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Claremont McKenna College

**Masochism, Drive, & Horror: Our Indulgence in
Self Infliction**

Submitted to:

Ryan Engley

by

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for

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ABSTRACT

Human nature is inherently masochistic, meaning we self gratify through the means of some type of self-harm. The term masochism usually refers to sexual tendencies, but in this paper, it will be used as a reference to some sort of self-infliction of pain whether it be mental or physical. It is rare that we, as individuals, do not partake in masochism on a daily basis. When we engage in an activity or task that inflicts a type of pain, or stress on our bodies and mind, we are rewarded with gratification. This can be observed in gym-goers, individuals who thrive in high-stress environments, and more specifically, people who enjoy horror films. We are driven through our masochistic inhibitions when we indulge in horror films. These films allow us to engage in our psyche's masochistic tendencies without having to experience the consequences of those masochistic desires. The genre of horror grants us access to live out our greatest fears while providing a type of safe haven. This paper will explore the masochistic psyche, as theorized by Freud in relation to media, our drive as a society towards horror and other masochistic behaviors in relation to media and film, and the specifics of horror films in regards to self-gratification.

Keywords: masochism, horror, film, Freud, Lacan, drive, Alfred Hitchcock

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GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
UNCONSCIOUS	The part of our minds that are responsible for our feelings, thoughts, urges, and memories
UNCANNY VALLEY	An object's resemblance to human life
SUPEREGO	The part of the mind responsible for morals
SADISM	Deriving pleasure from inflicting pain on another being
REALITY PRINCIPLE	The ego's control of the pleasure-seeking activity of the id in order to meet the demands of the external world. ¹
PLEASURE PRINCIPLE	The instinctive drive to seek pleasure and avoid pain, expressed by the id as a basic motivating force which reduces psychic tension. ²
MASOCHISM	Deriving pleasure from pain, usually self-inflicting
JOUISSANCE	Physical or intellectual pleasure, delight, or ecstasy ³
ID	The part of the mind that manifests instinct
FILM NOIR	Film categorized by fatalism
EGO	The part of the mind responsible for personality
DEATH DRIVE	The tendency inherent in all organic things to return to an inorganic state. ⁴
CONSCIOUSNESS	Awareness in self and space
CATHARSIS	The process of releasing emotion

¹ Oxford Dictionary, 2ed. (Oxford: University Press, 2020) s.v. "Reality Principle"

² Oxford Dictionary, 2ed. (Oxford: University Press, 2011) s.v. "Pleasure Principle"

³ Oxford Dictionary, 2ed. (Oxford: University Press, 2011) s.v. "Jouissance"

⁴ Oxford Dictionary, 2ed. (Oxford: University Press, 2018) s.v. "Death-Drive"

CHAPTER I: MASOCHISM

Freud's Unconscious vs. Conscious Mind

Pain and pleasure determines human nature what to do and when to do it. They are the governance of our bodies and minds. We are inherently masochistic, meaning humans, by nature, are drawn to pain for a source of gratification. This pain can be observed as physical or emotional. Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, theorized that pleasure is equivalent to displeasure or distress on the human body. He argues that displeasure corresponds to an increase, and pleasure to a decrease, in the quantity of free energy— free energy being the energy it takes to create demand for work or action.⁵ Displeasure corresponds to unsatisfied desire— so an unfulfilled libido, for example; and pleasure corresponds to conscious lust. Given that one is unconscious and the other conscious, it means that we, as humans, are conscious of our drive towards infliction, and unconscious of the dissatisfaction that causes us to desire and act upon that drive. Freud theorized that our mind is made up of the conscious and unconscious. The id is what makes up a person's instinctual desires— which for the purpose of this paper, would be masochism. The rest of the mind, the ego and superego, which are preconscious and unconscious, subsequently, are what makes up a person's reasoning and morality, and are repressed by our consciousness.⁶ The id is dependent on the ego and superego; the conscious is dependent on the unconscious, and the two must be dependent on one

⁵ Freud, Sigmund, and James Strachey. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. New York: Norton, 1989.

⁶ *Dialectics, Freud, & Fight Club*, Farley, Anne

another in order to create a dialectic and conflictual whole. In order for one's true masochistic desires to be fully satisfied, their conscious mind must give and act out their unconscious desires from their ego and superego. While Freud believed that human behavior is dictated mostly by our unconscious mind, it is our conscious mind that is responsible for acting out our desires generated by the drive.

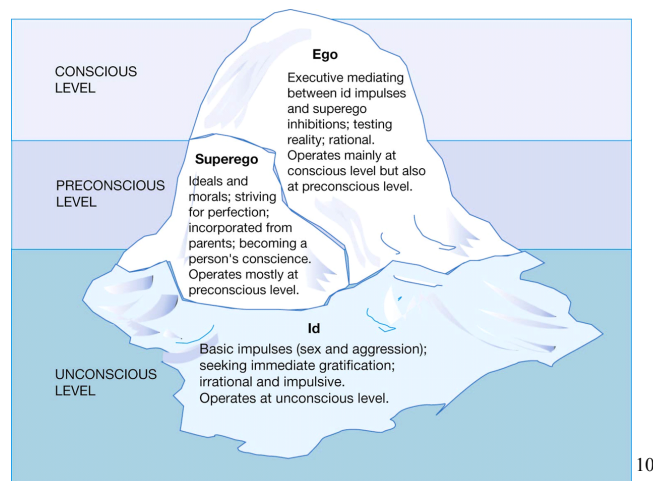
Conscious	Preconscious	Unconscious
	Ego: Personality	Id: instinctual desires Superego: reasoning & morality
Desire: wants & needs	Reality Principle: the mind's ability to assess the reality of the external	Masochism: deriving pleasure from pain Sadism: deriving pleasure from inflicting pain
		Drive: instinctual behaviors that motivate desires Eros: Drive of life, love, sexuality, and self-gratification Thanatos: Drive of aggression sadism, destruction, death

Freud's Masochism & Drive

The derivation of masochism, according to Freud, is sadism. For a primary masochism to be true in human nature, there must be an interpersonal contradiction between eros and thanatos instinct— eros being sexual instinct, and thanatos being the death-instinct.⁷ In Freud's *Economic Problem of Masochism*, he takes a look at masochism through the lens of economics. Economic values are constant in our daily lives and remain consistent as our economy shifts. With this consistency, comes the regularity of the masochistic drive acted out by human nature in reference to our economic culture. We see this occur in our daily lives, as mentioned in the abstract. Take the avid gym-goer, for example, and label them as masochists, for the sake of this argument. These masochists go to the gym consistently throughout the week to put a strain on their bodies and minds. Working out physically tears muscle fibers and spikes cortisol levels to all-time-highs. So why do these masochists enjoy this consistency of self-inflicted pain? Because it leads to self-gratification both physically and mentally. Their muscle fibers repair, and cortisol levels drop back to normal, eventually being replaced with endorphins— the feel good hormone. However, not just your avid gym-goer is a masochist. So are individuals who prefer a busy schedule. Like the gym-goers, these individuals thrive in high-stress environments. With a high stress environment comes high cortisol levels, then eventually even higher endorphins. In Freud's *Three Essays on Theory of Sexuality*, he concludes that “the libido has the task of destroying instinct innocuous, and it fulfills the task by diverting that instinct to a great extend outwards— soon with the help of a special organic system, the muscular

⁷ Freud, S. (1971). The Economic Problem of Masochism (1924). *PsycEXTRA Dataset*.

apparatus— towards objects in the external world”.⁸ This instinct that Freud describes, is in essence, the death-drive; our unconscious drive towards self-destruction. He also described in his metapsychological paper, *Instincts and their Vicissitudes*, that instinct is the true motive behind our behavior. He theorizes that humans indulge themselves in their own desires so far and often, until that desire is painful, and they must stop.⁹ This is called the pleasure principle. While the drive is what motivates us to act upon our desires, the pleasure principle is what tells us to stop, so that we can repeat that behavior for continued gratification. Through this logic, our unconscious mind uses the drive, or death drive, to motivate our actions in our conscious mind that are all inherently masochistic tendencies and behaviors. In order to fully understand why humans are driven to watch horror films, we must claim Freud’s theory of masochism as a truth.



⁸ Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. London: Imago Pub. Co, 1949.

⁹ Freud, Sigmund. "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes." *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 14 (1957).

¹⁰ "Sigmund Freud Psychoanalytic Theory." PMHealth

Freud & Fight Club

As mentioned previously, in my chapter on [*Freud's Unconscious vs. Conscious Mind*](#), the mind is dependent on the unconscious and conscious, while the unconscious and conscious are interdependent on each other. The conflict that occurs between the conscious and unconscious mind is what makes up the entirety of the mind. This conflict is called the dialectic. We must not look at the two entities as separate, but as two halves to a whole to understand the interdependence between the two. The conflict between the two parts, unconscious and conscious, id and superego, creates a dialectical relationship between the two and interrogates the interdependence on the opposition. This interrogation of interdependence of things on their own internal opposition is seen specifically in the film, *Fight Club*. Marx defined dialectics as “the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative”.¹¹ We have to look at dialectics as a form of opposition in order to fully understand how it might interrogate the interdependence of things. Dialectics aims to challenge or push back against that thing—just as we see with the pleasure principle, the idea where we indulge ourselves just enough to the point where reality challenges (or pushes back) on that pleasure. We also must identify *Fight Club* as a dream in order to understand this correlation and conflict. If we look at *Fight Club* as a dream, we can then state that the Narrator represents the conscious mind and Tyler Durden represents the unconscious mind. The Narrator is the voice of morality while Tyler is immorality, or the id. Both the Narrator and Tyler seem to have oppositional agendas. In the beginning of the film, we see the Narrator ask Tyler if he could fight one person in this moment, who would it be, and Tyler responds, “I’d fight

¹¹ Kornbluh, A. (2020). *Marxist film theory and fight club*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

my Dad”. We can see the Narrator challenging Tyler with this statement. He is creating a conflict, or interrogation of interdependence, when he challenges the id. As the film moves along, the Narrator seems to become less oppositional to Tyler, suggesting that there is some sort of unity between the unconscious and conscious. Towards the end of the film, we see that the Narrator is now very similar to Tyler in regards to his moralities. While we see an internal opposition between Tyler and the Narrator throughout the film, the interrogation of the interdependence seems to unify the two, bringing us back to the idea that the mind is dependent on the unconscious and conscious as whole, and not two separate entities. So when we take a step back and separate the unconscious and conscious entities of *Fight Club*, we can see that they directly correlate with Freud’s psychoanalysis of the mind. The two entities of *Fight Club* that make up the mind are Tyler and the Narrator, the unconscious and conscious and the interdependence of the two are what create dialectics. The internal opposition between Tyler and the Narrator is the dialectic. This relationship between the unconscious and conscious mind is observed in other cinema, specifically the genre horror— but we’ll dive into that later. But for now, let’s talk about the drive.

CHAPTER II: DRIVE

Lacanian Film Theory

Psychoanalytic film theory was first formulated by Christian Metz, Jean-Louis Baudry, and Laura Mulvey. These film theorists primarily focused on Lacanian theories for the formation of the psychoanalytic film theory. Based on Lacanian film theory, “there is a relationship between cinema and trauma that disrupts the functioning of ideology... Cinema remains a site for the dissemination of ideology, but it has also become a potential site of political and psychic disruption.”¹² Because cinema is expressed as a disruption in this instance, we can conclude that cinema can be categorized as something that is sadistic, meaning cinema causes some type of harm onto others, others being the spectator. We see throughout Lacanian film theory that he relies heavily on the gaze as a building block of his psychoanalysis of the cinema, but he also relies heavily on the spectator and their relationship with the screen. Lacanian film theory poses the idea that the spectator and the screen are conflictual, with the spectator being the perceiver and the screen being perceived.¹³ If there is a relationship between spectator and spectated, then there must be a motivating factor between the two— which we have established as the inherent masochistic drive. However, this statement is far too general to make a claim. Therefore, the key to understanding the filmic relationship between spectator and spectated, is through the Gaze— as posed by Lacan, but that’s an entirely different topic ([See Appendix A, The Male Gaze](#)). He continues to state that the

¹² McGowan, Todd. “Psychoanalytic Film Theory.” *OxfordBibliographies*. (October 28, 2011.).

¹³ McGowan, Todd. “Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Film Theory and Its Vicissitudes” *Cinema Journal* 42, No. 3, Spring 2003.

screen not only provides an imaginary world for us to experience, without having to experience the physicalities of, but that the screen acts as a mirror of our own self distinctions. By this logic, spectators not only go to the cinema as a reflection of their own self perception, but to also experience the imaginary escape of a sadistic world without the physical consequences.

Lacan's Jouissance & Drive

Jouissance is a French term that translates as physical pleasure. Jouissance also quite literally means little death, or short lived. While the idea is that our psyche is masochistic first, driving us into situations that do some kind of injury, jouissance tells us that our actions not only take from us, but must give something back to us. Jouissance is a plus that is also a minus that we inherently seek out. Lacanian theory states that “an active desire mastering and possessing a passive object obfuscates a traumatic alternative, drawing the subject toward a traumatic jouissance.”¹⁴ This is referring to the gaze in cinema, but can be broken into two different parts. The first part is the gaze, which I won't get into. The second part is the traumatic alternative. In simpler words, Lacan is saying when our desires are fulfilled by something passive, like cinema, it blinds our consciousness of the masochistic trauma that our unconscious receives. That trauma that our unconscious mind endures is overrun by the jouissance, or enjoyment that our conscious minds receive. Unlike Freud, Lacan argues that the purpose of the drive is to

¹⁴ McGowan, Todd. “Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Film Theory and Its Vicissitudes.” *Cinema Journal*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2003, pp. 27–47

come full circle, where we are met with gratification. He says that the purpose of the drive is not to be fully satisfied, but to be able to repeat that driven action with reward. Although Freud's drive must be complete, and Lacan's can be partial, both Freud and Lacan's drive and Jouissance are necessary to understand as to why humans partake in masochistic acts, like watching a horror film.

Societal Drive & Media

Now that we have established that individuals are inherently masochistic, that means their drive towards media is also masochistic. Some examples we see this in are when young girls scroll through Instagram pages of models with unattainable bodies. We see this behavior occur when young boys play video games for hours on end until their fingers are in pain. We can also infer that these video games are usually sadistic, or portraying harm to others. Does this mean that society as a whole is driven by their individual masochistic desires? While those previous examples can't offer a formal answer, they give us insight into our behavior and how society consumes media through a masochistic lens. Media, in essence, dehumanizes society as a whole (See Appendix A, Chapter III: *Behaviors & Attitudes in Relation to Film*). When our society is so saturated with media, it changes our perspective of not only that specific media, but ourselves as individuals and society as a whole. This idea, that mass media dehumanizes society, is masochistic. We can also note that our behavior in regards to media consumption is masochistic. It isn't uncommon to find ourselves scrolling through Instagram and TikTok for hours on end or binge watching Netflix series from the beginning to the very last

episode. The sheer amount of time we spend on our televisions, smartphones, and laptops directly parallels masochistic behaviors, the pleasure principle, Lacan's jouissance, and our overall societal drive to attain and complete these desires.

CHAPTER III: HORROR

Genre of Horror & Catharsis

According to Genre Theory in Rick Altman's *A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film*, genre is largely shaped by and reflexive of the current societal trends and preferences ([See Appendix A, Genre Theory](#)). We also learn through Franklyn Fearing's "Influence of the Movies on Attitudes & Behavior" that the screen is perceived by the unconscious mind of the individual.¹⁵ This was also expressed previously in Lacanian film theory when he concluded that the film is the perceived while the spectator is the perceiver. Therefore, we must conclude that genre is shaped by audience preference and film is perceived by the unconscious individual preference. Horror genre, specifically, reflects the theory of the uncanny. We hear the term "uncanny valley" often, when describing an object or person as seeming almost real. This can be observed in things like wax figures, or films like the polar express. This "uncanny valley" feeling elicits an off-putting feeling. The uncanny is said to come from our id, according to Freud. Therefore, horror films reflect our individual feelings of fears and desires, coming from our unconscious. When we, as individuals, are able to experience our unconscious fears and desires in our conscious mind, it gives us self-gratification. Because we cannot access our unconscious mind, and because horror films are capable of reflecting our collective unconscious on the screen, it drives us to consume the screen. It makes us capable of seeing into our own unconscious without two things: one being the realization

¹⁵ Fearing, Franklyn. 2010. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Nov., 1947, Vol. 254, The Motion Picture Industry (Nov., 1947), pp. 70-79

and understanding of our deepest desires, and two the consequences that follow the hypothetical of acting out those said desires. The genre of horror offers catharsis to the spectator, meaning they grant the spectator the ability to purge or rid themselves of emotion. Catharsis is a term that is generally used in reference to art, whether it be physical or digital, and the emotional and physical response that the spectator experiences. The category horror provides the spectator with a protective notion to experience emotions found deep within their unconscious through two ways: the first being that the experience is not real, and a mere illusion of reality, and the second being that the experience is in the safety of a theater or a person's home. So we have the physical barrier between the screen and spectator that serves as a protective boundary, and we have the contents within the screen, the imaginary reality, that also serves as a protective boundary. As stated before in my chapter on [*Lacanian Film Theory*](#), the relationship between the spectator and the screen is conflictual, and inherently masochistic. Therefore, we can argue that the perceived screen is the spectator's unconscious mind, and the spectator is the conscious mind. From this, we can conclude that the physical boundary between the screen (unconscious mind) and spectator (conscious mind) is the preconscious mind. Nevertheless, the relationship between screen and spectator is reflective of the mind as a whole. The act of watching the film is driven by our innate masochism in order to attain jouissance through catharsis.

Alfred Hitchcock

Alfred Hitchcock, English filmmaker, is widely recognized for his success in the film industry—specifically for his creation of horror films. This chapter will discuss the techniques Hitchcock uses to create such masterful films, and to manipulate the spectator. His films are consistently terrifying, unique, unordinary, enthralling, and exhilarating. In *Encountering Directors* ([See Appendix B](#)), a conversation between Samuel and Charles Thomas, Samuel explains that Hitchcock uses a jigsaw method to his editing, keeping anyone but him from knowing how his films are made.¹⁶ Samuels continues to interview Alfred Hitchcock asking questions about his films and techniques. Hitchcock expresses to Samuels:

Cinema is simply pieces of a film put together in a manner that creates ideas and emotions... I don't believe in mystifying an audience. I believe in giving them all the information and then making them sweat. It's no good devising a film to satisfy only yourself. The subject doesn't count either. You get satisfaction through your style of treatment. I'm not interested in content. It disturbs me very much when people criticize my films because of their content. It's like looking at a still life and saying, 'I wonder whether those apples are sweet or sour.' Cinema is form. I see many good films that contain very fine dialogue. I don't deprecate these films, but to me, they're not pure cinema.¹⁷

¹⁶ Samuels, Charles T. *Encountering Directors*. New York: Putnam, 1972. Archive.org

¹⁷ Samuels, Charles T.

It is quite obvious that Hitchcock's idea of cinema is rather different from other directors. His main motivation is the audience, and in specific, drawing out the most emotion he can from the audience. It's rather interesting to read Hitchcock say that he is non interested in the content of the film— but it makes sense in reference to his film style. Most of Hitchcock's films are notable because of the thrill and emotion we feel while watching them, but not because of the cinematic mastery of the contents in the film. The interview goes on to talk about the specific techniques that Hitchcock uses in his filmmaking. Samuel notes Hitchcock's objection toward using "weird angles" in his films. While Hitchcock tends to avoid these techniques, it is more often than not that we see "weird angles" in mainstream horror cinema. There are common modern camera techniques that filmmakers use to intensify the horror and thrill of the scene. The most common techniques we see in horror films are the close up, the handheld camera shot, an establishing shot, the POV push-in, and a zoom in shot.¹⁸ The handheld camera shot is usually used alongside the POV push-in and close up camera angle, which targets emotion as fear.¹⁹ The other shots, establishing, and zoom, are utilized to set the scene and drag out suspense. While Hitchcock's films do incorporate these techniques, it is not his main focus. Hitchcock continues in the interview:

What Truffaut appreciated from my technique was the use of the subjective treatment. A typical example is from the film *Rear Window*. Where the central figure is a man in one position whose viewpoint we study. His viewpoint

¹⁸ Liselotte, Heimdahl *Analysis of Camera Work in Horror Movies*. Tokyo University of Technology, 2016.

¹⁹ Liselotte, Heimdahl.

becomes his mental processes, by the use of the camera and the montage— and this is what I actually mean by subjective treatment. The objective treatment, however, is also used when necessary: but for me, the objective is merely an extension of the theater because you are the viewer of the events that take place in front of you, but you are not necessarily in the mind of that person. Subjective shooting puts the audience in the mind of the character.²⁰



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Rear Window, 1954

This idea that Hitchcock focuses on the subjective, rather than the objective, is brilliant— and plays with Freud’s theories on the unconscious and conscious mind. When the spectator is forced to be put in the mind of the character on screen, they inevitably feel

²⁰ Samuels, Charles T. *Encountering Directors*. New York: Putnam, 1972. Archive.org

²¹ Paramount. (1954.). *Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window*. Universal City, CA.

that character's emotions. The subjective character in Hitchcock's films are almost always the characters being antagonized; therefore, the spectator will not only feel their characters' fear and horror, but their own fear and horror from their unconscious. The use of focusing on the subjective, rather than the objective can be seen in all of Hitchcock's films, but let's just focus on two films, which can both be categorized as film noir: The 1943 psychological thriller, *Shadow of a Doubt*, and 1958 thriller, *Vertigo*.

Shadow of a Doubt

1943 American psychological thriller, *Shadow of a Doubt*, tells a story of a teenage girl, Charlotte (Charlie), and her run-in with danger. Charlie's Uncle, who she later suspects to be a murderer, comes to visit her and her family. Hitchcock magnificently creates a thrilling story of Charlie and her family, and the terror they encounter from their Uncle. This film noir puts the audience in the shoes of Charlie, evoking emotions of fear, distrust, and the feeling of suspense. Hitchcock does two fundamental things in his creation of this film. The first is the realism of this film. And the second is the inclusion of Freudian psychoanalytic theories. *Shadow of a Doubt* portrays an extraordinary ordinary American family— so it seems. The film introduces both Charlie and her Uncle with a camera shot through their windows, respectively. Then the camera cuts to a zoom towards their beds. The movement of the camera is rather simple, yet makes the audience feel like they are being watched— the audience feels uneasy. This introduction to the film makes it feel all too real. Hitchcock portrays an all-too ordinary family living in a small, quaint town, looking the same as every other family in America. As the film continues, we soon learn that Uncle Charlie is a prime

suspect of murder, and we, as spectators, start to feel the emotions that Charlie feels about her Uncle. As we spectate the subjective, we are thrown into the imaginary reality of their on-screen story. Additionally, Hitchcock plays with Freudian theories in his films. In the beginning of the film, we can infer that there is some sort of incestual relationship between Charlie and her Uncle, which Freud would argue is one of our unconscious inherent desires. It's rather uncomfortable for the audience to watch the movie unfold, since their family is supposed to be representative of the ordinary American family. Hitchcock turns the audience's imaginary real into a realistic terror. As the film unfolds, the audience still isn't quite sure of the incestual and abusive behavior of Uncle Charlie. The absence of the portrayal of incest and abuse parallels Lacan's take on the spectator-spectated relationship. The audience's inferral of incest is assisted by Hitchcock's filmmaking, but it is ultimately the audience's unconscious that comes up with the presumption. This presumption by the spectator's unconscious is the id expressing their inherent desires.



Shadow of A Doubt, 1942.

²² Hitchcock, Alfred. (1942). *Shadow of a doubt*. United States; Universal.

As the film draws to a close, the audience is met with the death of Uncle Charlie. This scene is immediately followed with a cross dissolve into a scene of a dancing couple, dancing to the Waltz. This use of juxtaposition also creates an uneasiness among the audience. One second, we witness the death of Uncle Charlie, then the next we are watching a happy couple dancing. One might argue that this dancing scene is strategically after Uncle Charles' tragedy in order to assist the audience in feeling glad that the antagonist met his demise. However, I just think it's Hitchcock's artistic style, with no rhyme or reason behind it. The film closes with a conversation between Jack and Charlie. Charlie says to Jack, "He thought the world was a horrible place. He couldn't have been very happy ever... You know, he said that people like us had no idea what the world was really like."²³ The camera then dissolves to the front of a church and the film comes to an end. It is at this moment that Hitchcock leaves us questioning our moralities. The audience is left with unanswered questions about Charlie. Did she end up marrying Jack or will she end up like her Uncle? Is Charlie's average life too bleak for her? In essence, the relationship between Charlie and her Uncle is a reflection of Charlie's own internal struggles. Her life was too bleak and ordinary, so she was inevitably caught up in the terrifying relationship with her Uncle. Hitchcock draws upon the Oedipus complex to toy with the audience's emotions and moralities. He not only does this in *Shadow of A Doubt*, but another widely known film, *Vertigo*.

²³ Hitchcock, Alfred. (1942). *Shadow of a doubt*. United States; Universal.

Vertigo

1954 psychological thriller, *Vertigo*, is an exemplary example of Freud's idea of the uncanny. As mentioned in my chapter on [*Genre of Horror & Catharsis*](#), the uncanny is said to come from our id. When we look at *Vertigo* through a Freudian lens, we can identify that Scottie, played by James Stewart, experiences the dialectic interdependence between conscious and unconscious, meaning his behaviors and feelings throughout the film reflect the relationship between the id, ego, and superego. Scottie's id, being his desire for pleasure, dictates his actions throughout the film— this becomes obvious when he obsesses over Madeline, who also falls into the category of the id. The superego can be identified as Midge, Scottie's closest friend, acting as Scottie's conscience and reasoning. From the beginning of the film, we can infer that Scottie experienced Oedipal trauma. *Vertigo* opens with a policeman's death, at the fault of Scottie. In order to claim that Scottie experienced Oedipal trauma, we must claim that the policeman represented a father figure.²⁴ Therefore, Scottie's motivations for his behaviors in the rest of the film are to satisfy that trauma— through his obsession with Madeline, and relationship with Midge. Karen Hollinger, author of *The Look*, states:

According to Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the Oedipal trauma for the boy involves his progress from an original feeling of oneness with his mother in the realm of the Imaginary to an experience of lack that leads him to separate himself from the Mother, identify with the Father, enter the Symbolic realm of language and culture, and search out a mature heterosexual love relationship. Scottie's

²⁴ Journal of Film and Video , Fall 1987, Vol. 39, No. 4, Spectatorship, Narrativity, and Feminist Revision (Fall 1987), pp. 18-27

failure to resolve these problems can be seen clearly in the film's second scene which reveals his relationship with his female 'friend' Midge.²⁵



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Vertigo, 1958.

Midge, who represents Scottie's superego, also represents a motherly figure— which is yet another example of the Oedipal complex. As the film progresses, we see Scottie “break free” from his relationship with Midge and shift from Oedipal love to romantic love, with his obsession with Madeline. In essence, *Vertigo* is a masterful and complex story of how the id, ego, and superego play a role in our motivations, desires, and behaviors. Madeline represents Scottie's unconscious— we can conclude this specifically from the scene of Scottie dragging Judy to the top of the stairs. Hitchcock uses the uncanny to create delusions within the subjective and illusions among the audience. By doing so, Hitchcock draws out confusion and fear from the audience— which are, as we have established, reflective of their own individual unconsciousness.

²⁵ Journal of Film and Video , Fall 1987, Vol. 39, No. 4, Spectatorship, Narrativity, and Feminist Revision (Fall 1987), pp. 18-27

²⁶ Hitchcock, Alfred. (1958). *Vertigo*. Paramount Pictures Corp. United States.

CONCLUSION

Sure, there are many motivators that go into why we, as individuals, behave the way we do, but it is largely derived from our psyche. Our reasoning behind leaving our homes, driving to a movie theater, and sitting down to willingly watch a two-hour tragedy unfold on screen can be dumbed down to the simple idea that horror films are exhilarating. However, it is much more complex than that. While yes, horror films are in fact extremely exhilarating, it is that rush of fear, that feeling of adrenaline, and that intoxicating thrill that has us sitting on the edge of our theater seats that satisfy us. Fear, adrenaline, and thrill. By nature, these sentiments are masochistic. Alfred Hitchcock draws out our masochistic desires through his films, and strategically uses Freudian and Lacanian theories to amplify our perception of horror.

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APPENDIX A

Farley, Anne. "Media Industry Studies: The Convergence Between Society & Hollywood." Critical Media Studies, December 2021 (pp. 1-23)

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Social Pandering

There is a type of convergence that happens in today's media industry, one in which people watch "progressive" Hollywood media and think it is reflective of social advancements; however, that couldn't be further from the truth. In reality, Hollywood is pandering to its progressive audience, fronting its media with messages of support of social change while fostering further social unrest. This convergence occurs when society's media preferences affect Hollywood's media output, and when Hollywood's media output reflects society's media preferences. In this paper, I will explore the correlations between changes in film and TV as a reflection of society, and the piggy-backing on progressive movements to turn a profit. For the purpose of the paper, I will describe this as **social pandering**. In the first section, I explore *The Queen Gambit* and *I Care A Lot* explaining how they both embody this idea of social pandering. In subsequent sections, I explore theories that are applicable to these media examples and how society is, in turn, affected. Lastly, I discuss how these theories impact Hollywood and society, as a result of this social pandering. This social pandering is seen in LGBTQ representation and representation of women in Hollywood. Hollywood uses diversity to draw in wider and more progressive audiences but includes misrepresentations of real

problems in the film. The topic I will discuss further is the controversy that this convergence creates and the dichotomy of whether or not media is, in fact, reflective of society and if society is reflective of media, in specific the representation of LGBTQ individuals and women in film. This is important to the field of Media Studies, specifically Media Industry Studies because it discusses the controversial affect the convergence society and Hollywood have on each other. My goal is to find specific media examples that parallel this convergence and can help society understand the detrimental effects of media that they are consuming.

CHAPTER II: THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT & I CARE A LOT

The Queen's Gambit

Let's talk about Netflix. Netflix is constantly dealing with lawsuits regarding sexism, racism, and misrepresentation in their films and tv shows. In recent events, Netflix was sued by Nona Gaprindashvili, the first woman to be named a grandmaster in chess. Gaprindashvili's lawsuit claimed that Netflix undermined and degraded her accomplishments through their show, *The Queen's Gambit*. *The Queen's Gambit* attempts to be an empowering story of a female chess player succeeding in a male-dominated sport. Although this may seem moral on the surface level, *The Queens Gambit* proves to be nothing but sexist, degrading, and misrepresented.

We witness this act of "undermining" in *The Queens Gambit* throughout the entirety of the mini-series. This limited Netflix series was supposed to be a trailblazing story about feminism in the 1960s. Elizabeth (Beth) Harmon, the main character, is one of the first

females to excel in the male-dominated sport, chess. She overcomes being orphaned and dealing with alcohol and drug abuse. She sets the tone as a key player in the sport of chess, teaching others that women can do just as a man can, and can do it even better than them. However, this trailblazing feminist story turned out to be the complete opposite. From a critical look, it is easy to spot the intention of the screenwriters. Beth is extremely overly sexualized throughout the entirety of this series while being one of the only female characters in the series. The writers of the series also romanticize Beth's relationship with drugs and alcohol. Regardless of this first impression that this series is an empowering story of a young woman persevering through a male-dominated industry, the series in reality is overtly sexual, and in my argument extremely offensive to women. This film paints a rude and misrepresenting picture of what women are "supposed" to look like from a male's perspective.

Jolene As A Trope: The Modern Mammy

To point out a few fatal flaws that the series incorporates are: 1) romanticizing drug and alcohol abuse to cater to the fantasies of escaping reality to a younger generation; 2) turning one of the only Black characters in the series into a harmfully familiar trope; and 3) overly sexualizing the main female lead, a common occurrence in most media today. Let's dig into these three points, starting at point two. One of the only Black characters in the show, Jolene (played by Moses Ingram) can, unfortunately, be categorized under the trope of the 'modern mammy' in film, which can be mistaken by viewers for effective representation, "a trope that specifically relies on a Black female character doing the bidding of a white character." The audience, at first glance, might see

Jolene as a great way for diverse representation, but the more we dig into the reality of her inclusion in the series, it becomes more apparent that she falls under this harmful trope more than she might be categorized as a diverse role with proper representation. This trope explains the idea of a southern stereotype of a Black woman who works for a white family and takes care of the white children. Jolene is first introduced in the first episode of *The Queen's Gambit*, then disappears from the screen until the very end of the series. She is portrayed as a support system and leader to Beth, showing her the ropes of the orphanage and being there for Beth as a friend to lean on. She then reappears in the series in the final two episodes to help save Beth from her crippling alcohol and drug addictions. In her appearances in the series, she is seen as a caretaker, sidekick, and stereotype; and by sidelining one of the few Black characters in the series, Netflix completely misses the mark on valid representation. This is a common occurrence in cinema today, overlooked by many viewers, and seen as a form of diverse representation.

Let's look at the first on-screen appearance of Jolene in *The Queen's Gambit* first— keep in mind that this series is set in the 1950s where racism and slavery were still glaringly apparent. Jolene appears in the first episode as one of the orphans, alongside Beth. The first episode chronologically portrays years in the orphanage and we witness Beth and Jolene forming a stronger friendship. As their relationship develops, so do the characters, but inversely. Beth continues to gain skills in chess while fostering her secondary relationship with a mentor and father figure, Mr. Shaibel (the orphanage janitor); and Jolene seems to constantly and more frequently stir up trouble within the orphanage. She makes sure to sneak Beth with more drugs than she needs, fueling her addiction, and

adoring calls her “Cracker”. Jolene is portrayed as a trouble-maker, while Beth is portrayed as a parentless victim. It almost seems as if Netflix immediately placed vilifying characteristics on Jolene— in a way, and guiltless characteristics on Beth. At such an early point in the series, it is hard to come to a conclusion that Jolene serves as a sidekick character, paralleling the elements of the modern mammy trope. After the first episode, Jolene is not seen until the final episode in the series when Beth is going through her downward spiral. This downward spiral was fueled by the death of Mr. Shaibel and intertwined with Beth’s drug and alcohol abuse. Jolene appears out of the blue to Beth’s home to try to pull her out of this spiral. Jolene then gives Beth thousands of dollars to continue her chess career in Russia, even after years of not speaking. Beth compares Jolene to her “guardian angel” and Jolene responds to this by saying, “I’m not here to save you. Hell, I can barely save me”. This was Netflix’s pathetic attempt at trying to dance around the trope of the Black sidekick saving the White protagonist. Netflix does a fantastic job at making it feel like Jolene had been by Beth’s side since the beginning, although in reality, she wasn’t. Her character was sidelined, seen as an underdog, and quite honestly feels like she was used as a token.

Beth From The Lens of A Man

Now, let’s look at points number one and three, which all have to do with the on-screen representation of women and the male gaze. First and foremost, the male gaze is a huge part of cinema across the world, so it is sometimes difficult to grasp what the male gaze is and how to differentiate certain parts of a film or series that might be catering to the male gaze. For the purpose of this paper, “the male gaze” will refer to the

cis-hetero stereotypical presentation of females. The female gaze, on the other hand, promotes a realistic portrayal of women, which is not recognized in *The Queen's Gambit*. The beginning of the series starts strong, with Beth as a figure of feminism, but quickly turns away from that as it begins to overly sexualize her and romanticize her addictions. Beth's addiction to drugs stems from her time in the orphanage when she would be given sleeping pills by the nurses. These pills that she was given would essentially help Beth visualize playing the game of chess, resulting in her being a better player. As time goes on, she uses alcohol as a replacement, and then eventually uses both drugs and alcohol. In the series, we see Beth becoming more mature and physically beautiful the worse her mental health gets. She also starts to gain more and more attention from the men around her as her mental health and addictions spiral. Although viewers may overlook this, it sends an inappropriate and completely wrong message to the audience, whether it be conscious or subconscious. This dramatization of substance abuse and overly sexualizing the female lead tells the audience that it is 'sexy' to be addicted and that men like women with mental health issues. One critic points out that Beth is overly sexualized not only throughout the entirety of the series but especially during the 'oddest' of times, like when her mother dies; the camera shows Beth undressing, addressing the male gaze and throughout the film, the angles are specifically focused on Beth's chest and legs. There is also a point in the series where Beth hits her peak in her mental health issues. This scene shows Beth spiraling, binge drinking alcohol, and dancing around her house in her underwear. The camera angle focuses on her chest and legs, yet again. The soundtrack in the background is the song, Shocking Blue, by Venus, a 1968 upbeat song about beauty, sex, and desire; the song says "she's got it... I'm your fire, at your desire...

making every man mad... got what no one else had, woah!”). This use of an upbeat song elicits a positive internal emotional response from the audience, while they watch a negative on-screen action, Beth’s unravel. The use of music changes how we think, feel, and respond— so when this specific song is used in this scene, it intentionally drives us to associate positive emotions with drug and alcohol abuse and mental decline. This juxtaposition, so clearly observed, is called soundtrack dissonance and can be found at almost every corner of Hollywood and its media. It indulges the audience and makes a commentary on the duality of human nature, allowing us to momentarily give into our fantasies and desires.

I find it particularly interesting that as Beth’s mental health seems to decline, her sex appeal, in turn, seems to increase. In addition to her sex appeal increasing, her brilliance also increases with the use of drugs— which she was introduced to during her time at the orphanage. Beth continued to take these drugs because they helped her visualize a chessboard and chess moves, fostering her skills. The more she took, the better she got at chess, and the greater her addiction was fueled. This entwinement of declining mental health with increased sex appeal, and increased substance abuse with increased genius, is, in my opinion, extremely detrimental to the audience. As viewers watch Beth’s story unfold, they are essentially being told that substance abuse will make you smarter, and mental health issues are sexy. Whether or not the audience is aware of this subliminal message from the storyline, it will still affect them negatively, which will be expanded on, when we discuss behavior in regards to film, in chapter II.

The Cis-heteropatriarchy

Furthermore, *The Queen's Gambit* was written by men, inadvertently taking away the validity of proper female representation— especially if the storyline was meant to be an empowering one. When a film is written and directed by a majority of men, specifically cis-heterosexual white men, it consequently falls bias to the male gaze. The portrayal of characters is no longer for the minority, but appeases the majority, catering to the desires of other cis-hetero men— feminist theory calls this the cisheteropatriarchy. While female representation in film is gradually becoming progressive, social pandering on these changes still exists. Feminist film theory suggests that parts of women in film are constructed by the perception of society. The perception society has on women is still overtly sexist, especially in media generated by men, proposing the parallels with social pandering. Our society forms the ideals of how a woman looks, speaks, and dresses; and this is reflected on screen, but through the lens of Hollywood— which is, majority controlled by cis-hetero men; and in turn reframed and reshaped as a tactic to not only conform to these ideals but to amplify them to satisfy the needs and desires of our society.

I Care A Lot

Another example that we see this 'piggybacking' on social change is in the use of lead female characters in film and television as an attempt to front as a progressive and empowering form of media. We witness this in Netflix's original film, *I Care A Lot*. In *I Care A Lot*, the main character, Marla, vapes and wears traditionally male clothing while also succeeding in a portrayed male-dominated career, a con artist. Con artists are

usually seen as male roles in both film and reality. This use of traditional male tropes like smoking, blazers, alcohol and drug abuse, and career success are placed on these leading female characters to amplify the effect of ‘progressiveness’ and empowerment. In Corinn Columpar’s *The Gaze As Theoretical Touchstone*, she talks about the male gaze and how women function primarily as an object to look at while catering to specific male pleasures, like power. The male gaze in film is used to describe the idea that females are the object, and heterosexual men are the gaze. The object is used to drive the desire and needs of the gaze— therefore, women are used for appeasement for these cis-hetero men and their desires. In both films, we see Beth and Marla as one of the few females in the entirety of the cast. *I Care A Lot* is male-dominated on screen and on set, just like *The Queen’s Gambit*. The producers and directors for both films are majority male. The actors for both films are majority male. If these films are to encourage female empowerment, why are these films dominated by men both on-screen and off-screen— to turn a profit. By creating a miniseries or film that caters to societal needs, like the desire to see the inclusion of a lead female, draws in a broader and greater audience. The use of the male gaze in the contents of these television shows and films, not only caters to the other divided audience but stays aligned with traditional film norms and tropes that are deemed detrimental to societal progression regarding LGBTQ and Female representation in film.

Marla As A Trope: Bury Your Gays

Critics call *I Care A Lot* a copy of *The Wolf of Wall Street*, but with a lesbian main character— keep in mind *The Wolf of Wall Street* is a film that is littered with toxic masculinity, gender inequalities, drug and alcohol abuse, physical abuse (towards women), and so much more. Within the first six minutes of the film, we witness dialogue that undermines women. After winning a court case, Marla responds to her angry male opponent by saying “Does it sting more because I am a woman?”. This dialogue falls victim to the parallels of societal stereotypes of women, where women do not measure up to men; and if they do, it hurts the man’s ego. They have also pointed out that the movie ends with the all-too-familiar “bury your gays” trope after Marla is shot dead in the last scene. This last scene was completely unnecessary in critics’ opinions, and in mine. One critic said that “if the point was to show that karma caught up to Marla and that justice needed to be served, why did it have to be her dying to prove that?”. Because the film ends in such an abrupt and obvious trope, in my personal opinion, it takes away the validity of a pro-LGBTQ film. “Bury your gays” is essentially a presentation of the deaths of LGBTQ characters. These characters are seen as more expendable than their other cis and heterosexual counterparts. This trope began as a punishment for the portrayed villains in films. These villain characters either died or were punished at the end of the film, similar to the final girl trope, commonly seen in horror films. Sequentially, these villains are usually LGBTQ because their sexuality is seen as, and perceived as a negative character trait. However, in *I Care A Lot*, the two main characters were not suffering. They were living their dream after their con bloomed into a multibillion-dollar business. The death of Marla was unwarranted and did not represent

her struggles as an LGBTQ individual in a predominately male career. Although the film did vilify Marla through her corrupt and immoral character, her death was unwarranted and seemed to follow this “bury your gays” trope in order to cater to societal trends—once again, social pandering. The critic mentioned before continued to state that “If you look at the movie, it is easy to point out problematic representation. You have a queer woman as a villain, a plot entirely about dehumanizing the elderly and disabled for profit, and a Black judge who calls the shots (even though he has the best intentions). To top it all off, the ending uses a majorly problematic queer trope we’ve been calling for an end to for years now.... We do need more positive queer representation in media. And this is not it”.

Marla From The Lens of A Man

Secondly, *I Care A Lot* was written and directed by J Blakeson, a male screenwriter. Now I am not saying that men shouldn’t be writing films about strong female and LGBTQ leads. The problem is that while women are excluded behind the camera, that the brains behind the film inevitably accommodate the male audience. First and foremost, Marla and Fran’s relationship was extremely overly sexualized, playing into the stereotype that fetishizes lesbian relationships. Queer representation in media has declined in recent years, and although the film does a great on-screen representation of an LGBTQ lead character, the validity of the representation is seemingly taken away because the story was written by cis-hetero men. According to GLAAD magazine in 2019, there was only 10.2% of queer representation in film, with only 38 characters on-screen being transgender. In 2020, queer representation declined to only 9.2% in film.

In essence, *I Care A Lot* is a representation of a male-dominated world, where men mask themselves as feminists creating a feminist film. The screenwriter uses a male perspective to portray an LGBTQ narrative but completely misses the mark, intentionally creating a film that does not successfully represent or benefit LGBTQ struggles but undermines them instead.

CHAPTER III: GENRE THEORY, BEHAVIORAL FILM, & REALISM

Now let's dive into the theory as to why this social pandering seen in modern media may be detrimental to society's progressiveness and behavior. The three things I discuss are Rick Altman's theory of genre, film in relation to individual behavior and attitude, and film realism. These three things are all key to understanding how *The Queen's Gambit* and *I Care A Lot* negatively impact societal perceptions and actions.

Genre Theory

In Rick Altman's "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film", he argues three points when describing his theory of genre. Firstly, argues that there is no definitive way to categorize film since it is a reflection of culture. The two categories that they can be placed into are exclusive and inclusive. However, since culture is ever-changing, so is genre. He also discusses the idea that semiotics and structuralism contradict the foundations of genre. Structuralism is an approach to analyzing culture that reveals the structures of film and television. It helps us understand how film and television are created and interpreted. Altman states, "either a relatively stable set of semantic givens is

developed through syntactic experimentation into a coherent and durable syntax, or an already existing syntax adopts a new set of semantic elements”. He is favoring the historical and developmental perception of genre and states that a semiotic approach to genre ignores the historical development of genre as culture is evolving. This is saying that since film moves in time, it must be analyzed in a framework dependent on temporality. The structure is therefore dependent on the time and currentness of our culture. Thirdly, Altman says that audiences shape genre. He argues, “by choosing the films it would patronize, the audience revealed its preferences and its beliefs, this inducing Hollywood studios co-produced films reflecting its desires”. By his logic, film does indeed reflect the current social state of society, and in turn, develops as audience preferences shift.

Since culture is always changing, and audience consumption is always changing, so will the preference and likeness of genre. According to contemporary genre theorists, a film or genre might lose its status in favor when “its thematic myth is no longer relevant to its audiences”. This is true in many cases. When a film is no longer reflective of modern or nostalgic American culture, it is for the most part no longer relevant or desired, because it might lack relatability. Therefore, shifts in film genre are directly related to shifts in audience preferences, paralleling shifts in culture. Harry M. Benshoff, a film theorist on multiculturalism, discusses in his *Film and Television Analysis* Antonio Gramsci, who theorized cultural hegemony, meaning the domination of a culturally diverse society by a ruling class. Benshoff says that when Gramsci theorized a cultural hegemony, he also brought up oppositional ideals that created commodification and incorporation:

incorporation meaning the perception of ‘mainstream’ and commodification meaning ‘turning an oppositional ideology into a product that can then be sold for profit’. In Hollywood, we see this directly and consistently. Films are labeled as ‘mainstream’ because of their dominating ideals; they often perpetuate the mainstream ideals as a result. Examples of this are race, inequality, toxic masculinity, female empowerment, and so on. By catering to the mainstream ideals in society, Hollywood effectively turns a massive profit.

Behaviors & Attitudes in Relation to Film

Just like genre-changing and evolving with culture, mainstream media does too. Interestingly enough, societal changes in genre and culture simultaneously affect the behaviors and attitudes presented in viewers of film. We learn this in Franklyn Fearing’s, “Influence of the Movies on Attitudes & Behavior”. He states that “the motion picture is not a fixed pattern of meanings or ideas which are received by a passive mind. Rather what the individual gets is determined by his background and his needs’”; meaning that film is determined by an individual’s perception and needs. He also states that film is a cultural product that affirms or negates the needs of the audience. Assuming that there is a functional relationship between the theme of the film and the needs of a mass audience, the viewer seeks an experience beyond just their immediate environment in order to understand their immediate environment. Franklyn Fearing used empirical testing to see if audience behavior and attitude would be amplified after watching certain films pertaining to societal times. He tested attitudes towards war, African Americans, and Asian Americans by showing each film to three different groups. The films were

anti-Black, anti-Chinese, and pro-Chinese. Directly after the film, the groups' attitudes about those categories were directly amplified in alignment with the film's message. These effects persisted up to five months later. The films used in this study were *The Birth of a Nation* (anti-Black), *Sons of Gods* (pro-Chinese), and *Welcome Danger* (anti-Chinese). This direct correlation between film contents and attitude in relation to culture successfully shows the relation between society and film as a whole. Film amplifies audience preference, understanding, attitude, and behavior. Relating this to *The Queen's Gambit* and *I Care A Lot*, one might watch the film and be directly affected in regards to their perception or behavior whether it be conscious or subconscious. Young women might watch *The Queen's Gambit* and think that it is sexy and fun to abuse drugs and alcohol. Another might develop fears and negative connotations around gay relationships after watching *I Care A Lot*.

Film & Realism

We see this understanding in American philosopher, Stanley Cavell's, "Film and Skepticism". He states that "human wish, intensifying in the West since the Reformation, to escape subjectivity and metaphysical isolation— in which for the power to reach this world, having for so long tried, at last hopelessly, to manifest fidelity to another". With this quote, Cavell is saying that it is humankind's wish to escape reality— and they are doing so through art. In this case, specifically, film. Realism is the information that the audience understands from what they see on a screen. Through realism, we are taught that a film is realistic when we as an audience view it as the events that formulate a story, not as the events that are filmed. Realism also brings up the idea that film displaces

people and objects from the world onto the screen, similar to Cavell's quote on human wish and fidelity. By escaping the reality of the world into realism on screen, audiences can see the world at a distance. Films are capable enough to reaffirm societal participation in the world, similar to what Franklyn Fearing states about audience attitude and behavior. When a film is reflective enough of society to seem real, yet holds the power of an escape, the audience not only can experience this escape, but the affirmation and amplification of their prior knowledge, needs, and understanding of the contents of the film.

Just like Cavell said about realism in film, when we see something on the screen, we can transport ourselves into an alternate reality. We are able to live in a fictional world without having to deal with the consequences in our real lives. Once the lines between reality and fiction become blurred, which is apparent in a lot of films, it is difficult to draw the line between what is true and what is fed to us for the purpose of the narrative. These films shape our lives and our perceptions of society without us even realizing it. Our interpretations of film become somewhat irrelevant in a small sense, yet remain relevant in the larger sense paralleling society and culture. The intent of films becomes irrelevant because interpretations of the film are more important than the intent. Audiences dictate what a film means in a larger sense, and in turn, it gradually seeps into society's perception of that interpretation and shifts our opinions unknowingly.

The Male Gaze

As a society, we continuously strive for equality, but our efforts are hindered by the media. In terms of film, we strive for more representation and diversity in women, LGBTQ, and race. However, the cis-heterophatriarchy in film continues to hold control over our media output, undermining these efforts. In Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, which I touched on in chapter I, she talks about a distinction between identity and desire, where desire is oppositional to identity. She says that as women identify with passivity (the object to be looked at), men's to-be-looked-at-ness is compensated for by their activity in the film's narrative. She also notes that the active protagonists, in traditional films, are male characters, while passive characters are female. By her logic, both Marla and Beth are used as compensators for the male gaze with their activity in the film while being active protagonists. Although through identity, they are female, by desire these actresses are the male protagonists. Mulvey continues to argue that in film, "it is the movement that creates the sense of agency and activity associated with masculinity, and thereby also creates the male gaze... film creates the desire to possess. Voyeurism and fetishism produce the desire to possess". Hollywood created the male gaze as a way to cater to the masses, and continue to use it while fronting social progressiveness, amplifying the use of social pandering.

Convergence Between Society & Hollywood

Film changes society and society changes film. While some changes are for the better, many are not. *The Queen's Gambit* and *I Care A Lot* are both examples of media created to cater to mainstream society while sending wrong messages to the audience,

whether it be intentional or unintentional. Viewers see this misrepresentation of women, LGBTQ, and black characters and become accustomed to the familiar tropes that surround them. Because the tropes are used so often in media and film, it is hard for the viewer to understand that what they are seeing is intentional, and bad. Taking Fearing's behavioral film theory into account, audience members' behaviors and attitudes parallel with those in the films, meaning that after watching both *The Queen's Gambit* and *I Care A Lot*, viewers overly sexualize women and gay relationships, while having unrealistic perceptions of mental health issues. While these films are fronted as empowering, diverse, representative, and progressive, in reality, they are succumbing to societal stereotypes that feed into the male gaze, to draw in a wider audience and, in turn, a greater profit.

APPENDIX B

Encountering Directors: Alfred Hitchcock

ENCOUNTERING DIRECTORS

confident of his credo. This he expressed in our talk, emphasized in minor revisions he asked to make in the transcript and summarized in a personal letter with which he accompanied its return.



SAMUELS: Your long distinguished career has taken you through every technical revolution in cinema. Were there any you would have preferred to miss: sound, Technicolor, Vista Vision, etc.?

HITCHCOCK: So far as screen size goes, I never liked what is commonly referred to as the letterbox screen. It leaves you with a good deal of empty space that causes the audience to wonder what it's there for. A painter is able to choose the canvas size that fits his subject. (I happen to own a Duffy that was painted on a long, narrow canvas; but the subject is a harbor and therefore suitable.) Filmmakers, on the other hand, are bound by the screens available throughout the

world. You can't compose for a New York screen only; you've got to think, say, of the screen in Thailand. I've always believed in film as the newest art of the twentieth century because of its ability to communicate with the mass audiences of the world. In any case, I suppose that oversized screens were devised when the industry was searching for novelty, which, of course, led to Cinemascope. But I can even remember films, in which, out of pure showmanship, the screen size was altered to produce a climax.

S: As in DeMille's *Sons of Sin* and *Deluge*?
H: Yes, or *Portrait of Jennie*, where there was a lighthouse and lots of water that lent themselves to the process. But I don't think it enhanced the story.

S: Isn't it generally true that technical impediments are useful? For example, you seem to me to change vistas without an expandable screen in a film like *The Thirty-nine Steps*, and therefore, to excite us by your skill. Through your editing, you alternate open and closed spaces.

H: You can do anything you want with montage. Cinema is simply pieces of film put together in a manner that creates ideas and emotions. The tragedy is that people don't make films that way now. Because I'm bound by consensus to make thrillers—

S: May I interrupt for a moment? Would you have liked to release yourself from this binding?
H: I'm not sure. The cobbler should stick to his last, you know.

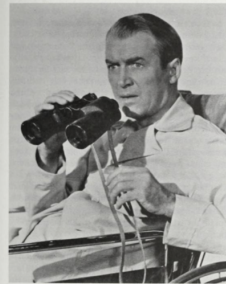
S: However, you began your career with a variety of films. Why did you narrow your focus later?

H: Unfortunately, one's employers expect certain things from you, so I've been more or less forced to stick to my genre. But, you know, people confuse what I do with mystery. I don't believe in mystifying an audience. I believe in giving them all the information and then in making them sweat. It's no good devising a film to satisfy only

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yourself. The subject doesn't count either. You get your satisfaction through your style of treatment. I'm not interested in content. It disturbs me very much when people criticize my films because of their content. It's like looking at a still life and saying, "I wonder whether those apples are sweet or sour." Cinema is form. I see many good films that contain very fine dialogue. I



don't deprecate these films, but to me, they're not pure cinema. Trying to make them cinema, some new directors find odd angles to shoot from, but they still only produce what I call "photographs of people talking."

S: I was with your objection to weird angles. That's why I was puzzled in *Spellbound* when you shot Gregory Peck drinking a glass of milk by aiming the camera at the glass that's being drained.

H: I was playing with white there, in preparation for the denouement, which had to do with snow. Throughout the film, I wanted to make a sort of leitmotiv of that color.

S: In view of your characterization of yourself as a formalist who just happens to work in the thriller genre, why have you, on occasion, made something like *Under Capricorn*?

H: *Under Capricorn*, I made to please Ingrid Bergman, who was a friend of mine. I was looking for a subject that suited her, rather than myself.

S: You've said you like to achieve your effects through editing. What do you think of directors who don't rely on it so much, like Antonioni and Bergman?

H: Antonioni is almost a surrealist.
S: But he's as visual as you are.

H: No question!
S: Bergman is rather more complicated because he relies so much on words.

H: And yet he has indicated on one occasion that he learned a lot from Hitchcock. He uses the visuals as much as he can, whether in the form of gigantic close-ups or natural objects; you know, the sapling trees against the sky and so on. What Truffaut appreciated from my technique was the use of the subjective treatment. A typical example is the film *Bear Witness*, where the central figure is a man in one position whose viewpoint we study. His viewpoint becomes his mental processes, by the use of the camera and the montage—and this is what I actually mean by subjective treatment. The objective treatment, however, is also used when necessary; but for me, the objective is merely an extension of the theater because you are a viewer of the events that take place in front of you, but you are not necessarily in the mind of the person. Subjective shooting puts the audience in the mind of the character.

S: You obtain your best results, I think, by creating sharp intrusions of the subjective in an otherwise objective narrative. For example, I'd instance the change to subjective camera angle in *Notorious* when Ingrid Bergman has to meet all of her husband's Nazi friends and convince them she's a Nazi, too. By making the camera her eyes, you convey the intensity of the threat.

H: Yes. I wanted to say visually, "Here is Ingrid in the lions' den; now look at each lion!"

S: These intrusions we've been discussing—between open and closed vistas, subjective and objective camera work, etc.—indicate what I believe to be the essential musicality of your films.

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H: I, myself, use musical terms when I direct. I say, "Don't put a great big close-up there because it's loud brass and you mustn't use a loud note unless it's absolutely vital." Cinema is the orchestration of shots.

S: In *The Thirty-nine Steps* you orchestrate not only shots, but music itself. You begin and end with natural music in the music hall, have a bit more of it in the Salvation Army Band scene, and use background music very sparingly; a bit in the moor chase and a few romantic bars when Madeleine Carroll returns to the inn room after learning that Donat has been telling her the truth. Yet in your American films you tend to use background music more generally. Why the shift?

H: A matter of conventions. Moreover, when I first came here, I didn't have the complete freedom I'd had in England. One had to conform. Don't forget, I came in a period when the producer was king. I suppose the most flattering thing ever said to me—not immediately after *Rebecca*, but two or three years later—was Selznick's: "You're the only director I'd ever trust a picture with." In those days—although I'm now speaking heresy—I never understood how, for example, Selznick could say, "Thalberg's great with a finished picture." A producer like that used to take a finished film, rewrite it, recut it, and so on. I first experienced this when I started *Rebecca*. I'd rehearse a scene, but before I could get ready to shoot it, the script girl would come up and whisper, "I have to phone Mr. Selznick now." He had to okay the final rehearsal before I could shoot! That's how heavy the hand of the producer was in those days. Another example is retakes. When I used to complain of a technical defect and ask to reshoot a scene, he'd say, "No retakes!" "Why not?" I'd ask. He replied, "It may not be in the picture." The producer used to assemble the film, arrange the credits, even outfit it with a temporary score taken from the music library. Within three weeks of the last day of shooting, you'd have the snafu preview.

S: How did you manage to become invulnerable to this kind of interference?

H: Very simply. I was loaned out. As soon as I was working for someone I wasn't under contract to, the supervision was lessened.

S: I had understood that you evaded interference by shooting things out of order.

H: No, I just normally work that way. To me, a picture must be planned on paper. People are always asking me why I don't improvise on the set, and I always reply, "What for? I'd rather improvise in a room with the writer." My method is very simple. I work out a treatment with my screenwriter. In order to do this, you've got to have a visual sense. I never look through the camera; I think only of that white screen that has to be filled up the way you fill up a canvas. That's why I draw rough setups for the cameraman.

S: You're making live-action animated films.
H: You could say that. If I wanted to, I could draw every frame of the finished picture. But when I have a good cameraman, I don't need to go that far. I simply tell him what elements I want to include or exclude in any shot. What I do with the writer is involve him in the direction of the picture and have him collaborate in the creation of the story line, including dialogue. After having completed this process, I leave it to the screenwriter to write his dialogue within the framework of the finished, agreed cinematic story line. I know every shot well end up with because the planning stage has been so complete. What mystifies me is why so many other filmmakers need to see things on the screen before they edit, whereas a musician can hear his music simply by looking at the notes and lines of his score. Why shouldn't we do the same?

S: Can't you plan so carefully and definitely because of your genre? After all, your films work precisely because they manipulate the spectator. Yet there are other sorts of films. Andre Bazin argued, for example, that deep focus and long takes left the spectator free to choose the elements he wished to pay most attention to and thus were to be preferred.

H: It is a laterer allowed to choose the notes he'll hear? If you free the spectator to choose, you're making theater, not cinema.

S: I'd like to talk about a different kind of freeing the spectator. What do you think of the disinterested quasi-documentary style of neorealism—a film like *The Bicycle Thief*, for example?

H: It's very good, but it's no different from any chase story.

S: But the emphasis is not on effect. Rather it is on the social realities reflected in the situation.

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H: Yes, but De Sica takes the audience into warehouses, soup kitchens, homes—

S: But not so as to produce a sharply defined emotion in each case. A panorama is created. That's not your intention.

H: I go further than a film like *The Bicycle Thief*, which shows a man and a boy walking in front of a panorama. I believe that your backgrounds must be involved in the story. For example, in *North by Northwest*, when Cary Grant gets trapped in an auction room, I use this setting by making Grant start crazy bidding.

S: What I'm driving at, however, is my suspicion that you're not interested in documenting a social reality without regard to evocation or the solving of an esthetic problem.

H: Where else is the dramatic impact for the ordinary spectator? You've got to remember that *Bicycle Thief* wasn't a success with the Italian audience. It's funny you should instance this picture. We have a home in Northern California, and in the period of *The Bicycle Thief*, we happened to have an Italian couple working for us who spoke not one word of English. One day my wife and I took the mother and her daughter into some shopping. Since I didn't know what to do with Mrs. Chiesa, I decided to take her to see *The*

Bicycle Thief. It was an Italian movie; I thought it might interest her. There was a kind of about twenty people in the theater—it was a road show. I remember, at the Geary—and we watched the film. Do you know, she only gave one exclamation the whole time: when the father cuffed the little boy. So when we got outside, I asked her how she'd liked it. She said, "Okay. But why didn't he borrow a bicycle?" Of course, she demolished the whole thing. So I said, "Mrs. Chiesa, what films do you like?" "Ah," she said, "I like a Betty Grable musical."

S: You may direct your films at the Mrs. Chiasas, but your style seems to me to require some sophistication in anyone who wishes to appreciate your work.

H: Yes. I don't expect the average spectator to go beyond his emotional reaction; then, if the others like to examine the way... You know, this may explain why occasionally one of my films is indifferently received and then, a year later, it becomes a classic. I never understood the delay.

S: Can you give me an example?

H: Psycho.
S: But wasn't the first response to *Psycho* due to a brutality unexpected in a Hitchcock film? Your films aren't usually brutal. Why, in *Psycho* and *The Birds*, did you suddenly change that?



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H: But *Psycho* was designed to throw a violent moment on the screen and then reduce the violence as the film progressed, while keeping its effects alive in the minds of the audience. Furthermore, brutality was inherent in both subjects. It's like *Frenzy*, which is the story of a man who is impotent and therefore expresses himself through murder. I only show one of the women being murdered; the rest I leave to the audience. I show a second murder this way: I bring the man and his victim along a corridor through an extended shot that takes us up the stairs, around the turn of the stairs, along the passage; then, I show them entering the room as the door closes, and he says something to the effect that she's his type. Then I cut and take the camera back the very way we've come—I had to have a special rig built for this—until we reach the street. As we're coming down, the traffic noise has been getting louder. Then I take us all the way out into the busy Covent Garden Market until we can see the full façade of the building. I then deliberately bring the street noises up to such a volume that the audience must say to itself, "No one will ever hear the poor girl's



screams." I'm not interested in showing brutality. I made *Psycho* in black and white purposely to avoid the blood. Red would have been unpleasant, unnecessary; I wouldn't have been able to treat the blood cinematically, as in the editing of its flow down the drain and so on, had the sequence been in color.

S: Since you've raised the subject, what do you think of working in color?

H: Color should start with the nearest equivalent to black and white. This sounds like a most peculiar statement, but color should be no different from the voice which starts muted and finally arrives at a scream. In other words, the muted color is black and white, and the screams are every psychedelic color you can think of, starting, of course, with red. Years ago I answered this question by describing a murder in a park, where you'd pan down to feet struggling in a flower bed full of white asters. Since it's night, you still haven't gone much beyond black and white. Then you dolly in to one petal of the white aster till it fills the whole screen; then suddenly there's a slash of red.

S: I understand Chabrol does something like this in *The Butcher*, where a sandwich suddenly has blood dripping on it.

H: Has he?

S: Is it true that you regard your actors only as elements of composition?

H: Well, the actor must be an element because film is montage. But I do explain the cutting to him so he knows why I've asked him to cooperate.

S: Do you let your actors see rushes?

H: Certainly.

S: You don't try to make your actors become other than what they are, do you? I mean, you seem to me to select your performers for qualities they inherently possess.

H: Well, if you take what I call a fantasy chase picture like *North by Northwest*, it's good to cast a known personality in the role of the endangered hero. That way the audience worries more about the character. We always are more deeply concerned by what happens to someone near to us than by something we might, say, read in the paper.

S: Am I not right, however, in thinking that the acting in your films is generally low on the list of your priorities?



Bernard Cribbins and Anna Massey.



Vivien Merchant.

H: No. The tiniest role is just as important as the bigger roles.

S: Your minor characters always seem better to me.

H: In *Frenzy*, for example, I have more character parts than I've had in years because the London stage actor is willing to play a moderate size part. So, I've got Vivien Merchant, Alec McCowen, Bernard Cribbins, Anna Massey, and so on. They're all leading players, you see. Vivien Merchant actually brought the character to me.

S: In view of the technical brilliance of most of your films, I wonder why you so often settle for bad backdrops. I think, for example, of the mother's street in *Marnie*, where you show an obviously painted ship and an obviously painted sky in the background.

H: That was a technical mixup, and something of which I did not approve. We were very pressed for time, or I would have scrapped the whole thing and started over. I wanted to show something that had always fascinated me—I think I'd seen it in Copenhagen and London, as well as in Baltimore, where *Marnie* takes place—

a row of houses and suddenly a ship looming above them.

S: You would shoot on location whenever you could, then?

H: Of course. On the other hand, some location shooting has become terribly cliché. I mean, if I see any more people walking along sidewalks and made to appear as if they were dancing because of the use of a long focus lens! We've got an awful lot of people nowadays who'll say, "Ah, I must symbolize the traffic." So they use a ten-inch lens that makes the cars all shimmer. If I see any more out-of-focus towers in the foreground?

S: Your films constantly show respectable people secretly attracted to crime. Why?

H: Can you give me an example?

S: Remember that little woman in *Strangers on a Train* who is so excited to learn that her cab is being commandeered by policemen chasing someone. She's a very minor character, but your films are full of touches indicating the same generalized attitude.

H: I think this is a little quirky; there's no deep significance in it.

S: But you often show that people find crime

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sexy, I think, for example, of the Peggy Ashcroft character in *The Thirty-nine Steps*. She is attracted to Donat, of course, because he's from the big city, which she longs for; but she is even more attracted when she learns he's a fugitive.

H: I think this must have something to do with my being English. Crime is much more literate in England than in America. In England, unlike America, crime novels are first-class literature. Not only are the English more attracted by crime, but the crimes themselves are more bizarre.

S: English eccentricity?

H: They are eccentric, especially the intellectuals. I remember what happened, for example, to the poet Lucie Lee Abercrombie when he was challenged to a duel. Offered his choice of weapons, he chose steamrollers. I'll tell you how deeply interested the British are in crime. There's a group in London called Our Society. It meets regularly on Sunday evenings at a fashionable restaurant in a private room. The members include lawyers, writers, journalists. When they meet, they rehearse a recent case *célèbre*, effectively trying the case among themselves. They borrow exhibits from the trial and so forth.

S: What do you think differentiates the British interest in crime from the American?

H: The British interest is esthetic.

S: Did you then change your style of treating crime when you moved from England to America?

H: I'd say that until *Frenzy*, and setting aside *North by Northwest*, I haven't had as much opportunity to introduce the British type of humor in my American pictures.

S: So *Frenzy* takes you back to something like *The Lady Vanishes*?

H: Except that that was a fantasy and *Frenzy* isn't. The closest I think I came in my American films to the humorous portrayal of character along with the crime was in *Shadow of a Doubt*.

S: I think that film also comes rather closer than usual to having content.

H: That's true.

S: I'd like to hear what you think of my version of this content. Aren't you showing that the girl in the film isn't quite so superior to her murderer-uncle? When he first comes to town, she's happy to have the relief he brings her from small-town boredom, but when she realizes that he threatens the status of her family, she pretty ruthlessly tries to get rid of him.

H: She switches from adulation so suddenly that she becomes paranoid. The horror of learning what he is makes her switch loyalty almost viciously.

S: Aren't we meant to find her ruthless?

H: She is ruthless. She comes down those stairs wearing that ring and thus tells him he must leave or be executed.

S: Our sympathy is split between them. He's a murderer.

H: But a very attractive man. That's something I always insist on. Movies usually portray murderers as tough and unsympathetic. That always makes me wonder how they ever got near their victims.

S: You wouldn't be interested in a murderer who didn't get close to his victims, would you?

H: No. I've never been interested in professional criminals. The audience can't identify with their lack of feeling. I'm also not interested in the conventional detective. That's why, for example, in *Frenzy* I invented the chief inspector's wife so as to permit myself to place most of the discussion of the crime outside a professional context. And I got comedy to sugarcoat the discussions by making the wife a gourmet cook. So, this inspector comes home



every night to discussion of the murders and overrich meals.

S: In the early scene of *Shadow of a Doubt*, when Joseph Cotten is being chased, why do you select such a high-angle shot?

H: For clarity of effect. It was like saying, "Here we are above a maze, where you can see both the exit and all the people who are trying to keep him from getting there."

S: Why did you have the niece fall in love with the detective at the end of the film?

H: I think that was a commercial concession, really.

S: You do, occasionally, introduce a love element that isn't strictly necessary. Why don't you resist this convention?

H: I'm not self-indulgent where content is concerned; I'm only self-indulgent about treatment. I'd compare myself to an abstract painter. My favorite painter is Klee.

S: But can't a commercial concession in content hurt the form? After all, the end of *Shadow of a Doubt* is corny.

H: It is corny. In *Frenzy*, I have dared—because times change—to kill off my love interest. **S:** Speaking of daring, why do you so often show lovers, who are forced by circumstance to bed down for the night, behaving like virgins, even though it's quite clear that they've had

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plenty of experience? This happens, among others, in *Rear Window* and *Foreign Correspondent*.

H: Well, the Laraine Day character was a Quaker. And, in *Rear Window*, I think the audience is thinking about another problem. I mean, how did they do it with his leg in a cast? Anyway, we weren't as permissive in the period when those films were made as we are now.

S: Yet *The Thirty-nine Steps*, which is earlier, is also more risqué.

H: In Hollywood, we had the Breen Office. We couldn't even show a husband and wife in bed together.

S: Well, let's go back then to *The Lodger*, which you've claimed was your first characteristic film. In connection with the subject I've been interested in, your detective in this film is inferior to the criminal: he's stupid, lascivious, uncharming, etc.

H: He's a local; he hadn't the lodger's finesse. He's a constable off the beat, that's all. Since those days, however, as you'll see in *Frenzy*, the level among inspectors has gone up. They've a police college now.

S: How did you get the idea for that marvelous shot of the lodger's hand moving down the banister?

H: All such touches were substitutes for sound. I wanted to show, by means of that shot, that the woman downstairs was probably hearing a creaking noise.

S: You repeat this sort of shot several times, as in *Foreign Correspondent* and, most famously, *Vertigo*.

H: Staircases are very photogenic.

S: Why do you make the young girl in the film so sexually aggressive toward the lodger?

H: She's goaded by the idea that he might be Jack the Ripper.

S: Another instance of the attractiveness of crime. Aren't you attributing to your characters your own delight in excitement?

H: I must refer again to the English attitude. Did you ever read *We the Accused* by Ernest Raymond? It's based on the Crippen case, although he alters the locations and circumstances. Raymond shows the whole process of English law. He shows the police to be kindly, but also the murderer, who did nothing worse

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than rid himself of a bitch of a wife. He takes us right up to the hanging, when the governor walks into the condemned man's cell and says, "Good morning." Then the hangman steps forward and says, "Put your hands down at your sides, old chap." And then his hands are strapped, and the procession starts. The white cap goes on, the noose goes on, and the assistant executioner straps the ankles. Then the hangman gives the condemned a friendly tap on the arm and pulls the lever. On the way to prison, when they were originally arrested, the murderer was asked what type of tobacco he wanted, and the girl for whom he killed was offered a choice of magazines.

S: In *Blackmail*, you've said that you wanted the first sequence to illustrate duty, but doesn't this throw us off a bit? The film begins almost as if it will be a documentary about a day in the life of a policeman; then it becomes a thriller.

H: I wanted the whole film to have that effect, but I was prevented. I wanted the film to open with an ordinary criminal being apprehended by detectives who behaved like men working in an office, just doing a job. In the last sequence, the detective's girlfriend was to give herself up, and then I would have repeated the same routine as I started with. The whole idea was to show his conflict between love and duty, with duty winning out.

S: But that isn't thriller technique; that's content.

H: Yes. The only thriller technique in the film would have been the girl's suspense about whether or not her murdering a rapist will be discovered.



S: Doesn't this alteration suggest that you might not have become so totally a director of thrillers had things worked out differently?

H: I think you'll find that the real start of my career was *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

S: But might you have gone on to make films which, though effective and cinematic, had a more thorough grounding in the complications of real life?

H: Well, I did make a film out of Galsworthy's *Skin Game*.

S: But you're not fond of it.

H: Because it's too theatrical.

S: Do you think you would have branched out beyond thrillers more often had you written your own scripts?

H: No, I'd probably have narrowed down.

S: Why don't you write your own scripts?

H: I do.

S: But not the dialogue.

H: I do now and again, but you can't be jack-of-all-trades. Dialogue writing, out of which comes character, is a job of its own. I'm busy enough with the cinematics. I work with the writer, as I've told you, very closely. You know, our first treatment can run as long as one hundred pages.

S: In the murder scene in *Blackmail*, did you allow Cyril Ritchard to sing because he was a singer or because you wanted him to?

H: Because it was my first talkie and the producers wanted it. It's like that old talkie *In Old Arizona*, which thrilled everyone so because it allowed them to hear bacon frying.

S: The opening of *Murder* is notable as a forecast of your later combinations of suspense and comedy. You pan across a sinister street but then show the inhabitants doing funny things: in one apartment, a man is taking his teeth out of a glass; in another, a girl tries unsuccessfully to get into her bloomers, always putting both her legs through the same opening.

H: That last detail was taken from a night when I went into my mother's room during an air raid in World War I. The whole house was in an uproar, but there was my poor Elsa Maxwell plump little mother, struggling, saying her prayers, while outside the window, shrapnel was bursting around a search-lit zeppelin—extraordinary image.

S: Do you make references to your own experience often in your films?

H: Odd bits here and there, but very rarely. *Murder* was an interesting film, though, because I intended it as a satire on the theater. In those days, the actor-manager was king: Sir Henry Irving, Sir Herbert Beerbaum-Tree, Sir Gerald du Maurier. Du Maurier used to have an office over His Majesty's Theater, called the Dome, where he conducted his business. That's why I dressed Herbert Marshall, who plays the hero, in black coat and striped pants, like a cabinet minister. They never went into the provinces. So, when my actor-manager does, he finds himself experiencing conditions which, up to then, he had disdained. When he starts investigating the murder there, he feels he's suffering the indignity of a lower order of actor.

S: In the finished film, doesn't the comedy get restrained by the thriller element?

H: Yes. But I still keep the theater business alive with the play within a play, when Marshall makes the murderer read from a play dealing with the crime, like Hamlet making Claudius witness his own crime to see if the man will expose himself. You know, I modeled the murderer on a circus performer of the period. He used to enter the ring, dressed like a woman, accompanied by a trim maid, and then go into his trapeze act. Oddly enough, the girl who plays the thief in *To Catch a Thief* did a high wire act in the circus, too.

S: Since the murderer is a homosexual in this film, why do you make his motive shame at being a half-caste? It hardly seems the more serious problem.

H: He was a half-caste homosexual. In those days, being a half-caste was very serious. Being a Eurasian in India, for example, meant you belonged to neither side, so that you weren't accepted. But the element is surely dated now.

S: In *Rich and Strange*—

H: One of my less successful pictures.

S: But it has many good things in it.

H: Yes, I like it.

S: Is the opening sequence with the umbrellas what gave you the idea for the umbrella scene in *Foreign Correspondent*?

H: Two different purposes; in *Rich and Strange*,

I simply used the umbrellas to express the life of ordinary clerks in the city of London.

S: Do you ever reuse a device deliberately, though?

H: Can you give me an example?

S: In *Rebecca*, Joan Fontaine's employer puts out her cigarette in a jar of cold cream; in *To Catch a Thief*, Jessie Royce Landis puts hers out into an egg.

H: I was aware of that repetition; the second example was used to show my utter dislike for eggs.

S: Why did you use place-name titles in *Rich and Strange*? Wasn't that a rather anachronistic device?

H: Oh, you had to. You've got to remember that some people in the audience won't be able to identify a remote place just by seeing it. In *Frenzy*, I've got a shot of London taken from five thousand feet up, yet I put a crest over it as though it were a map. I want to make certain that everyone realizes we're in London.

S: *The Man Who Knew Too Much* has a great deal to do with place.

H: You know how I wanted to start the original version of that film? I wanted to show the hotel window in St. Moritz, which reflects the beautiful Alpine scenery, suddenly shattered by a bullet, so that the whole window cracks and smashes to the ground. But I was told that a bullet would go right through and simply make a hole.

S: Why do you precede the killing with the comic bit of the unraveling sweater?

H: To show that death comes when you least expect it.

