Les Diaboliques*. She is presented as sweet and timid, afraid of her bullying husband who openly takes another lover, yet simultaneously she denies him herself. She accommodates their relationship while funding the boarding school, yet her part in her husband's 'murder' means that like *Easy Virtue*'s Larita, *Rebecca*'s Narrator and *Vertigo*'s Madeline, her actions become ambiguous and her morals questionable. Hitchcock's Marion is an amalgamation of the women that have come before her, 'damned if she does, damned if she doesn't'. She is more than Bloch's Mary, but she is also not a product of Hitchcock the auteur, but rather Hitchcock the adaptor. She shares characteristics with Hitchcock's other leading ladies, further proof of Hitchcock's continual use of recycling his own material, while she is also a product of Clouzot, Boileau and Narcejac, the latter also having extra influence through *Vertigo*'s Madeline.

5.3 Use of Camera and Sound, The Infamous Shower Scene and Brian De Palma

Using Dudley Andrew's analysis of adaptation, one could categorise Hitchcock's *Psycho* as 'intersecting'. This is the notion that "the uniqueness of the original is preserved to such an extent that it is intentionally left unassimilated in adaptation."³³¹ Rather than the whole text being borrowed and preserved, it is instead looked at from a different angle and placed into a different position. Andrew uses Bazin's metaphor and likens the intersecting adaptation to a flashlight whereas the original is a beautiful chandelier. The light is the essence of the transference. What it leaves behind is a beautiful fixed structure and what it becomes is a flashlight that sacrifices fixed beauty and illumination to light up previously unseen corners of the room.³³²

Bloch's *Psycho* lacked the status of the work of Dickens and Shakespeare so there was little preconceived audience expectation. Hitchcock's audience was not expected to marvel at the power of the original text through the adaptation, so

³³¹ Andrews, D., *Concepts in Film Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p.98.

³³² Andrews, p.99.

Andrew's label of 'borrowing' in that sense does not apply to Hitchcock's film. The film itself is not an original text nor is it essentially a 'transformation', a text that, in the spirit of fidelity, will attempt to adhere completely to the original skeleton of the precursor text. Hitchcock claimed, as he did with all of his films, that Bloch's book was merely an idea for him, an inspiration, and from that he produced an 'original piece', which as shown already is simply not true. Within cinematic history *Psycho* holds a place of originality, especially considering its position within the slasher/horror genre (as will be discussed later) but within the confines of Dudley Andrew's terms, while flirting with 'borrowing' (especially considering the re-emergence of Bloch's text), Hitchcock's *Psycho* lends itself to 'intersecting'.

Concerning 'intersecting', the first question to ask is what exactly is being preserved from the original text? What "uniqueness" does Hitchcock look to maintain "unassimilated"? Bloch's *Psycho* is essentially about the horror under the surface of society and it is that element that Hitchcock identifies with and looks to recreate, deliberately going against type with the typical science-fiction and supernatural horror of the late 1950's. It is more than just a tale of shower stall murder, it is about evil lurking behind what, as a society, we hold sacred. In this case it is the picture perfect American family unit and the preserving of innocence, or at least Hollywood's projection of innocence, that is under attack. It is this deconstruction of the family unit that will allow us to analyse Hitchcock's *Psycho* as an adaptation in terms of genre, psychoanalysis and cultural aspects. However, to understand these terms and their applications, we must first look at the camera work of Hitchcock and how the camera has been used to adapt this deconstruction. In doing this, two particular facets of Hitchcock's film will be discussed, the death of the private investigator Frank Arbogast, and firstly the role of the camera, particularly in relation to Norma Bates and Marion's murder.

Francois Truffaut describes Bloch's description of Norma Bates as 'cheating':

Truffaut I've read the novel from which *Psycho* was taken, and one of the things that bothered me is that it cheats. For instance, there are passages like this: "Norman sat down beside his mother and they began a conversation." Now, since she doesn't exist, that's obviously misleading, whereas the film narration is rigorously worked out to eliminate these discrepancies. What was it that attracted you to the novel?

Hitchcock I think that the thing that appealed to me and made me decide to do the picture was the suddenness of the murder in the shower, coming, as it were, out of the blue. That was about all.

What Truffaut describes is a tactic that Bloch uses throughout the novel, from the opening chapter when we first meet Norman and Norma, through to the murders:

And she was standing there now, looking down at him. He hoped she would think he had just fallen asleep. What was she doing here, anyway? Had she heard him leave with the girl, come down to spy on him?

Norman slumped back, not daring to move, not wanting to move. Every instant it was getting harder and harder to move even if he *had* wanted to. The roaring was steady now, and the vibration was rocking him to sleep. That was nice. To be rocked to sleep, with Mother standing over you.³³³

Within Bloch's narrative, Norma Bates is written as though she is alive. It is clear that she is responsible for the murders while Norman is powerless to stop her. With an absent father, Bloch is attacking the ideal American family by presenting an abnormal unit; one that we will later learn has been manipulated and created by Norman himself. With his father's death at an early age and overprotective mother, Norman destroys what little society has left him, and then sets about to recreate his own unit, playing the roles of mother, father and son. From one tragedy we get another. The idea of mental illness further compounds the destruction of what could be a portrait for the 'American dream'. Norman and his mother own a motel, a family business, yet the business is the place of death and the family is the killer. Bloch may deceive the reader about the mother's physical being but her actions are a truthful representation of what he hopes to achieve and it is these actions, this attack on society that Hitchcock looks to adapt. As he states to Truffaut it is the suddenness of the murder in the shower that appealed to Hitchcock. Now while it is clearly not the only thing that Hitchcock was either interested in or chose to adapt, it is a significant scene in terms of its adaptation and of its subsequent influence. As shown earlier with cardinal functions, the murder of Mary is shocking but not in the same way that it is within the film. Bloch uses Norma to unnerve his reader and probe at their fears while Hitchcock holds off on Norma's introduction and instead uses the murder of Marion to create the same fear.

The shower scene is shocking because in Marion, as has already been

³³³ Bloch, p. 37.

established, the audience have a figure with whom to identify. Marion is attractive and polite, agreeable even in the face of adversity as with the car dealer and the policeman. She has a relatable job for the early sixties, an office secretary, in a subservient role to her male bosses. She is meant to be an-all American woman. Even her act of thievery with the forty thousand dollars is presented as almost an act of courage as opposed to a sin. This coupled with her affair with Sam is meant to suggest a sense of innocence that is not based on purity, but on reality. Hitchcock is stating that Marion is a normal person, and normal people have sex out of wedlock and occasionally break the law, because sometimes they have to rebel against the oppressive society around them. Marion is in a thankless job where she watches money from a distance while Sam is held prisoner by crippling debts accrued by his father. In her own way, Marion is righteous. The conversations that she has with herself are proof of this. There is no ambiguity with her actions, as her internal dialogue rationalises what she has done and why she has done it. There is a strange symmetry with the dialogue of Mrs Bates, which is in-turn Norman's own inner thoughts and the only ones that we are allowed to access. Bloch presents chapter after chapter of the inner workings of Norman's mind while Hitchcock hides his thoughts away.

When Marion is murdered in the shower it is the camera that is seemingly the culprit, committing simultaneously Norma's murder and Norman's rape. Leading up to the attack the camera positions itself in line with Norman. Raymond Bellour writes:

Conversely, in the shots preceding the shower scene, the camera reduces to an extreme degree the unforeseeable effect of the distance separating it from what is being filmed: it virtually coincides with the insert of Norman's bulging eye, owing to the metaphor of the apparatus thus constituted. This is the point of maximal identification between the character and the instance of the *mise-en-scene*, it can only be surpassed by its own excess, when the eye-camera becomes a body-knife, entering the field of its object and attempting in vain to coincide with it.³³⁴

Bellour is commenting on the camera's attempt to physically interact with what it can see. Hitchcock's camera acts as if it is perverted, sneaking into Marion and Sam's bedroom while they are amorous, watching her pack her clothes, watching Norman through the peephole, using the peephole to watch Marion undress and then

³³⁴ Raymond Bellour, 'Psychosis, Neurosis, Perversion' in Deutelbaum, M. and Poague, L. (eds.), *A Hitchcock Reader*, Chichester, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009, p. 328.

getting into the shower with Marion. All these instances occur within Bloch's novel yet they are commented upon instead of experienced. The camera is a voyeur and it is these voyeuristic tendencies that force the audience to experience the horror that is being portrayed. Raymond Durnat describes the opening of *Psycho*:

The camera climbs towards a window like any other window. Documentary-style, a sub-title suggests time and date; but it really means: Here and Now, at this moment, without warning, imperceptibly, destiny entered these lives.³³⁵

Durnat describes Hitchcock's camera as a documentarian, yet it is more than that, it is not just about voyeurism, it is about possession. To document means to observe, but observation is not enough for Hitchcock. A common theme that runs through Hitchcock's work, from *Rear Window*, to *Vertigo*, to *Psycho*, is that voyeurism leads to possession, and possession leads to murder. In *Psycho* the camera is the voyeur, the camera possesses and the camera murders. From the opening shot through to the shower murder, the camera stalks Marion taking every available opportunity to become a part of its victim's fear and anxiety.

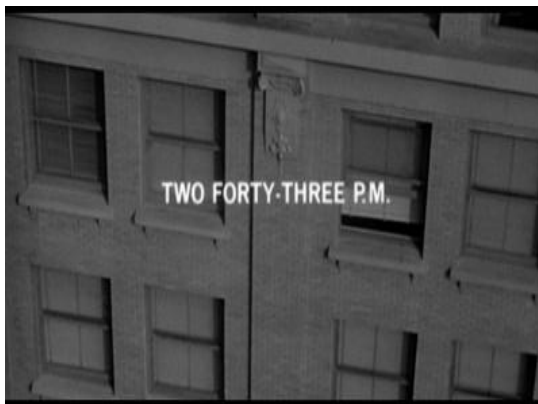


Figure 121.



Figure 122.

³³⁵ Durnat, R., *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock*, The Mit Press, Cambridge, 1974, p.322.



Figure 123.



Figure 124.



Figure 125.



Figure 126.

Figure 121 shows the camera moving through buildings until it finds an open window. Figure 122 show the camera having settled on a couple in the most intimate of situations where it waits and follows their every move as they embrace and then dress within the hotel bedroom. Figures 123 through to 126 show that the camera has now found its target. From the moment the camera latches onto Marion it shadows her wherever it goes, using close-ups and extreme close-ups to show her expressions and using point-of-view shots so that we know what is worrying her such as her boss crossing the road, the policemen, the rain and the knife. Figures 124 and 125 show the camera sandwiched between two close ups of Marion and the policeman who finds her sleeping in her car. As well as showing the fear felt by Marion and the intimidation of the policeman, this shot is also important because, like the eye-camera and body-knife that Bellour discusses, the camera here is attempting to merge with what it can see. It is attempting an act of possession, feeding off the fear created between cop and woman.

There is a secondary function to the scene with the close up of the policemen suggesting that it is not just Marion that he is looking at. Like the car salesman before him, there is a suggestion that they are aware of the stalking camera. While their presence appears menacing to Marion, like her boss, they are in fact the patriarchs that she should be looking to for guidance and help. The camera is aware of this, it is always one step ahead of Marion, in a sense leading her to the motel, away from safety and into the arms of Norman.

With repeat viewing of *Psycho* we are able to look at the role of the camera and subsequently the role of Norma Bates within a different light compared to an original viewing. When first viewed it is unclear what the camera represents as the killer's identity is unknown. This same ambiguity exists within the novel where with a second reading you are aware that Norma Bates does not exist, thus the conversations between Norma and Norman do not make any literal sense, yet while the ambiguity exists in the film, repeated viewings hold up visually because Norma is never shown on camera, and thus while we *know* the murderer is Norman, the actions of the camera still bring doubt to what we actually know. Bloch's novel does not generate any ambiguity concerning the existence of Norman's mother. As Truffaut states, the reader is cheated.³³⁶ The reader sees through words, creating their own mental picture, unlike the viewer, thus with *Psycho*, we hear Norma's voice, we hear all about her, we see a figure that we believe could be her, and we see the aftermath of her actions. The Bates' house that Bloch describes, grounds the character of Norma within a believable reality, whereas Hitchcock's house is the smokescreen that fogs the viewer's eyes, giving life to her voice and actions. The camera is aware of this, and on repeated viewings it is easy to imagine the camera taking on different roles; voyeur, Norma, Norman, pervert, murderer and witness. Like Norman the camera has multiple personalities, yet it is always the voyeur.

³³⁶ While Truffaut claims that the reader is cheated, it is in fact a logical cheat as we are placed within the subjectivity of Norman's split personality. It would have been considered more of a cheat on film, like the flashback within *Stage Fright*. Bloch's false narrative anticipates filmic takes on the same scenario, most notably *Fight Club* (Fincher, 1999) where the onscreen character of Tyler Durden represents what Norma Bates could have been on cinema.



Figure 127.



Figure 128.



Figure 129.



Figure 130.

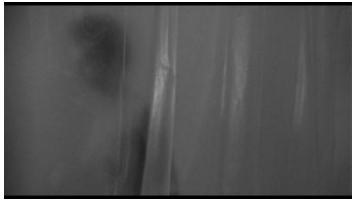


Figure 131.



Figure 132.



Figure 133.



Figure 134.



Figure 135.



Figure 136.



Figure 137.



Figure 138.



Figure 139.

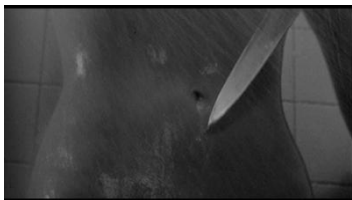


Figure 140.



Figure 141.



Figure 142.

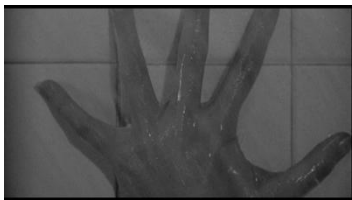


Figure 143.



Figure 144.



Figure 145.



Figure 146.



Figure 147.

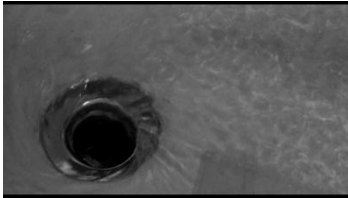


Figure 148.

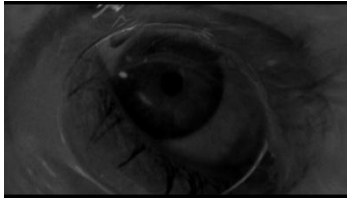


Figure 149.

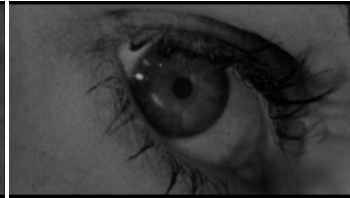


Figure 150.

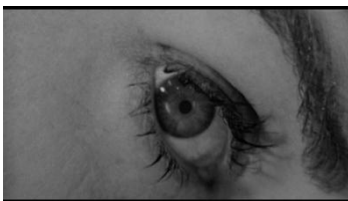


Figure 151.



Figure 152.



Figure 153.



Figure 154.

Figures 127 to 153 show the murder of Marion and explicitly depict the camera's many roles under the umbrella of its voyeuristic nature. Figure 127 in one way shows the camera at its most perverse and in another its most observant. In terms of the narrative the point of the flushing toilet is to show Marion throwing away the ripped up scraps of paper. This plot point is the equivalent of Mary's earrings that her sister will find. Both elements are meant to be evidence that Marion/Mary was in the hotel room, but not damning enough to suggest foul play. The flushing of the toilet does not have a transferable point within the novel, such as Marion losing her earrings, but Norman does have an internal debate with himself when he cannot find the other earring. So the camera focusing on the flushing of the toilet is technically a point of adaptation. Like Norman's musings on what will happen to the missing earring, the showing of the paper removal is vital to the audience as it is a specific sign that holds particular significance.

Another way to view figure 127 is as the camera's perverse nature. It is not afraid to show a flushing toilet³³⁷ and coupled with the shower, both of which hark back to images of filth in *Les Diaboliques*, we must ask if this perverse camera is without fear, what else then is it not afraid to do? The same must be asked for Norman Bates who in the very next frame is seen standing within his office, surrounded by birds of prey, debating what to do (figure 128). Eventually he removes a picture frame from the wall (figure 129) and watches through an existing peep hole (figure 130). The extreme side-view close-up of Norman's eye is the camera's attempt to merge with Norman, experiencing what he is seeing, becoming him. It can also be viewed as Norma Bates, as if the camera is a part of Norman that is wholly separate from the normal part, as in a split personality that watches what the other half is doing, knowing all and then acting when needed. This is essentially what the camera then does. After Norman leaves the room and returns to the house, the camera (the Norma half of Norman) returns to the motel and as shown in figures 131 to 134, watches Marion undress and then gets into the shower with her, becoming both stalker and victim. Bloch's description is brief and violent, and as a reader we are placed firmly within the role of the victim. That may be one of the main differences between novel and text, because while its position may be ambiguous, unlike the reader, the viewer simultaneously plays both victim and attacker.

Figures 135 to 147 show the bloody killing of Marion Crane. The camera, as it was between Marion and the policemen, is within the middle of both victim and attacker, thus the viewer experiences both the act of murder and being murdered. It is a masochistic approach that the camera takes and it is further continues with figures 148 to 152. With the focus and close-up of the plughole and subsequent fade-in to Marion's eye, the camera is essentially looking into the face of death. The hole is an abyss that the camera dips its lens into, only to withdraw and show us the mask of death upon Marion's face. Yet it could also be argued that the plughole acts almost as a looking glass that the camera steps into, leaving behind the world of Marion, and then out the other side into the world of Norman. This theory is backed up by the cataclysmic narrative shift that occurs with Marion's death.

³³⁷ The showing of a flushing toilet, as commented by Rebello, Spoto and many other biographers, caused Hitchcock a lot of aggravation with the censors.

The dramatic narrative shift that Hitchcock's shower scene provides, as well as the visceral visuals that his camera brings to Bloch's text is further adapted by Brian De Palma's *Psycho*-homage *Dressed to Kill* (1980), where the infamous shower scene is twice recreated and adapted. It is important to note because De Palma here believes he is attempting to adapt Hitchcock and not Bloch. De Palma's work is filled with references and recreations of Hitchcock, with *Sisters* (1973) and *Body Double* (1984) both adaptations of *Rear Window* while *Obsession* (1976) adapts *Vertigo*. In fact De Palma's entire block of work, like Hitchcock's, is littered with adaptations of other artists work, including his own. De Palma's work as an 'adaptor' of Hitchcock could fill a thesis alone, but what is worth noting is his willingness to accept that he is adapting texts and the viewer's own acceptance that they are watching an adaptation.³³⁸ Film critic Roger Ebert in 1980 favourably reviewed *Dressed to Kill* in relation to *Psycho*, suggesting that he had earned the right to have his work compared to that of Hitchcock³³⁹ while Vincent Canby of *The New York Times* commented:

The movie owes a great deal to Hitchcock, perhaps too much for one to be able to judge it entirely on its own merits. It's possible that if one is a Hitchcock student, with a special knowledge of *Psycho* and *Vertigo*, one will resent all of the so-called quotes and references that Mr. De Palma includes in *Dressed to Kill*. But that, I think, is to underrate what the writer-director has pulled off in this case, which is not an imitation but a film made by someone who has studied the master and learned, in addition to style, something far more important, that is, a consistent point of view. Among other things, the De Palma camera appears to have an intelligence of its own.³⁴⁰

While Ebert praises De Palma for his appropriation of Hitchcock, Canby suggests praise is in order for what De Palma and his camera have become by using Hitchcock. To further complicate this continual adaptation of *Psycho*, many theorists, such as Tony Williams in *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film* view *Dressed to Kill* as a film that borrows heavily from Dario Argento's *The Bird With the Crystal Plumage* (1970),³⁴¹ itself an Italian 'giallo' film that is often

³³⁸ In the 1970's Hitchcock's canonical status had become more secure and thus his work had been accepted as texts to study and learn from, thus De Palma's adaptations fall into the category of 'referencing' early cinema.

³³⁹ Roger Ebert, 'Dressed to Kill Review', originally published on January 1st, 1980, cited in <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/dressed-to-kill-1980>.

³⁴⁰ Vincent Canby, 'Dressed to Kill: Movie Review' in *The New York Times*, July 25th, 1980, <http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=EE05E7DF173AE067BC4D51DFB166838B699EDE>.

³⁴¹ Williams, T., *Hearths of Darkness: The Family in the American Horror Film*, Associated University Press, London, 1996, p. 216.

described as ‘Hitchcockian’ in its style, execution and even casting.³⁴² Thus De Palma in this sense, as well as adapting *Psycho*, is adapting an Italian ‘giallo’ film that is itself an adaptation of Hitchcock’s work, ultimately adding further ‘extratextual’ layers but also moving further away from the work of Bloch. While all the films are a part of the ‘Psycho-meta-text’, the more texts added, the further diluted each adaptation becomes.

As stated the *Psycho* shower scene is adapted twice within *Dressed to Kill*, once within the opening where Angie Dickenson’s character Kate Miller is showering and fantasises about being raped and presumably murdered within the shower and secondly when she is within the elevator and she is slashed to death with a straight razor. There are multiple narrative similarities between the two films, considering that *Dressed to Kill* deals with a character who the viewer believes to be the heroine, only for her to be murdered by another woman after thirty minutes. It is then up to two other side characters to uncover the truth and to end up suspecting that a man with good community standing may have the answers and as it turns out the man in question is a murderer who dresses up in female drag, taking on another personality to commit his crimes. The narrative parallels are obvious between the two films, with this skeletal structure fitting both texts but it is with the adaptation of the shower scene that De Palma’s appropriation of Hitchcock truly lies.

When Kate Miller is murdered in the elevator it is an intricate re-creation of the murder of Marion Crane. Like the shower, the elevator is a normal non-descript location and she believes herself to be perfectly safe. The doors then slide open as the shower curtains do and a large female figure appears brandishing a blade. De Palma’s camera holds on the razor blade as Hitchcock’s does on the knife and Kate’s arm comes up to block the blow as per the actions of Marion. The subsequent slashing and slumping of Kate’s body to the floor is also reminiscent of *Psycho*. Here De Palma is adapting only Hitchcock, at least it is Hitchcock that we are meant to recognise, for it is most notably the physical actions of killer and victim that have been transposed. This is noticeably different to the opening shower scene:

³⁴² Within *The Bird With Crystal Plumage* Reggie Nalder plays a hit man that is essentially a reprisal of the role he played within Hitchcock’s own remake *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

The word 'shower' immediately evokes *Psycho*, but the decidedly romantic music indicates a sort of anti-*Psycho*, whereas the way De Palma films the murder of Dickenson in the lift is an exact copy of the murder of Marion Crane and the fleeing of her killer after.³⁴³

De Palma's film opens with Kate Miller naked in the shower, washing herself with soap and touching herself for arousal. Her husband is outside shaving with a straight razor and she watches him the entire time, except for when the camera faces her straight on and she appears to be looking at the viewer. There is music over the top yet is a pleasant dream-like melody as opposed to the haunting stabbing sound of *Psycho*. This is shattered when a naked man appears behind her in the shower and rapes her:

The ending of the shower sequence, where Dickenson is seized and raped, indicates that a fantasy is being represented, but whose, hers or ours?³⁴⁴

While it is clear that the scene is a fantasy, it is not so clear that it is of the viewer, or even Kate Miller's. There is little evidence to suggest that the viewer wants this rape to occur as the camera is more than just a voyeur. One second it is out of the shower the next it is inside. It closes in on Kate's nakedness, sees her attacker first and then moves with the rapist as though it is a part of the attack. The following scene shows Kate having sex with her husband. She appears to be faking enjoyment and it could be argued that she is fantasising about the rape while she is with her husband, but then that is not necessarily in line with her feigning pleasure. A more interesting take on the situation is that this is the fantasy of the killer Dr Robert Elliot who Kate recounts her disappointing sex session to shortly afterwards. Like the masochistic-all-seeing-all-knowing camera that follows Norman Bates and his victims, De Palma's camera essentially seeks out and stalks Kate Miller, preparing her for murder. Like Norman, the camera is linked to Dr Elliot's psychosis, it knows what is happening and who to follow. It switches easily from victim to Dr Elliot to the woman killer, much like the camera does from Marion to Norman to his mother. The use of the camera is ultimately an adaptation of Hitchcock, but what the camera experiences relates as much to Bloch as Hitchcock.

³⁴³ Humphries, R., *The American Horror Film: An Introduction*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2002, p. 156.

³⁴⁴ Humphries, p. 156.

Robin Wood argues that while many contemporary sequels and remakes are often “constructed on the simple premise that a formula that worked before will work again”, De Palma’s relationship with Hitchcock is instead one that is “centred on a complex dialectic of affinity and difference.”³⁴⁵ Wood goes on to state that this “affinity” is not shared with Howard Hawks and De Palma’s remake of *Scarface* (1932),³⁴⁶ thus adaptation here moves above the commercial and becomes once again, as with Du Maurier, about the adaptation of an author’s ideologies and the connection that the two author’s share. A further example of this connection between Hitchcock and De Palma can be viewed through the parodied shower scene within *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974), where the Phantom slices through a shower curtain and shoves a toilet plunger into the face of the unsuspecting shower user Beef. The use of the plunger echoes Hitchcock’s taboo toilet and continues the dirty bathroom imagery that started with *Clouzot*, while the parodied scene also suggests a deliberate attempt at humour that Hitchcock himself would have appreciated, as noted by his love of morbid practical jokes³⁴⁷ and his belief that viewers took *Psycho* too seriously when he himself believed the film’s content to be amusing.³⁴⁸ Adaptation in this case has become a form of flattery.

The motif of sex and death runs strong throughout Bloch’s novel and subsequently Hitchcock’s novel and De Palma’s ‘remake’. De Palma’s shower scene explicitly shows a sexual fantasy of Kate Miller being raped while she looks on at her husband who shaves with the very implement that will eventually kill her. There are readings of the *Psycho* shower scene which suggest that Marion is masturbating within the shower:

The emphasis on Marion’s pleasure in the shower goes well beyond all diegetic motivation: close-up shots of her naked body alternate with shots of gushing water; she leans into the stream, opens her mouth, smiles and closes her eyes in a rapture that is made all the more intense because it contrasts with the horror that is to come, but also because the two are linked

³⁴⁵ Wood, R., *Hollywood: From Reagan to Vietnam...and Beyond*, Columbia University Press, Chichester, 2003, p. 124.

³⁴⁶ Wood, p. 125.

³⁴⁷ The Hitchcock biographies of Spoto, Chandler and Ackroyd contain plenty of tales involving Hitchcock and his penchant for playing morbid practical jokes on suspecting cast and production staff.

³⁴⁸ In 2013 BBC archives unearthed tapes of Hitchcock discussing, amongst many things that *Psycho* was meant to be a big joke that would cause viewers to giggle with pleasure.

- Xan Brooks, ‘Alfred Hitchcock: Psycho was a Joke’, *The Guardian*, 8 February, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/feb/08/alfred-hitchcock-psycho-joke>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

together. By a subtle reversal, the pleasure that Marion did not show in the opening love scene at last appears.³⁴⁹

If we take this as the true meaning of the shower scene and then the murder afterwards as a symbolic rape then this sequence of events is realised within De Palma's film with the shower/masturbation/rape opening and then the unfulfilled sexual encounter with her husband, which is then later fulfilled by the stranger (mirroring Marion's masturbation) and then subsequent murder. In relation to this, as discussed previously, Bloch's Mary does not have sex with Sam but we do have a window into her mind and when she undresses for the shower while thinking about sex and the act of wanting to be with Sam. She dances and teases herself, examining her body in the mirror, winking at herself. As well as driving Norman into a sexual rage himself, one could read into Bloch's words that Mary, like Marion and Kate, enters the shower with the intention of masturbating:

Mary giggled again, then executed an amateurish bump and grind, tossed her image a kiss and received one in return. After that she stepped into the shower stall. The water was hot, and she had to add a mixture from the COLD faucet. Finally she turned both faucets on full force and let the warmth gush over her.

The roar was deafening, and the room was beginning to steam up.³⁵⁰

Bloch's Norman watches Mary undress through a crack in the wall. He moves aside a framed license and while he watches Mary undress and dance, he thinks about his impotence and about whether she knows he is watching and is thus flirting with him. Bloch is very explicit about the sexual longing of both Norman and Marion, with both characters being unable to fulfil their desires. Norman is physically incapable of doing so while Mary is lacking a partner, yet it is perhaps in her acceptance of her own body, and subsequent entering of the shower, almost a sexual baptism, that seals her fate. In Hitchcock's film it is not a framed license that is removed but a painting:

The painting which Norman has placed over his spy hole is that of *Susanna and the Elders*, a fictional story set during the Jewish Exile in Babylon; it is particularly interesting in relation to voyeurism. Two elders conceive a passion for Susanna whom they spy on when she bathes in the garden. When she refuses to have intercourse with them they denounce her, claiming they watched her lay with a young man. Eventually they are caught out because their testimonies do not match. The painting depicts the moment when they apprehend her, trying

³⁴⁹ Bellour, p. 355.

³⁵⁰ Bloch, p. 31.

to hold her semi naked struggling body. *Susanna and the Elders* points to man's voyeurism and desire to punish woman for her supposed sexual sins.³⁵¹

Creed also notes that the voyeurism is strongly associated with masturbation, and thus the painting represents the frustration that Norman feels and the 'punishment' that Marion is to receive. Hitchcock introduces the painting as physical replacement for the feelings that Bloch's Norman shares with the reader, yet the choice of painting is obscure and other than recognising the image of two men attacking a woman, the painting would hold little recognition with the viewer, suggesting that its cultural value is of little importance. It is the camera itself with its extreme close ups of Norman's face and eye that signify his true voyeuristic tendencies. The subtlety of this scene is removed within Gus Van Sant's remake (which will be discussed in detail later), when Vince Vaughn's Norman is shown masturbating while looking through the peep hole. This could arguably be Gus Van Sant explicitly showing what he felt Bloch and Hitchcock wanted to say and show but were unable to due to censors, essentially borrowing the same idea that De Palma had, using the explicit to show the implicit.

One final note on the adaptation of the *Psycho* shower scene involves De Palma's adaptation of the author Stephen King:

Carrie (1976), also had a number of borrowings from Hitchcock, in particular its opening – a variation on *Psycho*'s shower sequence – in which Carrie White (Sissy Spacek) becomes hysterical when she discovers in the high school showers that she is bleeding from her menstrual cycle.³⁵²

Now *Carrie* and the shower scene in question are an adaptation of Stephen King's novel, not *Psycho*, but of course we know of the profound effect that Hitchcock had on De Palma's career, yet there is also plenty of evidence to suggest that *Psycho* also had a similar effect on Stephen King, not just the blood, the screaming and the shower that find itself in-tune with *Psycho*, but the fact that Carrie's body is now sexually mature, and this, as it does with Mary, Marion and Kate, will bring about death. Essentially this chain of adaptations for the *Psycho* shower scene would read Bloch to Hitchcock to King to De Palma to De Palma again,

³⁵¹ Creed, B., *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, feminism, psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1983, p. 146.

³⁵² Verevis, C., *Film Remakes*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2014, p. 67.

to Gus Van Sant, with each one appropriating what has gone before, a chain of adaptations each learning from the last, each building upon the previous work, consistently blurring the lines of their statuses as auteurs, in essence, as will be discussed shortly, creating a ‘Psycho-meme’.

Returning to Hitchcock’s adaptation of Bloch’s text, the behaviour of the camera will now be looked at in relation to the death of Arbogast who in both novel and film, as a character, is very similar and despite the build up to his death appearing dramatically different within both texts, the adaptive process that occurs brings with it a sense of unity between both novel and film. By unity we mean, connection. Some adaptations distance themselves from their origin texts, whether by external measures such as by directorial or public opinion, or internal, concerning narrative and character. Yet Hitchcock’s *Psycho* has a distinct unity with Bloch’s text. The director, as with most of his work, would never admit the kinship that the texts share and an anti-adaptation/pro-auteur theorist could use the death of Arbogast to expose the differences and, consequently, the distance between the two texts. For example, Hitchcock’s Arbogast is rebuffed by Norman Bates in his search for Marion. Norman refuses to let the detective speak with his mother and goes about his hotel work only for Arbogast to sneak up to the house where he is attacked and killed by Norman’s mother.



Figure 155.



Figure 156.



Figure 157.



Figure 158.

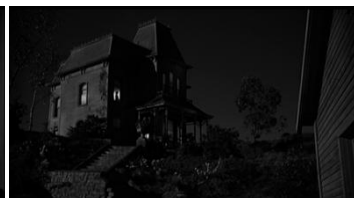


Figure 159.



Figure 160.



Figure 161.



Figure 162.



Figure 163.



Figure 164.



Figure 165.



Figure 166.



Figure 167.



Figure 168.



Figure 169.



Figure 170.



Figure 171.



Figure 172.

Figures 155 to 172 show a very different death to that of Bloch's Arbogast. Within the confines of fidelity, Bloch's Arbogast convinces Norman to allow him to speak with his mother, informs Lila Crane of the fact and then heads up to the house. Meanwhile Norman heads to the house and speaks to his mother who tells him that she will deal with the problem. Norman pleads with her but to no avail:

In just a few minutes, Mr Arbogast would get tired of waiting. He'd walk up to the house alone, he'd knock on the door, he'd open it and come in. And when he did –

‘Mother, please, *listen* to me!’

But she didn't listen, she was in the bathroom, she was getting dressed, she was putting on make-up, she was getting ready. *Getting ready.*

And all at once she came gliding out, wearing the nice dress with the ruffles. Her face was freshly powdered and rouged, she was pretty as a picture, and she smiled as she started down the stairs.

Before she was halfway down, the knocking came.

It was happening, Mr. Arbogast was here; he wanted to call out and warn him, but something was stuck in his throat. He could only listen as Mother cried gaily, 'I'm coming! I'm coming! Just a moment now!'

And it *was* just a moment.

Mother opened the door and Mr. Arbogast walked in. He looked at her and then he opened his mouth to say something. As he did so he raised his head, and that was all Mother had been waiting for. Her arm went out and something bright and glittering flashed back and forth, back and forth –

It hurt Norman's eyes and he didn't want to look. He didn't have to look, either, because he already knew.

Mother had found his razor...³⁵³

In terms of narrative, the physical events that lead to Arbogast's death differ dramatically to Hitchcock's, yet if we look at the specific plot points, this time using Seymour Chatman's idea of 'kernels' and 'satellites' (which are very similar to McFarlane's use of cardinal functions and catalysers) then we can see that the plot points match up perfectly. Chatman described 'kernels' as the points within a plot that could not be removed without altering the structure of the narrative, while the 'satellites' are the smaller events that link the kernels but are not actually essential to the text and can thus be manipulated without affecting the narrative structure. Arbogast visiting Norman, alerting Norman to the fact that he is a threat, informing Lila of his progress, entering the house and then subsequently being murdered by Norman's mother are the kernels of both narratives. Norman giving/denying access to Arbogast, witnessing/not-witnessing Norma getting ready, Norma descending the stairs/Arbogast ascending the stairs and a straight razor/knife are all examples of satellites within the narrative and it is these elements that Hitchcock was able to adapt and manipulate without affecting the kernels of Bloch's work.

It is within the satellites of the narrative that Hitchcock's adaptive process is most visible. Figures 155 to 158 show the relationship between Arbogast and Norman. When Arbogast first arrives he is physically positioned at a lower angle to that of Norman, who stands upon a porch, towering over the private investigator. While speaking, like a bird pecking at seeds, Norman picks at a small bag of candy corn. The camera is teasing the viewer, showing us that Norman is the predator here. This is further exemplified in figure 156 when Norman cocks his head and leans over

³⁵³ Bloch, p. 90.

Arbogast as though he is going to take a bite out of him. Norman's demeanour here is that of somebody who is calm and at peace. Within Bloch's novel Norman is a nervous wreck with descriptions of his twitching hands, beating heart and the constant urge to scream, something that Hitchcock's Norman never shows, yet, Norman is the ultimate actor, wearing many faces at once. Hitchcock presents us with the calm Norman while Bloch allows the reader to see the workings of Norman's mind, the madness behind the calm. Both texts are presenting the same situation but from different angles.

When Arbogast begins to catch Norman out, the camera switches positions and as in figures 157 and 158 both men are suddenly viewed as though they are the same height, Norman's physical advantage suddenly counts for nothing. The same feeling occurs during the novel and is expressed through Norman's emotions, yet when Arbogast sees Norman's mother within the window (figure 159) the camera instinctively knows what is going to happen. Figure 160 shows one of two over-the-shoulder shots that exaggerate Norman's height, establishing him as the predator. Norman denies Arbogast access to his mother, yet we know that the private detective is destined for a meeting with her. Bloch's Norman grants Arbogast access to his mother and like the film, it creates the inevitable sense of foreboding. Whether he is invited or not, Arbogast is doomed to die.

Figures 162 to 172 show the death of Arbogast. As he enters the house the camera shifts from following Arbogast to pre-empting his movements, almost tempting him up the stairs (figures 164 and 165). The camera then cuts to a closed door that then slowly opens (figure 166), thus predicting the action, it is all knowing. This suggests that there is an intimate connection between the camera and Norman's mother and thus with Norman. When Mrs Bates appears through the door and attacks Arbogast, her movement is almost identical to that of the shower scene, almost mechanical, like the camera she is linked to:

But Mother's automaton-like behaviour is not merely disgusting-it is uncanny, and for the same reason as in the shower scene. Mother does not stop after slashing Arbogast across the face; she runs down the stairs after him, positions herself astride his motionless body, and begins stabbing violently. The final shot of the sequence is actually that of the space above

Mother's head. Into that space intrudes the ridiculously long knife in Mother's hand, as it gets raised in the air again and again.³⁵⁴

The violence that accompanies Arbogast's death echoes the earlier shower scene. It is a sequence that occurs in the same way; Norman is threatened, he retreats within himself and his mother comes to the fore, and methodically, almost mechanical in nature, eliminates the problem with brutal but relentless force. In both murders the action of the knife is brought down again and again in the same way, it is a part of the pattern, almost clockwork, like the actions and workings of the camera.

5.4 Cultural Theory and Influences on Bloch and Hitchcock

In *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio Era*, Gueric DeBona identifies a shift in adaptation studies towards cultural studies and film history. He calls this 'The Politics of Redeployment', essentially texts being used to mirror modern politics and society:

The method I have chosen is to take four instances where American film culture has redeployed the "literary" and placed them under the lenses of intertextuality, cultural/textual power, and authorship, using them as coordinates inside a specific period in Hollywood history.³⁵⁵

As DeBona goes on to state, this approach is essentially an extension of James Naremore's suggestion that adaptation theory needs to incorporate the commercial, the cultural and viewership aspects of society.³⁵⁶ The text is not merely a solo vehicle consumed by an adaptor. It is a product of society, the gestation of ideas and beliefs that have been formed by an author who himself has his own set of beliefs and codes. The text is then transformed by society again, by the commercial machine that produces it and the reader that consumes it. The adaptation of said text undergoes the same process, a recycling of sorts, where everything that was in the original mixing bowl is suddenly added to and subtracted from, often by a new author with a different

³⁵⁴ Steven Schneider, *Manufacturing Horror in Hitchcock's "Psycho," Cineaction*, Sep 1999: p. 70-75. <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.brunel.ac.uk/docview/2178008?OpenUrlRefId=info:xri/sid:summon&accountid=14494>

³⁵⁵ Gueric DeBonna, *Film Adaptation in the Hollywood Studio*, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2010, p. 6.

³⁵⁶ James Naremore, *Film Adaptation*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2000, p. 10.

set of beliefs and codes in a different society. Take John Buchan's *The Thirty Nine Steps* for example. Written in 1915, Buchan's novella is a derring-do adventure that is essentially detailing the beginnings of World War One. The text mirrored the real-life collapse of peace in Europe, the rise of Germany and the need for a British call-to-arms. The hero, Richard Hannay, is the patriotic Brit who thinks nothing of going to war and risking his life for King and country. It is a propaganda piece and when Hitchcock adapted the text twenty years later, it was the text's connection with British society, rather than the text itself, that Hitchcock was really looking to adapt. Hitchcock used Buchan's text to fulfil the same purpose that the author had originally conceived, propaganda, but in this case for a war twenty years later.

Removing a text from the constraints of one society and placing it within the realms of another is essentially evidence contrary to the idea of total authorship. The whole purpose of adapting a text is to incorporate a singular idea to another medium, replacing the notion of an original idea (if such even exists). By removing the text from another time and place, the adaptor is also transposing everything that essentially created the text, thus the cultural shaping of World War One text *The Thirty Nine Steps*, is both dominant and relevant within the World War Two adaptation.

Concerning time, and not, for now, geographical location (which is a definite factor), if we set the perimeters as the publishing of a text and its subsequent adaptation with a gap of three years, then we could safely presume that both texts share culturally similar DNA. If we then look at a gap of ten years or more between texts, we can start to presume that the texts would each be products of different societies, even those born to the same city. Let us assume that the four to nine year gap in the middle would be considered a grey area, short enough that very little may have changed within society but long enough to have had, for example, a war.

Three of Hitchcock's adaptations have a question mark over their publication dates,³⁵⁷ so removing them from the equation leaves forty-one adaptations. Seventeen

³⁵⁷ *The Pleasure Garden* by Oliver Sandys, which would later become a film of the same name in 1925, seemingly has no known publication date, Sandys, or if we go by her real name, Marguerite Florence Laura Jarvis, began writing in 1911 so *The Pleasure Garden* has a publication window of fourteen years.

of those adaptations occurred three years after the original texts while thirteen of them after a period of ten years or more, the longest of which being *I Confess* which was adapted fifty-one years after publication. What this essentially tells us is that seventeen of Hitchcock's adaptations were from novels that would have been relevant to current society and shared the same cultural DNA and viewer recognition. Films such as *Easy Virtue*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *Young and Innocent*, *Jamaica Inn*, *Rebecca*, *Strangers On A Train* and *Psycho* are all examples of adaptations that relied on the success of the original text. Each one of these was written not only by a famous author in their own right such as Noel Coward, Josephine Tey and Patricia Highsmith, but the novels were also commercial successes and thus their narratives, while being products of society, would also have become a part of the social consciousness, thus Hitchcock's adaptation of them would have been intrinsically linked to that social conscious.

Texts such as *Rope* (nineteen years), *Notorious* (twenty-five years) and *Sabotage* (twenty-nine years) are all examples of texts that due to enough time having elapsed, while still being a product of a particular society, commercial pressures and audience expectation suddenly became very different factors. The reputation of the original author is also an important factor and in many ways their reputation could account for the length in time between adaptations. This notion is something that has to be taken on a case-by-case basis, but it does shed some light on the perceived incorrect notions, held by many, that Hitchcock was either a purveyor of original work, or an adaptor of 'bad' novels. Time is a very influential factor in the process of adaptation and it could be argued that the 'bad' novels that Hitchcock adapted and his perceived 'original' work, were in fact from texts that were just forgotten, far enough removed from the social consciousness of the time of adaptation that any power, influence and fame would have been lost.

Concerning Robert Bloch's novel, there was only a space of one year between novel publication and cinematic production. It is the perfect example of Hollywood

The other two films are *Champagne* (1928) and *Lifeboat* (1944). Both are adapted from short stories by authors who would help Hitchcock on the respective screenplays. Walter C. Mycroft's *Champagne* has no publication date and as with John Steinbeck's unpublished short story *Lifeboat*, both texts were probably written very close to the time of film production.

cashing in on commercially successful literature, but that is not to say that it was not the director's choice.

Hitchcock's reasoning behind choosing the novel of *Psycho* as a text to adapt is interesting in itself and fundamentally it is a window into the state of American society at the time and its influence on adaptation. In Steven Rebello's detailed account on the production of *Psycho*, amongst many interesting facts he quotes one of Hitchcock's assistants Michael Ludmer:

Often, all Hitchcock was looking for was a springboard or a trigger, even just a relationship. Raw material was all he ever needed.

This is of course in reference to Bloch's novel that Hitchcock eventually gravitated towards in 1959. According to Donald Spoto, Steven Rebello and the 2012 biographical film *Hitchcock*,³⁵⁸ Hitchcock was searching for a specific project to

³⁵⁸ In 2012 Sacha Gervasi's *Hitchcock* depicted a director that was fascinated with Ed Gein. Hitchcock imagines conversations with the murderer and the film implies that was Gein was more influential than Bloch was. Concerning the choosing of Bloch's text this is how *Hitchcock* presents this search:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - Anything. Anything at all?

He starts sifting through her tray. She notices the glass in his hand.

PEGGY - Nothing suitable. Is that water or do I need to call Alma?

He drains it playfully.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - Gin. Mother's ruin.

But something's caught his eye. A circled review of Anthony Boucher's column "CRIMINAL MINDS" in the New York Times Review of Books. He picks it up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - Boucher says this "Psycho" book by Robert Bloch is 'fiendishly entertaining'.

PEGGY - It sounds ghastly. Everyone in town's already passed.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - And who is everyone?

PEGGY - The story department finished the coverage this morning.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - Is this the one based on Ed Gein, the serial killer?

He takes the coverage and reads for himself.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - "Graphic elements of brutal violence, voyeurism, transvestitism and incest." Certainly not your average run of the mill nutcase, is he?

follow *North By Northwest*. He wanted something different, yet while he turned to Bloch's novel, as McFarlane comments in 'Psycho: Trust The Tale', *Psycho* did not come fully formed. It was as much a product of Freudian psychology, 1950's Hollywood melodrama and genre as it relates to American cinema and society, as it was a product of Robert Bloch.³⁵⁹

In a sense the Ed Gein murders were not a catalyst for *Psycho*, but instead were symptomatic of the dark psyche that was brimming under the surface of American society. If the murders were never uncovered, *Psycho* would not have been written, however that is not to say that Bloch would not have written about something similar that would rip apart the wholesome image of 1950's American family. His earlier novels *The Scarf*, *The Kidnapper* and *The Will To Kill* all dealt with not only murder, but psychopaths that challenged the fabric of American society. Ed Gein provided Bloch with a focus. The same can be said for Hitchcock who was also searching for something different. *Vertigo* and *The Wrong Man* were financial disasters, yet they were both attempts by Hitchcock to tap into the anger, angst and fear behind the façade of 1950's Hollywood. *North By Northwest* was a commercial success but it was also a safe return to the traditional formula in the grain of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Thirty Nine Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes*. *Psycho* was a financial risk and a gamble, but it represents a type of picture that Hitchcock would probably have made with or without Gein and Bloch.

According to Steven Rebello Hitchcock was angry that he did not get to direct Boileau and Narcejac's *Celle Qui N'Etait Plus* which, as already discussed, went instead to Henri-Georges Clouzot under the new title *Les Diaboliques*. Rebello discusses the production of *Psycho* and its heavy influence by Clouzot's work that

He gives a grunt of approval.

PEGGY - You're kidding.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK - Peggy. This is the boy who dug up his own mother.
(*The Internet Movie Script Database – Hitchcock*, <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Hitchcock.html>)

³⁵⁹ Brian McFarlane, 'Psycho: Trust the Tale' in Palmer, R.B. and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2011, p. 257.

was “photographed in moody, dirty-dishes-in-the-sink black-and white”.³⁶⁰ With murder and the dead seeming to rise from the grave there are, as shown, obvious comparisons between the two films but it is in the darkness beneath the surface where the real comparisons lie and ultimately show not only why Hitchcock was attracted to Boileau and Narcejac’s novel but also as to what kind of material for which he was looking. At the root of *Les Diaboliques* is an abusive, adulterous relationship that, like Norman’s split personality and cross-dressing, had rarely been seen, yet it is the undercurrent that powers the entire narrative. Both are subjects that 1950’s America did not want to address, but they are issues that both Bloch and Hitchcock felt the need to explore. The tension within both narratives lends itself to the supernatural but ultimately the horror is psychological. Sex and money become sources of evil and death, and real life issues replace monsters and aliens.

Robert Bloch lived only forty miles from the Ed Gein killings. Most sources describe him as being fascinated with the murders and hunting for whatever information he could garner from local newspapers. However, when it came to writing *Psycho* much of the gruesome details that littered the case were omitted. The nature of Gein digging up his mother’s corpse and his apparent transvestism are the main factors that survived the transition, albeit the transvestism itself being a transference from human female skin to female clothing. Bloch added the motel, a beacon for victims to gravitate towards, thus changing from Gein’s stalking predator to Norman Bates’ patient spider. Bloch was also overt with his use of Freudian psychology to explain Bates’ actions as something other than just that of a violent murderer, a notion that 1950s America would have found easier to accept.

Stephen Rebello writes that Bloch’s novel was considered a success with a first print of ten thousand copies and Bloch receiving favourable reviews from the *New York Times Book Review* and the *Herald Tribune*.³⁶¹ Yet it was rebuffed by the “mainstream literary cognoscenti” including writers such as Raymond Chandler³⁶² and for several years after the film’s release, Bloch’s novel was out of print.

³⁶⁰ Rebello, S., *Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho*, London, Marion Boyars Publishers, 1998, pp. 20-21.

³⁶¹ Rebello, p. 11.

³⁶² Rebello, p. 12.

The 2012 film *Hitchcock* presented the idea that the director imagined conversations with Ed Gein, almost using him as a spirit guide. While it is a ridiculous notion and only beneficial as fantastical narrative device, what the film does present, as with Bloch, is the fact that Hitchcock was fascinated with the idea that something so disturbing and violent could occur in everyday society, right under the noses of everyday townsfolk. Hitchcock allegedly instructed his assistants to buy up as many copies of Bloch's book as possible in an attempt to keep the narrative a secret. The secrecy continued with the release of the film. A media campaign accompanied the film's release where on posters, in magazines, on radio and in interviews; the public were informed of specific instructions for viewing *Psycho*:

No one...BUT NO ONE...will be admitted to the theatre after the start of each performance of PSYCHO.

YOU MUST SEE IT FROM THE BEGINNING!

After you've seen Psycho please don't tell your friends its shocking secrets.³⁶³

At the De Mille theatre in New York these message appeared on posters and bulletin boards. Cinemagoers were greeted to a life-size cut-out of Alfred Hitchcock who held a message stating the 'do's and don'ts' of *Psycho* etiquette and standing by the cut-out, to enforce the 'law' was a fake policeman. While waiting in line cinemagoers were also greeted by recorded Hitchcock announcements where the director would continually inform them of the importance of secrecy. This tactic of Hitchcock's fed into the audience's expectation of him. Many viewers would have been used to Hitchcock appearing on their television sets, preparing them every week for an episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. His face was already synonymous with 'terror'. While this feeds into the idea of the Hitchcock brand and his exaggerated public image of an auteur, it is also a further example of adaptation and another link to *Les Diaboliques*. This tactic of creating an air of secrecy about the film had already been covered by Clouzot five years before:³⁶⁴

Details of shooting the film went undisclosed as journalists were prohibited from coming near

³⁶³ These statements were taken from footage of the showing of *Psycho* at the De Mille theatre, found in 'How Hitchcock Got People To See Psycho', a press book on film, from the Academy Film Archive, presented by 'Alfred Hitchcock and Paramount' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjRzj_Ufiew

³⁶⁴ At the end of *Les Diaboliques* the final shot is of a title card that reads: "Don't be diabolical. Don't spoil it for your friends. Don't tell them what you've seen."

the set. At the time of release, theatres immediately closed after the beginning of each projection; an announcement came at the end of the film asking the public not to reveal the ending in order to spare the suspense for those who had not seen the film. The entire publicity campaign resulted in a significant commercial success.³⁶⁵

While not directly related to Hitchcock the auteur, it is definitely another example of Hitchcock the poacher.

Hitchcock's hunt for a text that challenged the status quo of Hollywood is symptomatic of a change in society and culture. As a film, *Psycho* pushed the boundaries of the suspense/thriller/horror genre and in doing so exposed Hollywood to a different nightmare, which had been absent within the previous decade:

It is common practice when discussing the films of the 50s to evoke the Cold War, the Bomb and the 'Red Scare'. The cultural and political articulation of these three component parts of post-war America had the most serious consequences as far as Hollywood was concerned: blacklisting.³⁶⁶

This fear of the unknown enemy, something that could walk among mankind, affecting the very fabric of American society, coupled with the advancement in technology to such an extent that the world could be destroyed at the press of a button, ultimately influenced Hollywood. Art imitates life and the horror genre imitates the fears of society. Films such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *The Thing From Another World* (1951) and *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951), are all overused examples of fifties horror that used extra-terrestrial aliens to symbolise the potential danger to the American way of life, and while they all share horrors that are considered to be unfounded and absent from reality, they are also examples of how the dangers within these alien horror films, were also often from man himself. The aliens in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* all take the form of humans while the alien in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* is ultimately attempting to save Earth from mankind.

Post world war America saw a boom in technology and industry, and with this came the continual rise of the American family. It was this perfect image of American society that was often at stake within the horror film, something further shown by films such as *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957) and *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*

³⁶⁵ Lanzoni, R. F., *French Cinema: From Its Beginnings to the Present*, The Continuum International Press Publishing Group Inc., New York, 2002, p. 174.

³⁶⁶ Humphries, p.56.

(1957) where it is teenagers that are the source of horror and tragedy within the family unit. As with *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), Hollywood showed that one of the greatest threats to the family unit was sex amongst the young, a consequence of abandoning the founding morals and virtues that American society is based upon. As Reynold Humphries discusses with the teenage horror films, as with many at the time, they often involved groups of teenagers who would bicker over the police, school-work and sex. There would often be a rock song present, and it would usually be the most morally secure of the teenagers who would survive and save the day as in the case of *The Blob* (1958).³⁶⁷ Their aim was to attract a young audience and in a perverse Hollywood way, educate them, but yet doing so by keeping the danger at a distance. It is this technique that connects the majority of the horror films within the 1950's, the very notion that most of the horror shown and depicted is either alien or supernatural. The purpose is to scare, but from such a distance that the resulting fantastical horror gimmicks are completely removed from the American family unit, and it is this very situation that is completely at odds with the writing of Robert Bloch.

Between 1947 and 1959 Robert Bloch's work represented the very antithesis of Hollywood horror. What started with *The Scarf* (1947) and culminated with *Psycho* in 1959 shows an author who was keenly aware that the danger that faced America was not a foreign enemy but one from within. Bloch's work suggested that the people of America should not be looking to the skies for bombs or aliens, or to their neighbours for foreign traitors, but rather at those they trust most, those they care for, that they live with and sleep with. In Bloch's literature, horror resides within the ordinary. That is not to say that his killers and murderers are normal, in most cases they are deranged maniacs, but while they are completely separate from the constraints of society, just like Ed Gein, they are often a part of that society, which they use as a mask to conceal their true identity:

Bloch's killers are often drifters of one sort or another; wanderers who have rejected or lost contact with their pasts and are in search of new identities to acquire or construct. This feature is even true of Norman Bates...Like other characters, Norman has lost his connection to the

³⁶⁷ Humphries, pp.67-68.

past, even though the identities which he attempts to construct are ones that will recreate that connection.³⁶⁸

Here Mark Jancovich suggests that Norman Bates' murder of his mother and step-father causes him to be disconnected from society and reality, and yet his attempt to revive his mother, while running a seemingly wholesome family business, are a means to reconnect with the family unit. For Bloch the family unit is already damaged and the pleasant public showing is often a mask that evil does not even know that it is wearing:

Bloch's fiction often features characters driven to prove their own omnipotence through violence and domination, but, ironically, these very drives are often unconscious impulses which threaten and even destroy the conscious individual's sense of control and sense of self.³⁶⁹

Evil is not just hidden from society, it is hidden from oneself. Norman's psychosis is the very epitome of this notion, a mental illness that goes undetected, yet once it is discovered, its barbaric nature is shocking not because of its violent consequences but because of its connection to the normal human psyche. Therein lies possibly the most disturbing of aspects with Bloch's killers. His literature depicts seemingly normal people carrying out normal actions. Jancovich writes at length about how Bloch's killers all share a tendency to collect things, turning inanimate objects into animate ones.³⁷⁰ It is a practice that normal people partake in, assigning human qualities to inanimate possessions and so forth, yet Bloch's killers take it to the extreme, a notion which is echoed within real life with Ed Gein's removal of human skin to make his own body suit. Off the back of *Psycho*, Bloch had a successful career as a screenwriter and his thematic tendencies continued with *The Psychopath* (1966), where Bloch depicts a killer who has handmade dolls that represent the people he is to kill, while in *Asylum* (1972) Herbert Lom creates a doll of himself that he reanimates, while other tales include a suit that has reanimating powers and dead body parts that come alive. The reanimation of the inanimate is in essence giving life to something that should not have life, essentially making the natural, unnatural.

³⁶⁸ Jancovich, M., *Rational Fears: American Horror in the 1950's*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, p.248.

³⁶⁹ Jancovich, p.240.

³⁷⁰ Jancovich, p.241.

It would be wrong to argue that Bloch's writing in the fifties was in reaction to Hollywood's representation of horror, as the ulterior meanings behind most of the films were of very real threats and worries to the public. His writing was instead an exposure of what Hollywood did not want to discuss, but was something that was very prevalent within the conscious of society. Jancovich describes Bloch's earlier work in pulp magazines as that of 'Lovecraftian' tradition, mixing between horror and science fiction genres, similar to the work of Ray Bradbury and Richard Matheson, yet his stories often revealed an interest in 'psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis'.³⁷¹ Unlike Bloch's emergence from the supernatural, Hitchcock was formed more from the genres of adventure, thriller and crime, yet as visible throughout his work, an interest in the human mind is prevalent throughout. Thus despite clearly not being on equal terms, *Psycho* is almost a natural convergence of the two authors. Hitchcock may have cannibalised Bloch's text, but *Psycho* symbolised what Hitchcock had been searching for.

The case of 'Jack the Ripper' is an interesting example that shares reference points with both Bloch and Hitchcock. Bloch's *Yours Truly Jack the Ripper* (1943), *A Toy For Juliette* (1967) and *Night of the Ripper* (1984) all deal with the Victorian serial killer, while Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, *Shadow of a Doubt* and *Frenzy*, with their newspaper headlining serial killers 'The Avenger', 'The Merry Widow Murderer' and 'The Necktie Killer' are all adaptations of Ripper folklore. The psychological trauma, brutal violence and the mystery that surround the 'Jack the Ripper' motif are all present within both *Psycho* texts and ultimately appear to be ingrained throughout the work of both Bloch and Hitchcock. It is a myth that each of them build upon and continue to adapt and re-invent.

Hitchcock's filmography within the fifties is in a sense very similar to that of Bloch's bibliography. The adaptations consist of *Stage Fright*, *Strangers On a Train*, *I Confess*, *Dial M for Murder*, *Rear Window*, *To Catch a Thief*, *The Trouble With Harry*, *The Wrong Man*, *Vertigo* and finally *Psycho*. With the exception of *To Catch a Thief*, and depending on how you choose to read the film, *The Trouble With Harry* (1955), every one of those adaptations involves the darker side of the human psyche

³⁷¹ Jancovich, p.246.

and involve the deconstruction of the family unit in its embryonic form. The other connection that Hitchcock's work has with Bloch's is his deliberate attempt to cut out the distance that Hollywood so often used to protect its audience. *Strangers On a Train*, *The Wrong Man* and *Psycho* are all the products of coincidences that anyone could encounter. The viewer could easily be Guy Haines sitting down next to Bruno Anthony, or be mistaken for a criminal like Manny Balestrero, or pull over to a random motel like Marion Crane. While *Dial M for Murder*, *Rear Window* and *Vertigo* are all examples where the viewer is forced into the position of the voyeur, experiencing murder and terror from uncompromising positions.

Both Bloch and Hitchcock's work within the fifties culminates with *Psycho*. It is a logical consequence, with each text becoming arguably their most influential, their most successful and their most controversial of the decade, if not their distinguished careers. Yet the fact remains, that despite the similarities between the artists, despite the real life monstrous influence of Ed Gein and despite the external influences of Hollywood and the outside world, Hitchcock still adapted Bloch.

In Gueric DeBona's attempt to produce an adaptation matrix by combining the many different theories of adaptation, one such approach he takes is by looking at the cultural power of the text. He examines the differing approaches to the text taken by the New Wave theorists Bazin and Truffaut and compares it with the later theories of George Bluestone.³⁷² The basic premise is that while Bluestone believed that true adaptation study lay in the adaptation of the canonical texts, the New Wave theorists believed in the cultural value of literary fiction as a whole, simply put, an adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, should not be held in a higher regard, or subjected to more critical study than say that of the work of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Texts have different historical and social meanings, and ultimately, like any form of art, public opinion and popularity will always play a role, especially within adaptation, thus public perception of *Oliver Twist* will be completely different to *Princess of Mars*, yet both texts are still a product of culture. The same laws apply to *Oliver Twist* as they do to *A Princess of Mars*, and in terms of adaptation studies, the latter non-canonical novel is even more susceptible to study because the author does not hold the same

³⁷² DeBonna, p. 5.

standing within history and society and thus the question of who is the author of the text, becomes a more pliable issue for theorists.

We have discussed the physical differences between the two narratives, we have established the reasons and influences behind the two texts and we have looked at the culture that drove the work of both artists and in doing so we are able to examine the cultural power of Bloch's text. We are able to map out and chart many of the things that Bloch's text stands for and view it within its place in society and then out of it, and then consequently we can look at the cultural power of Hitchcock's adaptation, and if it is actually attributable to Bloch's text.

Psycho is one of only five Hitchcock adaptations that has as little as a year between book publication and film release and as discussed earlier this puts it within the category of cultural adaptation that sees both texts try to address the same society and culture. This means that commercially, no matter how many books Hitchcock supposedly ordered to be bought and hidden, his text fed off of the commercial success of *Psycho*. His text benefitted from audience recognition, a form of brand awareness, to help create understanding and viewer desire, the very notion that drives a lot of audience intrigue with adaptations. Ultimately, it is what Bloch's text has consumed that gives it its cultural power, and it is this which Hitchcock fed off most.

Bloch's *Psycho* represents a horror that is both real and visceral. It was not the first novel of its type, it was not the most popular and it was not the most successful, in fact Hitchcock's adaptation of the novel illuminated Bloch's work to much higher standards than what it would have ever received, but none of this changes what the novel represents. As illustrated, the case of Ed Gein was shocking and disturbing. It was as far from Hollywood horror as one could get, and Bloch's use of the tale to stand as a representation for his commentary on America, on mental illness, on the evil depths of the human psyche and on the family unit stand as almost a protest against the very society from which the text was born. The novel has no discernible hero, and the nearest we get to a hero is a psychopathic transvestite who commits murder and matricide, whose problems are explained by psychoanalysis and one that does not die when the final lines are written. Bloch's purpose is to shock and terrify, while also deliberately going against the narrative grain of typical fiction. Bloch's text

is self-aware about mental illness and murder, albeit an outdated and politically incorrect representation. There is no mystery to be solved, no heroine to be saved, just chaos. The reason for this is because that was society as Bloch saw it. Hollywood depicted a war between the American family unit and the fear of many global threats from communism to the atomic bomb to a return of economic depression, but what those threats largely boil down to is a fear of modernity.

The family unit is a contained working organism that relies on exterior pieces from different aspects of society, such as finances, technology and the media. Society itself functions on the running of multiple family units, and thus it keeps the elements such as finance and technology ticking over smoothly. When these branches of society grow, they affect the family unit. It is when the growth of such branches cannot be controlled that disaster occurs. Bloch's writing clashes with Hollywood's representation of such fear, but not with the idea of fear itself:

In his fiction, the dangers of modernity are associated with the ways in which the detached and isolated people who compose modern society become prey to new forms of control, particularly through the media and technology.³⁷³

To Bloch the dangers of modernity are not a global threat to society and culture. It is not the arrival of a nuclear bomb that we should fear, but the man that fears the arrival of the nuclear bomb. Norman Bates' motel is essentially put out of business by a new road. The natural progress of society is one of the catalysts for Norman's psychotic break and destruction of his family unit. By becoming his mother he is recreating this unit, yet Mary's arrival from the outside world, from the new road from which she loses her way is a further attack on Norman's world. His obsession with psychoanalysis is another internal attack. His mother represents the past and is uncomfortable with Norman's literary tastes, referring to them as sordid and disgusting, but to Norman, this modern way of thinking helps him to understand his life, yet it is a Catch-22 situation because by understanding these relatively modern theories, he plunges himself further into the psychosis that will destroy him and the world around him.

³⁷³ Jancovich, p. 249.

As mentioned previously, the films *The Wrong Man* and *Vertigo* were financial failures. Over the years since their release an appreciation has grown for both films, specifically *Vertigo*, and with this appreciation has come critical understanding and the granting of cultural capital to his work. Hitchcock's filmography is made up of many internal genres. *The Farmer's Wife*, *Juno and the Paycock*, *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca* are arguably all examples of the period piece, while *Number Seventeen*, *The Man Who Too Much*, *Foreign Correspondent* (1940) and *Torn Curtain* are all a part of Hitchcock's action adventure films. *Psycho* follows *The Wrong Man* and *Vertigo* in what can be described as the psychological drama/horror genre, which also includes *The Lodger*, *Rope*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Rear Window*, *The Birds* and *Frenzy*. Like the parameters of all genres, the lines are blurred, for example, *Rebecca* could easily be described as a psychological drama, while *The Wrong Man* shares many similarities with the action and adventure films. The point is that genre is a means of categorising the films of Hitchcock, and when it comes to the cultural power of a text, genre is where the power of Hitchcock's *Psycho* lies.

Hitchcock himself would (and essentially did) deny the cultural similarities between his and Bloch's novel, but that denial is a lie. The narrative may differ and the characters may have substantial physical differences, but ultimately, the cultural power of Bloch's text, is present within Hitchcock's. The shock and awe tactics, the fear of modernity, the portrayal of sex and the self-awareness of psychoanalysis are all present, and essentially they are all Bloch. The similarities between what the novel and film represent is so similar that is fair to say that Hitchcock's authorship of the text is genuinely under threat, yet it is through genre that the cultural power of Hitchcock's text becomes evident and his status as an auteur becomes more defined.

In *Authorship in Film Adaptation* Jack Boozer challenges the theories put forward in Roland Barthes' 'Death of the Author' and Michel Foucault's 'What is an Author?' Siding with different theorists, Boozer aligns himself with a poststructuralist approach towards the position of the author, focusing on aspects such as intertextuality and cultural influences:

Literature and film as well as language translation theorists, however, have begun to raise questions about the total erasure of the individual creative voice. Issues of personal style continue to exist alongside issues of personal worldview within specific historical eras.³⁷⁴

Boozer rejects the notion that there is no real author to a text, and instead focuses on the author of the original literary text, the writer of the screenplay and subsequently the director as auteur. It is not a case of no author, but too many, each with their own 'personal style' and 'worldview' and in the case of *Psycho* which essentially has at least two authors, Hitchcock cannibalises Bloch's style and worldview, but does so to align with his own.

Before looking at Hitchcock's use of genre, let us look at three different approaches to the subject. John Frow characterises genre as:

a form of symbolic action: the generic organization of languages, images, gestures, and sound makes things happen by actively shaping the way we understand the world.³⁷⁵

To Frow, genre influences society and culture. It is not merely a case that 'this film has this quality and thus it belongs here', it is more than just a categorising tool, it is a set of codes and conventions that the viewer will recognize, and like an adaptation is about the transformation of one text to another, genre is essentially the adaptation of a set of rules from one medium to another. Genre relies on viewer recognition, much like auteur theory, whereas adaptation is essentially a construct that can survive and thrive on its own. The adaptation is a fixed point, how it is perceived and recognised is where genre and auteur theory come into play, for example, *Psycho* is irrefutably an adaptation of Robert Bloch's film, but then do we then view its status as a horror film, or a Hitchcock film?

Andrew Tudor writes that the relationship between auteur and genre is such that genres have rules which imply audience expectation which then allows auteurs to either break or subvert said rules.³⁷⁶ This is in direct contradiction to Carol Clover's suggestion in *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, that:

³⁷⁴ Boozer, J., *Authorship in Film Adaptation*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 2008, p.21.

³⁷⁵ Frow, J., *Genre*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2006, p.2.

³⁷⁶ Tudor, A., *Theories of Film*, London, Martin Secker & Warburg Limited, p.142-143.

Like the purveyors of folklore, the makers of film operate more on instinct and formula than conscious understanding.³⁷⁷

Here Clover is talking about the horror genre and in specific reference to interviews with the director John Carpenter and the widespread belief that Hitchcock had no idea why *Psycho* was such an unprecedented success. Through multiple interviews given by John Carpenter, who explains that fundamentally he gives the viewer what they want and expect in his films, essentially classifying himself as a genre director, through to Hitchcock's apparent obliviousness to his film's effect on the genre, Clover believes that the genre defines the actions of the director, specifically the horror genre where the structures, according to Clover are 'fixed and fundamental':

The very fact that the cinematic conventions of horror are so easily and so often parodied would seem to suggest that, individual variation notwithstanding, its basic structures of apperception are fixed and fundamental. The same is true of the stories they tell. Students of folklore or early literature recognize in horror the hallmarks of oral narrative: the free exchange of themes and motifs, the archetypal characters and situations, the accumulation of sequels, remakes, imitations. This is a field in which there is in some sense no original, no real or right text, but only variants; a world in which, therefore, the meaning of the individual example lies outside itself.³⁷⁸

Unlike Tudor, Clover looks at the horror genre as if it is a construct that one must fit into, and not the subject of manipulation. To make a horror film is to conform to the genre of horror, thus the status of the auteur is immediately put in to question because they are conforming to, as John Carpenter states, what the viewer wants and expects from the genre. This idea of 'conforming' cannot be directed towards Hitchcock in terms of the horror/suspense genre as *Psycho* is widely viewed as the founder of the horror that John Carpenter and others would go on to recreate, but instead it can be directed towards his own genre, the 'Hitchcock genre'.

In terms of genre, there are two ways of viewing Hitchcock's adaptation of *Psycho*, one as it stands within the 'Hitchcock genre' and two as it influences the America horror genre and Italian 'giallo' that follows it. At this point it is worth reminding ourselves of the power of Hitchcock's name within Hollywood and American culture. Thomas Leitch writes that Hitchcock:

³⁷⁷ Clover, C., *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 11.

³⁷⁸ Clover, p. 10.

Methodically avoided literary cachet as an area in which he could not successfully compete and instead embraced a generic identification that he was able to promote through his carefully crafted public image, as well as his films. His success in turning his own corporeal presence into a trademark in his cameo appearances, his witty end-papers to *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and the *Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, the monthly magazine and the board game to which he lent his name and image, even the signature eight-stroke silhouette with which he often signed autographs established him as the quintessential directorial brand name, an auteur capable of eclipsing authors whose claim to authority was simply less powerful.³⁷⁹

Leitch's view of Hitchcock echoes the auteur-structuralist viewpoint of such theorists as Peter Wollen where the auteur's name becomes synonymous with the structures that their films create, thus a 'Hitchcock film' holds different meaning to a 'film by Hitchcock'. Whether a part of the Hitchcock brand or genre, *Psycho* fitted the bill. Narrative-wise it shared multiple elements with films before it, such as the psycho-sexual violence of *Rope*, the voyeuristic tendencies of *Rear Window*, the graphic murder of *Dial M for Murder* and the manic obsession of *Vertigo*. Yet as mentioned previously, these elements were integral to the novel. Bloch's text conformed to the conventions of the Hitchcock genre and while his narrative was absorbed into a screenplay, his status as the author was erased, an act specifically evident from the *Psycho* trailer, which as with other Hitchcock films, which the director starred in himself. The trailer is six minutes of Alfred Hitchcock walking through the set of *Psycho* discussing a shocking crime that has recently taken place. Hitchcock is accompanied by the Bernard Herrmann's *Psycho* score but it is interspersed with a light-hearted, almost comic jingle as Hitchcock snoops around the set, a tune more akin to the iconic opening of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* as opposed to a horror film. The trailer then ends with the message:

The picture you MUST see from the beginning...
Or not at all!...for no one will be seated after the start of...
Alfred Hitchcock's Greatest Shocker "PSYCHO".³⁸⁰

As well as feeding into the Hitchcock brand, it is the physical act of the director putting himself into the film, an extension of the Hitchcock cameo that truly symbolises the power that Hitchcock had over his texts. Through the assimilation of Bloch's text, combined with the cultural power that Hitchcock was able to wield, *Psycho* effectively changed the Hollywood horror genre. Robin Wood wrote that

³⁷⁹ Leitch, T., *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, p.239.

³⁸⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ps8H3rg5GfM>.

Psycho “conferred on the horror film something of the dignity that *Stagecoach* conferred on the western”.³⁸¹ Mark Jancovich refers to the film achieving a state of respectability and remarks that it allowed commentators the opportunity to take the genre seriously. However, Jancovich argues that *Psycho* should not be viewed as the catalyst for the horror revival of the sixties and seventies:

Unfortunately, Hitchcock’s reputation has also resulted in an over-concentration on *Psycho* at the exclusion of other areas of the genre and, most worryingly, it has distorted the genre’s history. Too often, *Psycho* is not merely used as an indicator or marker of certain changes within the late 1950’s and 1960’s, but is seen as the cause of those changes. Too often, aspects of the film are identified as Hitchcockian innovations when they were actually the product of more general tendencies and processes within the genre, if not features of Bloch’s original novel.³⁸²

The problem facing Jancovich though is Hitchcock’s status as an auteur, which is visible within the documentary *The American Nightmare* when veteran director John Landis discusses the influence that Hitchcock had on the genre. To Landis, Hitchcock was ‘the master’ of the genre, suggesting that when the viewer is in suspense, they are there because Hitchcock has led them there, creating an almost ‘comfortable sacredness’. From this, Landis suggests the new wave of directors who were influenced by Hitchcock such as Tobe Hooper and Wes Craven, compared to Hitchcock, were untrustworthy, and thus rather than being masters behind the camera, they were in fact maniacs, in other words Hitchcock’s violence contained an element of control while the work of Hooper, Craven and other horror directors depicted a violence without restraints, more gore and higher body counts etc.³⁸³ Due to the cultural status of Hitchcock’s film, his authorship transcended what his film actually represented. Landis states that Hitchcock is essentially the pioneer of the seventies slasher film, and while it is true that the horror of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974), *The Last House on the Left* (1972) and *Halloween* (1978) all bear similarities with *Psycho* in terms of American suburban horror and the destruction of the American dream, while technically influenced more by the work of Robert Bloch, it could be argued that Hollywood and society were already heading down this road, not to mention the time-gap that existed between *Psycho* and the ‘maniac’ horror directors of the seventies. In essence *Psycho* would have influenced the slasher films

³⁸¹ Wood, p. 77.

³⁸² Jancovich, pp. 220-221.

³⁸³ *The American Nightmare*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5v03a_zCSM.

of the seventies, but a more immediate effect was had on the more psychological horrors of early 1960's Hollywood such as *Homicidal* (1961), *Carnival of Souls* (1962), *The Cabinet of Caligari* (1962) and *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1963). Considering the success of *Psycho* and the recognisable profile of Hitchcock, its influence on Hollywood was unsurprising, yet what is more intriguing is Hitchcock's influence on foreign cinema in the sixties.

Cinema outside of Hollywood, specifically the thriller genre was very similar to the tone and style of Hitchcock's film. In Italy films such as *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (1963) and *Blood and Black Lace* (1964) were building on *Psycho*'s themes of sex, money and violence while in France films such as *Les Diaboliques* (1955), as mentioned earlier, were already exploring themes of dark domestic horror. In 1960, the same year as *Psycho*, the French film *Eyes Without a Face* was released and like *Psycho* it shocked viewers with its graphic imagery, and again like *Psycho* and other Hitchcock films, showed violence and horror through the act of voyeurism. The fact that it was also written by Boileau and Narcejac is further emphasis of the continuing link between Hitchcock and French cinema. A very similar technique can be found in the British film *Peeping Tom*, also 1960, where the audience follows the killer, Mark Lewis, as he stalks women in London. As the viewer we witness their attacks through the eyes of his camera as he records their murders, which he then re-watches afterwards. The viewer, as in *Eyes Without a Face* which uses masks and mirrors, and in *Psycho* with the use of Norman's peep hole, we are forced into a voyeuristic position. In *Peeping Tom* the viewer watches Mark Lewis as he re-watches the murders that the viewer has already seen. These are multi-cultural examples of a cultural movement towards a fear and fascination with voyeuristic horror. *Psycho* was one of the founders and it is within the adaptation of *Psycho* by others that prop up Hitchcock's label as an auteur over Bloch. Concerning the 'giallo' movement of Italian cinema, Philip Met equates the influence of *Psycho* to that of a 'childhood trauma':

If *Psycho* is undeniably the *mother* (pun intended) of modern cinematic horror at large, its impact on the development of the 'giallo' was a fortiori pivotal, not least because of the marked oedipality of Hitchcock's film. To put it in psychoanalytic terms, for proponents and

practitioners of the burgeoning subgenre in Italy, the film as a whole came to carry the emblematic weight of a veritable *childhood trauma*.³⁸⁴

Mikel Koven charts the evolution of the ‘giallo’ from the yellow paper back thriller novels of Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle and others to the adapted thriller counterparts of the forties and fifties, through to the multiple genres that the ‘giallo’ spawned into.³⁸⁵ Before the ‘giallo’ became synonymous with horror its roots were firmly planted within the crime genre but it was Mario Brava who was:

unofficially credited with inventing the ‘giallo’ as a cinematic genre. This invention can be said to have occurred through two specific films. Brava’s *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* (*La Ragazza che sapeva troppo*) established the ‘giallo’ films’ narrative structure...Two years later, Brava further developed the genre with *Blood and Black Lace* (*Sei donne per l’assassino*). This film, although the narrative structure is quite different, introduced to the genre specific visual tropes that would become clichéd. Specifically the graphic violence against women.³⁸⁶

These two films are credited with influencing an entire genre of cinema that would last decades and it is through the cultural adaptation of *Psycho*, and by extension of the ‘meta-text’, *Les Diaboliques* and Bloch, that it was possible. Mett states that every ‘giallo’ film made after *Psycho* was in some way influenced by it.³⁸⁷ To conform to generic conventions is to adapt what has come before it. Generic conventions are dictated by what the viewer expects, and thus what the viewer expects from a genre film is continually adapted and reworked, thus genre is essentially the adaptation of cultural values. When the Hitchcock-sounding *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* was advertised, it was promoted as a film that was as thrilling as Hitchcock,³⁸⁸ a tactic that was used on multiple occasions, though in America it was re-titled *The Evil Eye* and the Hitchcock connection was played down. As well as the adaptation of the physical aspects of *Psycho*, it was the adaptation of Hitchcockian culture that truly pushed the ‘giallo’ towards voyeuristic horror. Mett comments that after *Psycho* the ‘peephole’ became paramount to the ‘giallo’, as did the use of shower scenes, plugholes and the violent death of beautiful women.³⁸⁹ Yet these were

³⁸⁴ Philip Mett, Knowing Too Much About Alfred Hitchcock: The Genesis of the Italian ‘giallo’, in Boyd, D., and Palmer, R.B. (eds.), *Alfred Hitchcock: Influence, Imitation and Intertextuality*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2006, p.205.

³⁸⁵ Koven, M.J., *La Dolce Morte: Vernacular Cinema and the Italian ‘giallo’ Film*, The Scarecrow Press, Oxford, 2006, p. 2.

³⁸⁶ Koven, pp. 3-4

³⁸⁷ Mett, p.208.

³⁸⁸ Mett, p.208.

³⁸⁹ Mett, p.209.

all props used to decorate the psychological horror that Hitchcock's work represented, work that represented the fear within society, fear that filled the pages of Bloch's text first. Despite the 'giallo' emerging from thrilling crime novels, rather ironically it is the adaptation of cinema and Hitchcock that the 'giallo' credits and not the literary source behind it. Bloch is the original artist behind the shower scene murder, the inanimate becoming animate with Mary's blood, yet it is the props used by Hitchcock, such as the swirling-water-plughole-eye-close-up that are found, for example, throughout the films of 'giallo' stalwart Dario Argento, such as in *Deep Red* (1975), *Suspria* (1977) and *Tenebrae* (1982), and to the 'giallo' and Argento, they are the props of an auteur, not an adaptor.

In *The American Nightmare*, visual effects expert Tom Savini discusses recording nightmarish images while fighting in the Vietnam War. He explains that the camera is used as a separation device between the eyes and the real horror of war yet it is also a window into the soul.³⁹⁰ This is also true of the horror film. The very notion of a camera means that the viewer becomes the voyeur, and with this new wave of horror where the dangers depicted were that of domestic horror, the culture of terror became one of watching. In *Peeping Tom*, the murderer Mark Lewis discusses a condition that his father had, which by extension he has, scopophilia, which is the morbid urge to gaze at erotic objects, a condition that one could argue from which Bloch's Norman Bates suffers. When we first encounter Norman he is looking at pictures of naked tribesman and he is scolded by his mother for doing so. The point is that there are countless similarities that run through these films, existing both before and after Hitchcock. *Psycho* was not the first horror film to attack the family unit or actively use psychoanalysis as a narrative tool, these elements and many others are essentially conventions of both the 'Hitchcock' genre and more importantly the ever evolving horror genre, but it is Hitchcock's brand status, his position as the culturally powerful auteur that gives his texts power and why *Psycho*, despite not being the sole catalyst for the new wave of horror films in the sixties, is often depicted as such.

³⁹⁰ *The American Nightmare*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5v03a_zCSM

5.5 The ‘Psycho-Meme’, Sequels and Remakes

The incorporation of the sequel and remake into the body of adaptation studies has aided with the subject’s evolution away from fidelity discourse, and extended from this are exploitation films which may be further removed than remakes but still deal in appropriation. In his paper ‘Exploitation as Adaptation’ I. Q. Hunter finds “it more useful to re-describe exploitation as unlicensed adaptation and adaptation as licensed plagiarism”.³⁹¹ Both exploitations and adaptations deal with the same basic principles, the need to recreate and assimilate. In the same paper Hunter examines ‘exploitation as adaptation’ within the film *Jaws*, examining its influences (literary, cinematic and cultural) and subsequently every sequel, remake, exploitation and adaptation, creating a *Jaws* meme, a ‘Jawsploitation’.³⁹² The same process is applicable here with *Psycho*, and has essentially already been started here by examining Bloch’s work, the case of Ed Gein and *Les Diaboliques* amongst others. There are not many Hitchcock films that can be seen as having their own meme, certainly not to the degree that *Psycho* can, though *Strangers on a Train*, *Rebecca*, *Rear Window*, *Vertigo* and *The Birds* all have multiple meme-qualities such as remakes, sequels and consistent appropriations within popular culture.

Arguably one of the reasons for the enduring popularity of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* is the constant reinvention of the text. Hitchcock’s assurance at authorial dominance has meant that over the years it is his text and not Bloch’s that has become a staple part of culture, from its theme tune, to iconic images, to stories from the actors and predominantly to the sequels and remakes that followed. Essentially, what occurred in the wake of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* is an attempt to adapt its success, and interestingly, unlike many texts, these adaptations have ranged from film, to television and even back to the novel, where it can be argued that Robert Bloch

³⁹¹ Ian Q. Hunter, ‘Exploitation as Adaptation’ in Smith J.R., (eds.) *Cultural Borrowings: Appropriation, Reworking, Transformation*, Scope: An Online Journal of Film and Television Studies, 2009, p. 23.

https://www.academia.edu/207383/Cultural_Borrowings_Appropriation_Reworking_Transformation

³⁹² Hunter, p. 14.

looked to the work of Hitchcock for his own sequels.³⁹³ We will first look at the role of the sequel and the remake in terms of adaptation:

Critical discussions of movie remakes have a good deal in common with discussions of literary adaptation. Both deal with the somewhat questionable idea of the original versus the copy, both value the unique work of art, and both treat the “precursor text” with a kind of deference.³⁹⁴

Naremore describes the remake as an entity that is essentially submissive to the original text. Its description is in the name, ‘remake’, the very point of its existence is to recreate another text. It is arguably even more definite than an adaptation, the purpose of which is to transplant a particular narrative or idea, and not necessarily the cultural, political and economic values of the text, and thus a typical adaptation can be very vague with what is actually being adapted. The remake, or what is essentially being remade, is often a known quantity, as in the remake’s intentions are usually to replicate the cinematic success and cultural impact of the original. That is not to say that obscure financial flops are not remade, but that the impetus behind cinematic remakes is often one of clear re-creation.

Sequels are, in essence, the continuation of a narrative and not often discussed in terms of adaptation. However, while the purpose of a sequel is to bridge a link to the text that precedes it, often the reason for a sequel is because of the success of the original. The purpose of a sequel then is to recapture that success by repetition:

All adaptations express or address a desire to return to an ‘original’ textual encounter; as such, adaptations are perhaps symptomatic of a cultural compulsion to repeat.³⁹⁵

Sequels, prequels and most other cinematic labels such as paralequels and reboots are as Carroll describes, part of a cultural compulsion to repeat. In this case Hitchcock’s *Psycho* was followed by three cinematic sequels *Psycho 2* (1983), *Psycho 3* (1986) and *Psycho 4: The Beginning* (1990), one failed attempt at a television series in 1987 called *Bates Motel* and then a successful television series of the same name in 2012. Scenes and images from the original film have been recreated

³⁹³ *Psycho 2* (1982) and *Psycho House* (1990)

³⁹⁴ Naremore, p. 387

³⁹⁵ Carrol, R., *Adaptation in Contemporary Culture*, London, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009, p. 1.

multiple times, it has been adapted into art installations such as Douglas Gordon's '24 Hour Psycho' while Bernard Herrmann's score has often been reused throughout different media to recreate the *Psycho* 'effect'. In 1998 the director Gus Van Sant recreated Hitchcock's film almost shot for shot, while Robert Bloch, after Hitchcock's film, wrote two further sequels of his own, *Psycho II* and *Psycho House*. Bloch's novel spawned a legacy, but it is all in the name of Hitchcock's film.

Within 'The Original and The Copy', Julian Stringer discusses the evolution of the Japanese text *Ring*, which has essentially become its own branch of the horror genre. From a novel, to television, to film, to sequels, to a Manga comic series, *The Ring* is a sprawling example of cultural reinvention, especially when considered that the film was eventually remade for American audiences and with that version also generating its own sequel. Stringer discusses in detail about how the success of *Ring* is down to the desire for fidelity by the Japanese marketplace towards what the texts have come to present and depict. It is not a clamouring for a re-creation of the original text but rather a continual evolution that remains consistent with public expectations while continuing to explore different aspects of culture. It is a cultural and economic success, thus the reinvention of the series is ongoing, constantly adapting. Stringer states that 'horror adapts like a virus, it goes on and on.'³⁹⁶ This is essentially an extension of Elizabeth Cardwell's 'meta-text' theory, previously discussed in relation to *Rope*, except this incorporates all branches of the text, which considering that we are viewing both remakes and sequels as adaptations is the correct path to proceed along. As with *Ring*, the *Psycho* brand is the product of the viewer's repetitive voyeuristic need for a particular horror.

Stringer examines the adaptation of the film *Ring* and why it this text and not the original that is so often adapted within Japanese and American cinema and thus the same protocol can be put into place concerning the 'Psycho-meme'. If we take two particular lynchpins, two fundamental features that are always present, and examine how they are dealt with throughout the subsequent adaptations then we get a better understanding of the cultural reinventions that have taken place. The two elements that will be examined are the character of Norman and his psychosis,

³⁹⁶ Julian Stringer, 'The Original and The Copy: Nakata Hideo's Ring', in Philips, A. and Stringer, J. (eds.), *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2007, p.296-304.

something which originates from Bloch's novel and was transplanted into Hitchcock's text, and the second being the use of Norman's home and motel, two structures that are clearly present within Bloch's novel but are given a more defined metaphorical meaning within Hitchcock's film.

Within both Bloch and Hitchcock's text the use of the home and motel have significant meanings. Norman's house is where he hides his secrets, the physical location of his mother's body, the place where he becomes her, where he acts as a child, where his psychosis transforms. His home is the dark side of his brain. The motel is representative of Norman's outwardly appearance, the part of his life that he shows the outside world, and when Marion/Mary is killed within the motel shower, it suggests that the dark side of Norman's brain is encroaching on the very part of his life that makes him normal. Yet within Hitchcock's film the two buildings have further meaning, which is made possible through visual stimuli. Concerning the murders of Arbogast and Marion, Slavoj Žižek writes:

The architectural locale of the two murders is by no means neutral; the first takes place in a motel which epitomizes anonymous American *modernity*, whereas the second takes place in a gothic house which epitomizes the American *tradition*... This opposition (whose visual correlative is the contrast between the horizontal – the lines of the motel – and the vertical – the lines of the house) not only introduces into *Psycho* an unexpected historical tension between tradition and modernity; it simultaneously enables us to locate *spatially* the figure of Norman Bates, his notorious psychotic split, by conceiving his figure as a kind of impossible 'mediator' between tradition and modernity, condemned to circulate between the two locales.³⁹⁷

The notion of modernity versus tradition is a theme that runs through the cinematic sequels, each of which recreates the iconic shots of Norman's house from Hitchcock's film (see figures 173 to 176), with the idea of American tradition becoming one with *Psycho* tradition. The inside of the house never alters. This clashes with outside of the house, whether it is the modernising of the motel with suggestions that a new owner has turned it into a brothel in *Psycho 2*, or new staff and wild parties in *Psycho 3*, or the very fact that Norman has left the area and is living in a brand new home with modern day appliances and décor in *Psycho 4*, suggest a definite divide between tradition and modern. In each case it is the modern changes that drives the manic psychosis of Norman. As discussed earlier, it is the fear of modernity.

³⁹⁷ Slavoj Žižek, 'In His Bold Gaze My Ruin Is Writ Large', in Žižek, S. (ed.), *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, London, Verso, 1996, pp.231-232.

Figure 173. *Psycho*Figure 174. *Psycho 2*Figure 175. *Psycho 3*Figure 176. *Psycho 4*

Recreating the iconic images of Norman's house and motel reinforces the connection with Hitchcock's film. The opening of *Psycho 2* consists of scenes from Hitchcock's film, *Psycho 3* recreates the death of Arbogast with the murder of Maureen (see figures 177 to 180), while *Psycho 4* recreates Marion's frantic driving-in-the-rain scene, but placing Norman's wife in the position of Marion (see figures 181 and 182). This is not a case of auteur versus adaptor. Each of the *Psycho* sequels are looking to openly recreate Hitchcock, though this is not something that could be immediately associated with the 2012 television series. The purpose of the show is still to play off of the 'Psycho-meme' but perhaps to loosen its connection to Hitchcock's film. It may not set out to recreate Hitchcock from the offset, but adaptation ultimately concerns re-creation, and a viewer that is aware of the 'Psycho-meme' will follow a young Norman Bates because there is an implied expectation of him to become *the* Norman Bates, despite the very fact that it follows the same path

as the television show *Hannibal* which like *Bates Motel* establishes alternative versions of characters that have already been encountered in prior texts.

Psycho 2 was made in 1983, twenty-three years after Hitchcock's film. It could be argued that the director, Richard Franklyn, was not seeking to adapt what Hitchcock's text represented from a cultural standpoint. *Psycho 2* is not a reaction to 1950's American society, but instead an attempt to recreate a successful iconic horror film. It is an adaptation of historical cinema in an attempt to recreate the commercial success. This is further evident with the opening of *Psycho 3* which recreates the bell tower scene from *Vertigo* (see figures 183 to 188) and then in *Psycho 4* of which the screenplay is written by Joseph Stefano, the original screenwriter for Hitchcock's *Psycho* and ultimately another of the many adaptors that litter the 'Psycho-meta-text'. The use of the *Vertigo* bell tower scene and Joseph Stefano are deliberate attempts to recreate Hitchcock; it is a case of recreating the auteur. The *Psycho* sequels which range from 1983 to 1990 all strengthen *Psycho*'s retrospective association with the American horror/slasher genre and thus it is from this cultural standpoint that they should be viewed. As mentioned earlier, while *Psycho* is often thought of as the first slasher film, the forerunner to films such as *Halloween*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Black Christmas* (1974), ironically the *Psycho* sequels are in just as much debt to the horror genre of the eighties. Knife wielding maniacs such as Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees and Michael Myers were big box office draws³⁹⁸ and the teenage sex and over-the-top violence and gore that they depicted lent itself to the cinematic *Psycho* sequels:

Every remake simultaneously refers to and remakes the genre to which that intertext belongs, and thus genre may itself be the only intertext.³⁹⁹

The three *Psycho* sequels adapt and take on the traits of the slasher genre, conforming to its generic conventions and not those associated with the 'Hitchcock

³⁹⁸ Between 1980 and 1990 the 'slasher' genre performed consistently well at the American box office, especially in relation to non-R-rated films which usually have a much wider demographic and subsequently on average have higher box office takings. Selected 'slasher' statistics include: *Friday the 13th* – 1980 - 18th ranking – over \$39 million gross, *Psycho 2* – 20th ranking – over \$34 million gross and *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master* – 19th ranking – over \$49 million gross.

³⁹⁹ Frow, J., Review of 'Play It Again Sam: retakes on remakes' 1 July 1999, <http://tlweb.latrobe.edu.au/humanities/screeningthepast/reviews/rev0799/jfbr7a.htm>, (accessed 23 August 2015).

genre'. From a commercial point of view the sequels use the name of Hitchcock, the success of *Psycho* and recreate the iconic scenes and characters yet from a cultural standpoint, using *Psycho 3* as an example, the sequel has more in common with *Friday the 13th Part 4* which was released the same year. The political and social sub-texts that both Bloch and Hitchcock's texts are rooted in are absent within Perkins' sequel. The film is, of course, in the vein of *Psycho*, referencing 'Psycho-lore' throughout and maintaining the narrative that Bloch started but in terms of an adaptation, it is as much a product of the 'slasher' genre, beholden to the conventions within its framework.



Figure 177. *Psycho*



Figure 178. *Psycho*



Figure 179. *Psycho 3*



Figure 180. *Psycho 3*



Figure 181. *Psycho*



Figure. 182. *Psycho 4*



Figure 183. *Vertigo*



Figure 184. *Vertigo*



Figure 185. *Vertigo*



Figure 186. *Psycho 3*

Figure 187. *Psycho 3*Figure 188. *Psycho 3*

The evolution and adaptation of Norman's psychosis, unlike the iconic imagery of Hitchcock's film, can be traced directly to Bloch's text. Bloch's Norman is self-aware of his own problems, reading up on psychoanalytical theory, understanding that his relationship with his mother is damaging and recognising that he is not normal. This self-awareness is not necessarily present within Hitchcock's film but as mentioned previously, the first person perspective of a novel is a difficult aspect to adapt and thus a narrative shift has to occur. In the case of Hitchcock, we are unaware of Norman's habits until he physically reveals them. The *Psycho* sequels attempt to go further in explaining Norman's behaviour, essentially following Hitchcock's narrative, but in reality they are feeding off of Bloch's.

In *Psycho 2* Norman kills his real mother at the end of the film, recreating Bloch's original murder, while in *Psycho 3* Norman at one point kisses the dead body of a young girl that he has recently murdered and then licks her blood off his finger, suggesting both an inability to sexually perform and a compulsion towards cannibalism, both of which are factors that can be attributed to Bloch's Norman who, through first person perspective, we learn believes himself to be impotent and that he has an obsession with primitive tribal practices.

Psycho 4: The Beginning acts as though the previous sequels have never happened and instead places Norman within a modern suburban home with a wife and the notion that he has been cured yet after marrying his doctor, he has yet to be able to perform sexually. Norman rings a radio talk show that is discussing matricide and precedes to recount his life story up until his incarceration for the murder of Marion

Crane. Through flashbacks we learn that Norman's mother is cruel and domineering, belittling him one minute, only to seduce him the next. For punishment she locks him up in a closet while clothed in a dress and when she marries again, she flaunts her sexual practices. Norman is shown to fail in relationships, unable to perform sexually, murdering first a young girl who tries to sleep with him, and then later an older woman who is obviously a surrogate for his own mother. Coincidentally the character of Mrs Bates is endlessly workable because within Hitchcock's text we are only ever shown her from Norman's perspective. Thus in *Psycho 2* when his 'real' mother appears, and in *Psycho 4* when we see his mother raising a young Norman and most recently within the Bates' Motel television series, with Mrs Bates having her own narrative outside of Norman's perspective, unlike Norman, there are no expectations of Norma Bates because she never actually existed within the original text. Norman eventually returns to his old home which he burns down prompting him to declare, "I'm free" (see figure 189).



Figure 189. *Psycho 4*

There are a multitude of issues that we can derive from *Psycho 4* in relation to the adaptation of both Bloch and Hitchcock, firstly the flashbacks that relate to Bloch's Norman and feed into his narrative. Secondly, the destruction of the iconic house is the destruction of Hitchcock's creation. Norman's "I'm free", thus becomes a nod to Hitchcock's authorship, which is then immediately followed by the image of his mother's rocking chair which continues to rock as the fire burns around it. Her voice appears over the top and then the cellar doors slam shut, and we again hear Norma Bates screaming to her son Norman to let her out. Norman is not cured, the destruction of the house is superficial, and somewhere within Norman's mind resides

his mother in her rocking chair. This repeats the consistently projected notion that psychology and psychiatry cannot cure Norman Bates, a suggestion that is found within other serial-killer thrillers as Mark Jancovich comments:

In this situation, the traditional forces of order and control become ineffective and redundant. Psychology cannot deal with Michael Myers or Thomas Harris's serial killers, and all that is left is for Myers' psychologist to shoot to kill, and for Will Graham and Clarice Starling to use their imaginations so that they can think like the killer of their victims. Rational procedures get one nowhere, and all that is left is our own irrational resources.⁴⁰⁰

Rational procedures such as psychology and mental health practices, as in *Manhunter* (1986) and *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), account for little. They can explain the actions of Frances Dollarhyde and Buffalo Bill, but they are useless in stopping them, thus requiring the use of the irrational, which is visible within *Asylum* (1972) although in this case the powers are of a supernatural kind that render medical discourse obsolete. Directed by Roy Ward Baker and written by Robert Bloch, this anthology of connected horror stories set in an asylum as a new doctor attempts to work out which of the current patients used to run the asylum before they went mad, ultimately not realising that the inmates are actually running the asylum. Bloch creates characters who are all permanently ill, there is nothing medically or psychologically that can be done for them, which is reinforced when the doctor is murdered at the end, which like Norman at the end of *Psycho* and *Psycho 4*, suggest that on the outside everything appears to be normal as the rational procedures are held in place, while on the inside insanity runs riot.

It is worth looking at Gus Van Sant's shot-for-shot remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, as it is an interesting case of an overtly obvious adaptation that deliberately tries to adhere to the rules of fidelity, while also in a sense critiquing these rules by being deliberately over-faithful, yet in doing so, it sacrifices the cultural aspects of Hitchcock's film. It is an interesting undertaking, and in terms of adaptation it is very original. An adaptation often invokes within the viewer a sense of intrigue as to how and what has been adapted yet Van Sant's film abandons intrigue and instead shows you something you have seen before and urges you to compare it to the original, which an adaptation usually attempts to avoid. Yet as stated previously it was an

⁴⁰⁰ Jancovich, p. 230.

economic failure,⁴⁰¹ while critically it did not fare well either,⁴⁰² summed up here by the American critic Roger Ebert:

Curious, how similar the new version is, and how different. If you have seen Hitchcock's film, you already know the characters, the dialogue, the camera angles, the surprises. All that is missing is the tension--the conviction that something urgent is happening on the screen at this very moment. The movie is an invaluable experiment in the theory of cinema, because it demonstrates that a shot-by-shot remake is pointless; genius apparently resides between or beneath the shots, or in chemistry that cannot be timed or counted.⁴⁰³

It is also worth noting Rachel Carroll's take on Van Sant, whom she likens to Todd Haynes and his film *Far From Heaven* (2002), an adaptation-of-sorts of Douglas Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* (1955):

Intertextual allusion is a cinematic practice entirely in keeping with van Sant and Haynes's auteur status, and yet the degree of fidelity exhibited by their unconventional film remakes seems more akin to the sentiments associated with fandom.⁴⁰⁴

Carroll is essentially suggesting that the auteurship of Van Sant has been sacrificed for adaptation, a notion that is understandable when the text is held up next to Hitchcock's film, but whether deliberate or not, Van Sant's adaptation shares an affinity with Bloch's novel that Hitchcock's film does not. It could be argued that Vince Vaughn's portrayal of Norman Bates is much closer to Bloch's Norman than Hitchcock's. Compared to Anthony Perkins, Vince Vaughn is more physically imposing and his mannerisms are more open, his body language more dominant. Hitchcock's Norman is constantly folding his arms and lowering his head, while Van Sant's Norman stands tall and either has his arms by his side or gesticulates with them, a sign of confidence that resonates with Bloch's text. Norman's encounter with Sam further emphasises the similarities between Bloch and Van Sant. Bloch writes:

Bates didn't reply, but Sam heard the gurgle and then the bottle's thump. 'Here,' Bates said. 'Let me pour you another.'

⁴⁰¹ Gus Van Sant's *Psycho* grossed a total of \$36,629,900 in the United States.

⁴⁰² A selection of ratings include:

Empire Magazine – 2 Stars out of 5

<http://www.empireonline.com/reviews/reviewcomplete.asp?FID=3833>

Rotten Tomatoes – 37% <http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1084964-psycho/?search=Psycho>

IMDB – 4.6 out of 10 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0155975/>

Roger Ebert – 1.5 out of 4 <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/psycho-1998>

⁴⁰³ <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/psycho-1998>

⁴⁰⁴ Carrol, R., *Adaptation in Contemporary Culture*, London, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009, p. 3.

‘Not yet.’

‘I insist.’ He was coming around the counter now, and his shadowy bulk loomed over Sam.⁴⁰⁵

Bloch’s Norman is an imposing man, which suggests his psychosis is not about strength or size, and thus his ‘de-masculinisation’ is down to his inability to consummate his relationships, except with that of his mother with whom he becomes one. Hitchcock’s Norman (figure 190) is smaller and thinner compared to Sam who is the hero that he longs to be. Norman’s size is representative of his psychosis, which Van Sant’s Norman is anything but. Van Sant’s Norman towers over Sam (figure 191), which is in keeping with another unusual quirk of the Van Sant film. When Norman views Marion through the peephole, he masturbates. He is not impotent when he is the voyeur and in control of his own body. With his height and confidence, Van Sant’s Norman is meant to be ‘normal’, and thus, like Bloch’s Norman, his ‘de-masculinisation’ occurs through his relationship with his mother. The act of masturbation in this case is a trigger, the equivalent of alcohol in Bloch’s text. Under Bloch, when Norman gets aroused, he drinks, blacks out and becomes his mother. Van Sant’s Norman masturbates, blacks out and becomes his mother, while Hitchcock’s Norman merely waits. Hitchcock shows us no trigger, because the cinematic Norman of the late fifties is meant to be one of the people. He is meant to be the American stalwart of society, he has no apparent vices and thus he changes because of the darkness within him, a darkness that represents the unseen evil that the American people fear.



Figure 190. *Psycho* (1960)



Figure 191. *Psycho* (1998)

⁴⁰⁵ Bloch, p. 128.

One final note on the *Psycho* legacy and the subject of adaptation concerns Bloch's status after Hitchcock's film became a cinematic success. Bloch received a moderately small fee for his novel, having no clue at the time that it was Hitchcock who was buying the rights. He received very little recognition and received no further money and as a result his comments over the years were usually of bitterness towards Hitchcock and his adaptation. Knowing this, it can easily be argued that Bloch's novel, *Psycho 2*, is in fact a part adaptation/part murderous fantasy about Hitchcock.

The novel details the escape of Norman Bates from a mental institution who after killing off Lila and Sam Loomis, escapes to Los Angeles where a film is being made of his murders. The director of the film is a foreign man called Santo Vizzini. He is balding, equipped with 'pudgy fingers' and has a reputation for groping his actresses and putting them through rigorous ordeals on set. In the novel we learn that, stemming from his mother, he has psychological problems that have left him impotent. Bloch then teases us that Vizzini is in fact the novel's murderer only for Vizzini, while attempting to grope the lead actress's naked breast in the infamous shower scene, to be ultimately hacked to death inside the very same shower. While it is both a petty and humorous attempt to exorcise his demons towards Hitchcock, it is also another example of cultural adaptation.

Bloch may not have received any royalties from Hitchcock's film, but his novel did receive a lot more attention, and his sequel, while an obvious attack on the cinematic production process of his own novel, is an adaptation of the commercial and cultural success of Hitchcock's film. Hitchcock's status as an auteur is mocked within the novel but it is ultimately used as a commercial tool by Bloch to sell the novel. This is a tactic he would again use for *Psycho House*, which played on Hollywood's constant use of the iconic Bates' home. In Bloch's novel, Norman's home and motel are rebuilt as a tourist trap, essentially adapting Universal Studio's use of the house in their theme park and Hollywood's constant use of the iconic imagery. Bloch kills off unsuspecting visitors within the house and motel, essentially attacking the idea of commercialism, yet ironically it is the iconic image of Norman Bates' house, brought to life visually by Hitchcock, that again sells the novel. Bloch's sequels can be seen as a comment on the status of the cultural property of *Psycho*.

Bloch created *Psycho*, yet it is the commercial power and symbolic aura of Hitchcock that keeps the *Psycho* legacy going.

Cultural adaptation is made up of reinvention and repetition, and while, due to the director's brand status, Bloch may not be considered the author of Hitchcock's film, it is *his* narrative that has been metamorphosed throughout the *Psycho* legacy. The visuals may belong to Hitchcock, but the psychosis of *Psycho* is all Bloch's creation. His sequels are branches of the 'Psycho-meta-text-meme' that are borne out of reaction to the man who adapted him. Bloch the 'adaptee' becomes the adaptor. In *Psycho 2* he kills his version of Hitchcock, stabbing the director to death, in essence reclaiming his authorship.

Within modern culture the *Psycho* legacy supports and feeds Hitchcock's status as an auteur, and the longer the timeline of the 'Psycho-meta-text-meme' grows, the more removed Bloch becomes. Time is an essential component of the adaptation when viewed from a commercial and social standpoint. Bloch still exists within *Psycho 4* and *Bates Motel*, just like the presence of *Psycho* is felt within suspenseful thrillers such as *Jaws* (1975), *Scream* (1996) and *Saw* (2004). Yet while the cultural power with which the texts are infused may hark back to Bloch, or the narrative strands and characters depicted may resemble the pages of Bloch's novel, commercially and culturally it is Hitchcock who appears to be the dominant author. It is Hitchcock that the sequels, remakes and exploitations believe they are adapting, and thus from a cultural standpoint, over time, Bloch's status as the original author slowly disappears. Thus it is in the adaptive process from novel to film that the author's status is to be found and preserved. Without the cultural power already behind Hitchcock and without the generic conventions of his own genre, the influences of *Psycho*, from Ed Gein to Narcejac and Boileau, to Clouzot and finally to Bloch, the evolution of the *Psycho* legacy could have been very different and it is through the study of adaptation that the rightful influences of *Psycho* are preserved adding further proof to Hitchcock's true status as a collector of texts and 'Master of Adaptation'.

6. Conclusion

This study into Hitchcock and adaptation originally began as an examination of Hitchcock's status as an auteur in relation to the statistic that forty-one of his fifty-three films were adapted from literary texts. Now while auteur theory has risen and fallen in popularity, Hitchcock criticism has thrived on the very fact that the director's varied body of work lends itself to most aspects of film theory, which of course includes adaptation studies. In recent years, since work on this thesis began, two significant works have been published concerning this field, *Hitchcock and Adaptation: On the Page and Screen* and *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, both of which are excellently compiled volumes of essays on the subject. Thus what was an area of study that seemed ignored within Hitchcock theory, is suddenly alive and fresh. Therefore, the direction of this thesis had to change in a way to fit in with this new body of work that had emerged. Rather than the main aim being to attack Hitchcock's status as an auteur in light of adaptation, the discussion has evolved into one that includes an analysis of his relationship to adaptation studies, examining his adaptive process and developing an adaptive model that could be used to look at his entire body of work, while still examining the case of the auteur versus adaptor.

Three aspects of Hitchcock's adaptive work were chosen, the theatrical adaptations, the adaptation of an author and the evolution of a single iconic text. By looking at his theatrical work, specifically his British texts, which even within the current field of studies have been much maligned, the aim was to examine and contextualise the original plays of Coward, Phillipotts, O'Casey and Galsworthy. By examining the adaptive process of these plays and looking for any Hitchcock traits, motifs and influences that make it from page to stage to film, these findings could then be looked at in relation to different theories of auteurism. The adaptation of the author, in this case Daphne du Maurier, allowed for an examination into the adaptation and exploitation of another author's ideologies. While the evolution of an iconic text was always intended to show how one of the most famous and iconic films of Hitchcock's career, a symbol of his brand, was more the product of previous literary texts and films than the director's brilliance, and then in turn look at the

different adaptations, including sequels and remakes, of Hitchcock's film and examine whether they are in fact the product of Hitchcock's film or the texts that influenced it.

The first aspect dealt with Hitchcock's British plays, specifically *Easy Virtue*, *The Farmer's Wife*, *Blackmail*, *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Skin Game*. Chapter two saw the plays reviewed in detail in an attempt to bring focus to the semi-forgotten texts and then the process of adaptive transference was examined. Concerning the adapted works of Coward and Phillpotts, specific attention was paid to narrative as both were silent films drawn from witty plays with little in the way of physical action while with the Galsworthy and O'Casey adaptations, which occurred during the advent of sound, were considered in terms of the technical in relation to Hitchcock's use of the camera. Throughout the study of the British plays the process of 'opening up' was examined with regards to how the confines of a play's structure can be explored and manipulated on screen while Hitchcock's penchant for changing the endings of adapted texts into something more 'grand' and 'cinematic' was examined within *Blackmail*

Hitchcock's use of the theatrical was carried over into chapter three which first looked at the evolution of *Rope* and secondly at his use of theatre within multiple other texts, with the main focus directed on *Dial M for Murder*. This chapter also discussed a structuralism inspired adaption model that could be used to examine Hitchcock's work, drawing connections between the multiple intertextualities that littered his films, ultimately allowing for a different take on his position as an 'auteur' and 'Master of Suspense'. Part of this model is built upon the theory of the 'meta-text', an ever-evolving stream of texts that continually adapt and build on what has gone before. The 'Rope-meta-text' was examined to include such texts as Poe's *The Tell Tale Heart*, the Leopold and Loeb murder case and Patrick Hamilton's stage play *Rope*.

The examination of the theatrical within Hitchcock involved not only his adaptation of plays but also his use of theatre within his other films such as *Murder!* and *Stage Fright*. Hitchcock's relationship and use of the stage was discussed, while *Dial M for Murder* was used to show on one hand Hitchcock's deliberate fidelity to

Knott's play, but on the other, through the use of 3D and the camera, how his continual use of the theatre was about its merging with the camera.

Chapter four had two aims. The first was to examine Hitchcock's overarching appropriation of Du Maurier's work, an author that he returned to twice, looking specifically for the characteristics of Du Maurier's work within Hitchcock's. The second aim was to develop a reinterpretation of the adaptation of *The Birds*, suggesting that the film was a product of Du Maurier's earlier work and is the result of Hitchcock finally having complete control over the way he adapted the author and not suffering from third party interference from the likes of Laughton and Selznick.

Chapter five was a case study that looked at *Psycho* in terms of fidelity, cultural and historical adaptation and as a meta-text. As well as conducting a close textual comparison with Robert Bloch's novel and a look at the role played by *Les Diaboliques*, the influence of Hitchcock's iconic film was examined in relation to multiple sequels and remakes, including *Psycho 2*, *3* and *4*, De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* and Van Sant's shot-for-shot remake, while also considering its influence on different forms of cinema such as the Italian 'giallo' and American horror, with the question always being, is it Hitchcock doing the influencing or Bloch?

One of the most interesting aspects to come out of the first chapter is the overwhelming evidence of Hitchcock's symbiotic nature with the theatrical. It is not simply the number of plays that he adapted but his process in recreating them in a cinematic form, introducing the camera to show, transform and exploit. *The Skin Game*, *Rope* and *Dial M for Murder* all show examples of Hitchcock's camera taking advantage of the sometimes static nature of the theatre, moving through the on-screen stage to show an effect that only cinema can create but also to show how cinema and theatre can act as one. His theatrical plays are often maligned because their very nature is the antithesis of Hitchcock's quest for pure cinema, yet this is contrary to what Hitchcock tried to create, rather he attempted to merge the two disciplines.

Hitchcock's adaptive process often involves shifting an element of the literary narrative and positioning it at the start of the cinematic narrative to alter the viewer identification of particular characters. The character's journey remains the same, such

as Larita's treatment at the hands of the Whittakers and her eventual ejection from the house, but by placing her secret past at the start of the narrative, letting the viewer experience her emotional state, in a sense, her vulnerability, a different form of identification is created. This is part of Hitchcock's attempt to recreate the theatrical on screen. Unable to recreate the physical relationship shared by theatregoer and stage performer, his theatrical heroes and heroines are often shown to be more vulnerable, with an intimate means of access into their lives, often shown by 'opening out the play'. His use of the theatrical is also evident throughout his novelistic adaptations with consistent use of the theatre, the stage and the very role of the 'performance artist', a character that must physically act out a role within the narrative. Hitchcock is constantly drawn to texts that involve characters that must act as though they themselves are putting on a performance from a play.

A final note on the theatrical concerns the fact that many of the traits and motifs that are synonymous with Hitchcock, whether they are considered a part of the 'Hitchcock' brand and relate to the relevant codes and conventions, or prescribe to one of the many branches of auteur theory, are found within the original plays suggesting that the archetypal structure of a 'Hitchcock' film has its roots within the theatre, and thus every text chosen after the establishment of this structure is merely trying to adhere to what has gone before it. As other critics have suggested, one of Hitchcock's main sources for adaptation was his own work and this is made possible because of the theatrical foundations. The aim behind his continual application of this self-adaptation is to achieve the symbiosis of pure cinema and the theatrical.

By looking at the adaptation of Du Maurier as an author, a new reading of *The Birds* emerges. While the adaptation of *Jamaica Inn* bears more in relation to Hitchcock's previous adventure thrillers and was heavily influenced by the presence of Charles Laughton and while *Rebecca* was under the strict watch of David O. Selznick to remain true to the novel, Hitchcock's true expression of Du Maurier is not realised until *The Birds*. An analysis of Du Maurier's work illustrates an author that shares many thematic traits with Hitchcock, while their depiction of sex and violence, coupled with their use of psychoanalytical theory, specifically the psychosexual, suggests two authors, which despite both openly appearing to regret the films *Jamaica Inn* and *Rebecca*, are in fact in sync with one another. While Hitchcock's film

obviously uses the short story's avian threat, the character of Melanie, her journey to Bodega Bay and her complicated interaction with the Brenner family are a product of Du Maurier's earlier novels. The film is ruled by a mixture of warring psychosexual complexes that are found within Du Maurier's adapted novels that Hitchcock was never able to fully express, while the character of Melanie is an amalgamation of Mary Yellan, Rebecca and *Rebecca's* narrator. Hitchcock's film is as much a product of his technical ingenuity as it is Du Maurier's ideologies, and whether deliberate or subconsciously, the themes that run through her novels and short stories come to a head within the film.

Psycho as a 'meta-text' reduces the iconic film to a point on a timeline, thus becoming the product of many texts prior to its conception and the apparent influence on many others afterwards. By looking at this timeline, we are able to look at different influences, examining what links them and what in turn they can tell us about other texts, such as Bloch's *Psycho* and its relation to Gus Van Sant's *Psycho*. Another way of interpreting this is by looking for a 'Psycho-meme' which is another way of connecting the vast number of influences that have spread through society and culture. By looking at the influence of *Psycho* on aspects of genre and culture, we are able to interpret that a film like *Psycho 3* adapts the America slasher genre just as much as it does Hitchcock's film. The meme that runs through and alongside the 'Psycho-meta-text' spreads itself far and wide meaning that the original influence is diluted and thus many of the following works are in name only, or are merely the recreation of particular images such as the house and motel. What similarities they still bear to Hitchcock's narrative could then be argued is in fact more relatable to Bloch's original text. By examining the evolution of a text, we come across multiple extratextual sources that continually enrich our understanding of the adaptation and subsequently the adaptor responsible.

Each of the four chapters lend themselves in differing ways to a potential structural adaptive model that could be used to analyse Hitchcock's work as a whole. By incorporating fidelity criticism, cultural, historical, economic and authorial adaptation, while looking at the evolution of a text we are able to identify the adaptive process of Hitchcock. By examining his influences and the intertextualities that run through his work we can account for and answer questions about 'why' he made

particular choices and decisions, while also making different readings of the text more accessible. With the declining popularity of auteur theory, film theorists are now searching for a new author within the text. Hitchcock has arguably survived the decline of auteurism as his body of work is entangled throughout cinematic history and subsequently film theory. His fifty-three films represent a wealth of adapted texts and influences and it is through the countless number of extratextual sources that we really begin to understand Hitchcock's work and his true status.

There almost appears to be no purpose in arguing Hitchcock's status as an auteur any more, yet the notion of an auteur embodies many values and traits, one of which is control and while adaptation and auteur theory fundamentally clash at almost every turn, they do share the need for control. The process of adaptation is neither haphazard nor random. By looking at a film as a meta-text we can study its evolution as though we were following plotted points on a map, but who put those points there? To adapt a text takes control and skill. To adapt multiple texts, takes even more. Hitchcock's body of work portrays a director who built his filmmaking foundations upon theatrical adaptation, yet all the while attempting to create and push the boundaries of the camera. The sheer amount of adaptations coupled with constant technical inventiveness, suggest that Hitchcock believed that he needed both to make 'pure cinema'. His use of the theatrical, his appropriation and assimilation of another author and the creation of an iconic text that still influences culture over forty years later, via the adaptation of other multiple texts, suggest a director that was in control of his adaptive skills.

An adaptation model would position Hitchcock in the centre of a collaboration of texts. He does not become the auteur behind these films, but instead a poacher, snatching up texts that would feed his brand, and a forger as he sets to recreate the texts fulfilling the viewers need for a 'Hitchcock film'. Other authors share his domain but the 'Master of Adaptation' is always in control. Robert Bloch for example, as shown, had as much influence on the Hitchcock sequels, Brian de Palma and the Italian 'giallo' as Hitchcock did, and while it is not definitive, if we had to answer the question of who is the author of *Psycho*, one could put a concrete case forward for Bloch, yet Hitchcock, as the 'Master of Adaptation' will always win. His adaptation process had fuelled his brand, creating the 'Hitchcock' film. It is not a

product of auteur theory but the systematic adaptation of multiple texts and sources, writers and authors that are manoeuvred, manipulated and controlled. *The Birds* symbolizes Hitchcock's adaptive prowess. From the fundamentals of the avian killers of Du Maurier's story, to the appropriation of the ideologies behind Du Maurier's literature, to the adaptation of his own successful work and finally through multiple screen-writers and draft scripts, *The Birds* is formed and Hitchcock is praised for his auteur status which as we know is just another part of the director's brand. The real authorship of the text lies in Hitchcock's new role as the 'Master of Adaptation'.

The aim of this study was to build on the current work on Hitchcock and adaptation scholarship, while giving a voice to the texts that are often ignored because of their statuses as theatrical adaptations. It was also the mission to work towards a structuralist based adaptive model that could account for the adaptive process of a director's entire body of work, so that any text could be critically linked to another, given relevance to all aspects, from the semi-forgotten British plays to establishing new ways of looking at the theoretical favourites and the most popular films. For this to be fully realised though, a collective in-depth study into Hitchcock's entire body of work needs to be carried out. Echoing the studies of Raymond Durnat and Charles Barr, each of Hitchcock's films need to be examined in terms of their adaptive process, understanding their origins, and their influences. By doing this we will have a matrix of interlocking intertextualities that will help us understand the vast majority of Hitchcock's creative, technical and narrative changes. It will also ultimately expose the concept of an original text, as something adapted, or even more interesting, highlight elements that have gone unnoticed within his work. This model would help to fully understand Hitchcock's 'original' films in context with his adaptations, which is a study that this thesis has not conducted. A successful study would provide a framework that could then be used for any other filmmaker.

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Appendix I: Number Seventeen and the Different Endings of Hitchcock

In 1932 Hitchcock reluctantly⁴⁰⁶ agreed to direct *Number Seventeen*, which was to be another stage play adaption. The play is a simple narrative concerning a bunch of villains, a corpse, a mute girl and amongst others, the hero, who all chase around after each other in the shadows of a large dark house. Farjeon's play is an amusing small-scale adventure and while Hitchcock did not want to direct it, there are three very important aspects about the play and thus the film. The first is that it contains an example of Hitchcock's MacGuffin⁴⁰⁷ with everybody in the house searching for a jewelled necklace. The search holds no purpose other than to further the plot in both play and film. The second important aspect within both texts is the teaming together of a man and woman, thrown together against the odds, who will go on to save the day and find love in each other's arms. This was a successful formula that Hitchcock would later make regular use of, starting with *The 39 Steps*.

The third and possibly most interesting aspect concerning Hitchcock's adaptation of *Number Seventeen*, is the ending that he concocts for the film. The play ends with a climax that involves a railway line that runs underneath the house, yet the play's action remains confined to the house. Hitchcock runs with this idea and creates a different ending. It is a twenty minute chase sequence that involves the hero on a

⁴⁰⁶ "The prolonged trip took the Hitchcocks across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and finally home. They arrived refreshed, and with an original idea for a new film... They told John Maxwell about it, and he showed some interest. But he also said Mycroft had another project scheduled first – a thriller about a house of thieves, a stolen necklace, a girl and her detective boyfriend, and a breakneck race involving a train, pursuing autos, and a waiting ferryboat. It was to be a filmed version of Joseph Jefferson Farjeon's play *Number Seventeen*, and Hitchcock was furious at having to take it on, for it was a bundle of clichés."

– Spoto, pp. 128-129. (Quite an ironic comment considering it could be argued that Hitchcock's suspenseful action adventures are built upon 'clichés').

⁴⁰⁷ "You may be wondering where the term originated from. It might be a Scottish name, taken from a story about two men on a train. One man says, *What's the package up there in the baggage rack?*

And the other answers, *Oh, that's a MacGuffin.*

The first one asks, *What's a MacGuffin?*

Well, the other man says, *It's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands.*

The first man says, *But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands*, and the one answers, *Well then, that's no MacGuffin!* So you see that a MacGuffin is actually nothing at all."

– Truffaut, p. 138. These are the words of Alfred Hitchcock. This is Hitchcock's famous explanation of the MacGuffin, a plot device that featured in many of his films. It's purpose, no matter what it is, whether it's the secret of the 39 steps, or the whistled tune in *The Lady Vanishes*, is simply to create intrigue and drive the narrative.

hijacked Green Lion bus that is chasing a train packed with the three villains, the heroine and the diamond necklace, who themselves are speeding towards a ferry that is to take them to the continent. It is a frantic sequence that Hitchcock clearly has fun with, yet while it is completely original in its conception, it still fits in perfectly with Farjeon's narrative. It is a sequence that could never realistically occur on stage and Hitchcock exploits this idea by literally crossing the country with his chase sequence. Hitchcock utilizes the use of models⁴⁰⁸ throughout the sequence to create effects that not only would have been impossible to produce on stage, but also would have cost too much to film in live action.

Hitchcock's ending to *Number Seventeen*, which is essentially an adapted interpretation of Farjeon's play, links to numerous other Hitchcock films. Concerning the models used, this was a technique that he would also later employ within the beginning of *The Lady Vanishes*, in this case to imply that the world presented is filled with toys, essentially rendering the tale fantastical in nature. While the chaotic chase scene echoes several of Hitchcock films from *Saboteur's* Statue of Liberty climax to the chase sequence involving Mount Rushmore in *North by Northwest*, it is the *actual* fact that the train sequence is a different ending to Farjeon's play that is most notable factor. Just like the climactic chase finale that is repeated throughout Hitchcock's work is one of his recognizable motifs, the changing finale of a text's narrative, is another trait that lends itself to the adaptation structure within Hitchcock's films. Other examples include *Blackmail* (as already discussed) which inserts a chase sequence involving the British museum into the narrative of the play, *Jamaica Inn* where a chase across the Cornish moors becomes a siege upon a boat and *The Thirty Nine Steps* where the novella finds John Hannay finding the actual thirty nine steps along the coastline of Kent only to become John Hannay confronting Mr. Memory in the London Palladium. These are all instances where Hitchcock's adaptive

⁴⁰⁸ "This was his first extensive use of miniatures, a technique that would figure prominently in his later British thrillers. Bryan Langley, who shot this sequence in 1932, remembered well how it was done.

The last ten minutes was all a model, a model train running though the countryside. Anything with the actors in it is the real train, the close-ups and so forth. But everything else was models. The scale of the models was one inch to one foot. When the train runs into the dockside, the dock was painted on what they call a Schiufftan shot. The little man [figure 68 below] you saw being run over by the train was reflected in a sheet of glass, which was put on the model track. The man, of course was a real man, but he had to be a great distance away to be in scale to the rest of the thing. Hitchcock was there directing it, most of the time, in particular that last sequence."

- Chandler, pp. 85-86.

process has led to a dramatic shift in narrative and subsequent invention of a scenario more cinematic for the screen, yet in keeping with the text. Of course each case is different, with some texts appearing more ‘faithful’ to the original narrative, or that a certain number of changes may have occurred throughout the text to render the original ending implausible. The point is that just like a simple moment of black comedy that on its own appears to be just a facet of a film, when that moment is consistently repeated over a body of work, it becomes a recognizable trait that is a part of a larger structure. Within Hitchcock’s adaptation structure, the differing ending becomes one of those traits.

A further example of Hitchcock’s adapted finales is found in *Strangers on a Train*. Within Patricia Highsmith’s novel the psychopathic Bruno falls overboard and drowns at sea, leaving Guy Haines to wallow in the guilt of the murder that he has committed before eventually confessing his crimes. In Hitchcock’s adaptation Guy Haines does not go through with the murder of Bruno’s father and thus the ending becomes that of a chase between hero and villain. The dramatic finale takes place within a fairground where Bruno and Guy fight upon a carousel. They each crawl under it and as the ride gets faster and faster, Bruno is eventually hit and killed. This ending while being completely different to Highsmith’s novel is in fact lifted from Edmund Crispin’s *The Moving Toyshop*:

‘Bloody fools,’ said the attendant to Cadogen, who had just arrived with Mr. Hoskins to join Sally and Wilkes. ‘Do they want to kill themselves?’

The lights of the roundabout dimmed suddenly as it reached its normal maximum speed. Islanded in calm, the operator at the centre regarded it with indifference, waiting the few revolutions during which strained muscles would hold out before slowing again.

‘You’ve got to stop that thing,’ Cadogen said sharply. ‘The first man who got on is a murderer. He’s armed and dangerous. Stop it, for God’s sake.’⁴⁰⁹

Here is an example of a double adaptation within one text, an example of Hitchcock’s poaching methods and another example of the changed ending trait.

⁴⁰⁹ Crispin, E., *The Moving Toyshop*, Vintage, London, 2007, p.194.



Figure 66.



Figure 67.



Figure 68.



Figure 69.

The above four images bring us back to *Number Seventeen* where they represent the spectacle of cinema and in a way they show the grandest possible adaptation of a play, depicting a sequence that could never occur on stage, only off of it. The chase sequence at the end of *Number Seventeen* is one of Hitchcock's last forays into adapting plays in England, and it expresses his desire and eagerness to leave them behind. He was always openly critical of his earlier work, including the adaption of Farjeon's play, and it is the lack of freedom that upset him, and subsequently remained with him throughout his career. In an open letter to the *London Evening News*⁴¹⁰ Hitchcock described the importance of cinematic creativity,

⁴¹⁰ "Perhaps the immediate opportunity lies in more careful and more intelligent treatment of film stories. The American film directors under their commercially minded employers have learnt a good deal about studio lighting, action photographs, and telling a story plainly and smoothly in moving pictures. They have learnt, as it were, to put the nouns, verbs and adjectives of the film language together....Film directors live with their pictures while they are being made. They are their babies just as much as an author's novel is the offspring of his imagination. And that seems to make it all the more certain that when moving pictures are really artistic they will be created entirely by one man."
- Spoto, pp. 102-103.

longing for the day when he could express the artistic freedom that he craved. Adapting theatre provided Hitchcock with experience in adaptation and an understanding of the text. The remainder of his British career dealt with the adaptation of short stories and novels, and from 1940 onwards he began making films for Hollywood. His adaptive process had subsequently changed and Hitchcock had become one of the most famous directors in the world and was able to pick and choose his projects, yet the structure of adaptation found throughout his work was already in place and in 1948 he returned to his theatrical adaptation roots with *Rope*.

Appendix II: Hitchcock's Adaptation of the Short Story

Concerning Roeg's *Don't Look Now*, Kinder and Houston state that "the editing style destroys the linear structure of the original source"⁴¹¹ while *The Birds* shows very little narrative similarities between Du Maurier and Hitchcock's retelling. Short stories are often expanded on or manipulated in a way that differs to that of a play or a novel. Now whether that is because there is not enough material within a story to fill the narrative of a typical ninety-plus minute feature such as with *The Birds* or whether the narrative of the short story needs to be manipulated with camera work and editing before it becomes a film, as with *Don't Look Now*, both examples suggest that the short story lends itself to a 'looser' form of adaptation.

Hitchcock adapted five short stories in his career resulting in *Champagne* (1929), *Lifeboat* (1944), *Notorious*, *Rear Window* and *The Birds*. While there appears to be no similarities between his reasons for choosing the stories or how each were adapted, there are still a few interesting facts that help shed further light on Hitchcock's adaptive process.

It Had To Be Murder was a short story that was written by Cornell Woolrich and was submitted for publication in 1941. It would later become *Rear Window*. The narratives are very similar with a man wheelchair bound at his window who watches his neighbours to pass the time before he eventually starts to suspect one of them of foul play. Yet it is not in the narratives of the two texts where the most interesting aspect of this adaptation lies but rather the legal ownership. In 'The Author of This Claptrap' Pamela Robertson Wojcik writes in detail about the legal wrangling that occurred within the 1970's when *Rear Window* was shown on television and rereleased in the cinema. The case involved Sheldon Abend who was a literary agent who had acquired the rights to Woolrich's story after his death and because Woolrich never renewed the movie rights before he died, the copyright expired and a

⁴¹¹ Marsha Kinder and Beverly Houston, 'Seeing is Believing: The Exorcist and Don't Look Now' in Waller, G.A. (ed.), *American Horrors: Essays on the Modern American Horror Film*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1987, p. 52.

court case for the control of the original work followed.⁴¹² Wojcik states the court case is important because it specifically addresses the complexities of authorship:

In his opinion for the Court of Appeals, Justice Pregerson awarded damages and royalties to Abend but refused to impose an injunction on the film, arguing that it would cause “great injustice” to the owners of the film (James Stewart, Hitchcock, and MCA). In part, Pregerson appraised the significant work and money behind the “derivative” work: “Defendants invested substantial money, effort, and talent in creating the *Rear Window* film”. For Pregerson “the *Rear Window* film resulted from the collaborative efforts of many talented individuals other than Cornell Woolrich.”⁴¹³

Legally the film owes its authorship to Woolrich, but only reluctantly by the letter of the law. Perhaps the most telling piece of information regarding Hitchcock to come out of this case is found in his deposition which essentially states that he dictated the entire script to John Michael Hayes:

...the writing was done in my office, with his typewriter, in my office, and there are many witnesses if you need them. In other words, I dictate the picture. I did not hand the book to the writer and say, “Make a screenplay of this,” which is a custom in this business. But it doesn’t apply to me, because I make a specific type of film, and I dictate to him what I want to go into the story, and just as a matter of interest, the reason that is done is because I want it my way, in my style, and I would say that in the process there is twenty percent Cornell Woolrich and eighty percent Hitchcock.⁴¹⁴

What makes this even more fascinating is that not only is Woolrich’s story very close to Hitchcock’s text, but before Hitchcock even got his hands on the text, a playwright by the name of Joshua Logan, who never got to work on the film or was ever credited for any work, had already been commissioned to write a script, in which the notable changes he made consisted of making Jeff a photographer, creating the character of Lisa, changing the short story’s character of Sam into the comedy relief part of Stella and the removal of the first person narrative. The murder and fixed viewpoint survived from the short story. Logan’s script was then used as a basis for the film so quite what Hitchcock dictated to Hayes is a mystery.

This legal battle over *Rear Window* highlights not only Hitchcock’s continuing ignorance of original texts and other authors, but also the ambiguity that

⁴¹² Wojcik, P.R., ‘The Author of This Claptrap: Cornell Woolrich, Alfred Hitchcock and *Rear Window*,’ in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, Albany, New York Press, 2011, pp. 213-215.

⁴¹³ Wojcik, p. 215.

⁴¹⁴ Wojcik, p. 218.

exists over the status of the adapted short story. This is further highlighted by *Notorious* which is an adaptation of John Taintor Foote's 'The Song of the Dragon.' In this case both texts are quite different yet each share the fixed point of a woman who agrees to go undercover as a spy for her country which involves her becoming romantically involved with a possible enemy. The waters are further muddied because of her romantic involvement with the American agent that is meant to be her contact. In 'Unrecognizable Origins' Mathew Bernstein challenges the notion that is often put forward that this adaptation only contains "a few basic elements"⁴¹⁵ of Foote's text and thus it is too far removed from the text to learn anything. Despite referring to the text as a "low brow literature piece" Bernstein successfully shows that by analysing the "surgical adaptation" that is performed and by discussing what the differences are between the texts, we are able to learn more about the artistic choices made by the director.⁴¹⁶

A minor criticism of Bernstein would be his clear preference of the film over the short story, where for example he seems to criticize Foote's work for not containing the "emotional anguish and moral complexities"⁴¹⁷ of Hitchcock's film. Criticisms aside, what Bernstein presents is further evidence that no matter how far removed a film may appear to be from its original text, there is always something to be found. In the case of *The Birds*, Hitchcock's text appears to be completely removed in terms of narrative, while concerning time (the importance of which will be discussed in the next chapter) there is eleven years between the publishing of Du Maurier's story and the production of Hitchcock's film. In *The Screenplay, Authorship, Theory and Criticism* Stephen Prince details the script writing process that took place between Hitchcock and Evan Hunter. Prince describes three draft scripts, multiple rewrites by different writers and many arguments between Hunter and Hitchcock and the only thing that they can all agree on, including Price, is the suggestion that Hunter and Hitchcock built an entirely new story, completely separate from Du Maurier.⁴¹⁸ While this thesis contests that notion, it would be foolish not to

⁴¹⁵ Matthew H. Bernstein, 'Unrecognizable Origins: The Song of the Dragon and Notorious', in Palmer, R.B., and Boyd, D. (eds.), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, Albany, New York Press, 2011, p. 140.

⁴¹⁶ Bernstein, p. 157.

⁴¹⁷ Bernstein, p. 156.

⁴¹⁸ Price, S., *The Screenplay, Authorship, Theory and Criticism*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2010, pp. 74-94.

acknowledge the scriptwriter⁴¹⁹ here, whereas with *Rear Window* and the controversial screenwriting process, Price's account suggests an extensive collaboration between multiple writers and assistants. Hitchcock's status and his ego usually got in the way of the scriptwriter taking any credit, but the fact of the matter is that the scriptwriter is intricately placed between Du Maurier and Hitchcock, one foot on the front line of adaptation, the other to keep the author at a distance.

⁴¹⁹ It should be noted that the role of the screenwriter is not the main focus of this thesis yet it would have an incredibly important role within a Hitchcock adaptation model, and thus further academic work is needed to fully understand Hitchcock's adaptive process.