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# WEBS OF SIGNIFICATION IN HITCHCOCK'S ADAPTATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF INTERCONNECTING TROPES IN *THE LODGER* AND *VERTIGO*

ヒッチコックのアダプテーションにおける意味作用の網の目

―『下宿人』と『めまい』における連鎖的比喩表現の分析

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ABSTRACT

Although many of the films directed by Alfred Hitchcock are adapted from novels and plays, it is only recently, in texts like *Hitchcock & Adaptation: On the Page and Screen* (Osteen) and *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor* (Palmer and Boyd), that these films have received any considerable amount of critical attention as direct adaptations of other texts. Further, the ways that source texts are reconfigured and recontextualized as Hitchcock films which link to other Hitchcock films remains largely unexplored. This dissertation analyzes two Hitchcock films—*The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927) and *Vertigo* (1959)—in relation to their respective source texts. Specifically, this dissertation closely examines Hitchcock films that are adaptations of other texts and, in doing so, explicates part of the network of tropes and motifs that lend such captivating signification to so many of Hitchcock's films. By focusing on the ways that signifying markers in source texts relate to greater networks of signification in Hitchcock films, certain motifs and tropes like the Avenger's triangle in *The Lodger* and the spiral in *Vertigo* are understood in new contexts and are shown to link source texts to Hitchcock films, and Hitchcock films to other Hitchcock films, in significant yet unexpected ways.

The first chapter, "Avatars, Embodiment, and Knowledge in Hitchcock's Adaptation of *The Lodger*," relates treatments of embodiment and inscription in Marie Belloc Lowndes' 1913 novel, *The Lodger*, to those in Hitchcock's film adaptation. The second chapter, "Revivifications of Narrative in *Vertigo*," traces elements of *Vertigo*'s source text, *D'entre les morts* by authors Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, that appear most faithfully reproduced in Hitchcock's film in order to explicate the differences in signification between novel and film. In both chapters, material markers, issues of visual representation, and issues of embodiment are found critical to

understanding *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* as adaptations. Finally, the conclusion outlines the potential for this method of investigation to explicate links between Hitchcock films in greater clarity, as well as the possibilities for this research to extend to further Hitchcock adaptations and source texts in the future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES……...2

INTRODUCTION……4

CHAPTER I: AVATARS, EMBODIMENT, AND KNOWLEDGE IN HITCHCOCK'S ADAPTATION OF *THE LODGER*....……26

Lowndes' Novel…….……30

Hitchcock's Liminal Avenger…….……37

Accidents and Strategic Embodiments…….……...43

Structures, Geography, and Myth…….…….……..51

Inscribed Guilt…….57

Authenticity and Appropriation……...67

Conclusion……...75

CHAPTER II: REVIVIFICATIONS OF NARRATIVE IN HITCHCOCK'S *VERTIGO* ……81

Gavin and Gévigne……..87

Portals of the Past……99

The Spiral and Effaced, Feminine Subjectivity…….…104

Non-kinesthetic Movement……...113

A Logic of Reiteration……...120

Textual Reiteration and Transformation……....132

CONCLUSION……...…..137

Overlapping Networks of Signification in *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*……143

Methodology and Future Applications……..156

BIBLIOGRAPHY……162

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Opening Scene in *The Lodger*……..39

Figure 2: Two Maps of the Avenger Murders…….42

Figure 3: Mr. Bunting's Fall……....44

Figure 4: The Fire Poker……..47

Figure 5: Daisy's Scream…….49

Figure 6: Mr. Bunting's Near Slip……52

Figure 7: Daisy and the Lodger's Final Kiss……...53

Figure 8: Daisy's Bath…….58

Figure 9: Murder of the Lodger's Sister……..61

Figure 10: Daisy Dressed Like the Lodger's Sister…….66

Figure 11: The Lodger's Sister……67

Figure 12: The Lodger's Close-up……...69

Figure 13: Daisy's Upward Glance……70

Figure 14: Conspicuous Absences……...72

Figure 15: The Eyes of the News Truck……..73

Figure 16: Gavin's Office……....91

Figure 17: The Spiral Eye in *Vertigo*'s Opening Credits……105

Figure 18: The Policeman's Fall……....105

Figure 19: The Spiral Eye Imposed over the Policeman's Fall…….106

Figure 20: The Portrait of Carlotta…….109

Figure 21: Madeleine's Fall……..….116

Figure 22: Judy's Flashback……..…126

Figure 23: Madeleine's Sidewards Glance at the Bell Tower……...….131

Figure 24: Madeleine's Sidewards Glance at San Juan Bautista……..…….131

Figure 25: The Second Murder in *The Lodger*……..…155

Figure 26: Daisy as Avenger Victim…….…155

Figure 27: The Lodger's Sister as Avenger Victim……...156

# INTRODUCTION

In Alfred Hitchcock's filmmaking career, which spans some 50 years and includes 57 films, the source texts of Alfred Hitchcock's movies vary greatly. From pulp fiction, canonized literature, stage plays, and original treatments (as in the case of *North by Northwest*), these texts exhibit a wide range of tones, genres, and historical contexts. Many of Hitchcock's most famous films—*Rear Window, Vertigo, Psycho,* and *The Birds*, for example—are adaptations of novels or short stories. Moreover, some of Hitchcock's most well-known imagery, such as the shower scene in *Psycho,* or the image of a wheelchair-bound James Stewart spying out of his apartment window in *Rear Window*, originate in adapted texts. While Hitchcock's films have received a great deal of critical attention from film theorists, feminist critics, psychoanalytical critics, and adaptation studies scholars, there has been little discussion concerning the ways these films signify differently from their source texts despite often sharing very similar plots, characters, and narrative structures. An investigation of the differences in signification between a Hitchcock film and its source text promises to elucidate the network of significations spanning across many of Hitchcock's films. In particular, this dissertation focuses on issues of gender, embodied movement and identification, and artifice and authenticity. The primary aim of this dissertation is to closely examine Hitchcock films that are adaptations of other texts, and in doing so, to explicate part of the network of tropes and motifs that lend such captivating signification to so many of Hitchcock's films.

This dissertation focuses on two of Hitchcock's films, *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927), and *Vertigo* (1958). The first chapter, "Avatars, Embodiment, and Knowledge in Hitchcock's Adaptation of *The Lodger*," focuses on *The Lodger* and its source text and the second chapter, "Narrative Reiterations and Adaptations in

Hitchcock's *Vertigo*," focuses on *Vertigo* and *D'entre les morts*. *The Lodger* is an adaptation of Marie Belloc Lowndes' 1913 novel of the same title, and *Vertigo* is an adaptation of a 1954 novel titled *D'entre les morts* by authors Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac. Specifically, this dissertation uses the digitally restored version of *The Lodger* published on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection in 2017 and the digitally restored version of *Vertigo* published on Blu-ray by Universal in 2012 (as part of *Alfred Hitchcock: The Masterpiece Collection*).

The analyses of *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* in this dissertation benefit greatly from the enhanced resolution and superior control that the Blu-ray releases of these films offer. As David Colangelo notes, "Early work in the analysis of Hitchcock's films involve frantic note taking in darkened theaters, or, at best, infrequent sessions at an editing table with hard-to-find 16mm prints" which "leads to 'relatively short reflections' that focus on 'themes'" (128). The efforts to trace motifs and tropes throughout *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* in this dissertation are, in many ways, contingent on the ability to capture clear and detailed frames of these films and to view these films (and certain sequences) in exhaustive repetition. Colangelo suggests, "It is not that these motifs are otherwise invisible; it is that they only become discoverable—they only enter our perception and the episteme of film—alongside a changing technological apparatus of film scholarship" (134). This dissertation's research would likely have been impossible without the high-resolution rereleases of these films, as the analyses of *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* within this dissertation frequently focus on minute details or extensive considerations of single frames.

This dissertation utilizes modern home viewing technologies by analyzing particular frames and sequences on a more granular level than would otherwise be possible, and also seeks to share these technological benefits with its reader. Static

images of the digitally enhanced versions of these films have been inserted throughout this dissertation, but there are also short sequences of moving images inserted where the benefits of a moving image are most vital. These sequences have been recorded as "GIF files" which do not support sound, and it is important to note that, in consideration of file size, these "GIF files" are recorded at ten frames per second. Considering that *The Lodger* was likely recorded at 16-24 frames per second and *Vertigo* was recorded at 24 frames per second, these GIF files play at the same speed as the original films but omit some of the original films' frames. Despite their reduced fidelity, these GIF files serve as invaluable, immediate visual references to arguments made throughout this dissertation. While the static images used for the print versions of this dissertation adequately illustrate the scenes and sequences in question, this dissertation is best viewed in its digital format with the full benefits of the animated figures.

In choosing *The Lodger*, a film that Hitchcock referred to as "the first true 'Hitchcock movie'" (Truffaut 43), and *Vertigo*, which is one of Hitchcock's most well-known and well-regarded films, this dissertation will reveal the treatment of embodiment and authenticity in these films to be parts of a network of significations that is sustained and reiterated throughout Hitchcock's films. Although these films are very different in terms of their tone, pacing, and plot (not to mention that *The Lodger* is a silent film), both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* raise concerns over the relationship between the camera, the audience, and the bodies and objects on screen in similar ways, and both films present similar concerns over geographic and vertical movement, the reification of past narratives, and inauthentic embodiments. In the process of examining these films together, unexpected links begin to emerge, and these links demonstrate some of the ways that so many tropes and motifs are recontextualized and re-explored throughout Hitchcock's filmography. In this sense, the Hitchcock adaptation is not only an

adaptation of its direct source text, but also a process in which signifying threads from source texts are reimagined and incorporated within the vast network of signification spanning so many Hitchcock films.

Although *Vertigo* has often been read as being influenced by other works, *Vertigo* is rarely analyzed in relation to its source material, *D'entre les morts*, and it is even more difficult to find readings of *The Lodger* as an adaptation of Lowndes' novel. Barbara Creed's essay, "Woman as Death: *Vertigo* as Source" serves as a comparatively detailed comparison of *Vertigo* and *D'entre les morts*, as does Peter Lev's "*Vertigo*: Novel and Film," but this dissertation aims to provide a yet more thorough investigation of these works. Further, this dissertation centers issues of authenticity in embodiment and identification in *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* in ways that have not been addressed by other critics. This research relies on critical writing on adaptation studies, early and contemporary writing on Hitchcock films, and a broad range of writing on film theory. The writing of early Hitchcock critics, such as William Rothman and Robin Wood, provides a valuable critical background for this project, though addressing and incorporating the work of contemporary critics, such as Creed, Leslie Abramson, Robert J. Belton, Tom Gunning, and Leslie W. Brill, has proven even more crucial. In order to develop a critical foundation for contemporary adaptation studies, this project relies on the work of Linda Hutcheon, John Bryant, and Thomas Leitch, among others. The works of Donald Spoto and Dan Aulier have provided a wealth of historical and biographical knowledge concerning Hitchcock and the production of Hitchcock films, and works by Roland Barthes, Christian Metz, Laura Mulvey, Vivian Sobchack and George Bluestone have provided a background of film theory.

The goals of this dissertation were conceived of upon observing that many of Hitchcock's most memorable tropes, images, and characters originate in adapted texts and further, that many of those adapted texts have not been widely read. It is interesting that Hitchcock's films are so infrequently read as direct adaptations of their source texts, especially as Hitchcock films are such popular subjects of critical discussion. In their introduction to *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor*, R. Barton Palmer and David Boyd similarly identify a scarcity of critical attention towards Hitchcock as an adaptor of texts and offer several explanations. First, Palmer and Boyd point towards the diversity and obscurity of many of the source texts for Hitchcock films, which range from literary classics like Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* to stories like "Rear Window," which was originally published in *Dime Detective Magazine*. Regarding the obscurity and misleading attribution of particular source texts, Palmer and Boyd cite *Spellbound* (1945) and *The Birds* (1963) as films which relate only tenuously to their accredited source texts, and, contrariwise, detail instances in which Hitchcock films are strongly influenced by texts that do not appear in film credits:

> Hitchcock directed only one film openly based on a novel by John Buchan, *The 39 Steps* (1934), but he frequently acknowledged Buchan's wider impact on his work. And quite rightly: Mark Glancy convincingly demonstrates the extent to which *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, released the year before *The 39 Steps*, was influenced by Buchan's novel *The Three Hostages*, and many critics have pointed out that *North by Northwest*, putatively based on an original script by Ernest Lehman, is virtually an updated and Americanized version of *The 39 Steps* itself. Similarly, Marie Belloc-Lowndes's influence on Hitchcock extends beyond *The Lodger* to inform, in a general way, many of the director's exercises in female Gothic in the 1940s, and in a very specific way *Shadow of a Doubt* . . . (7)

Lastly, Palmer and Boyd identify "the rise of the auteur theory in the 1950s" as leading to a perception of Hitchcock films as "constituting, in effect, a genre in themselves," but lament that "the idea of directorial authorship so firmly imposed itself on the study of Hitchcock's films that it tended to suppress alternative or complementary approaches" (7).

Having identified and explored a perceived lack of critical attention towards Hitchcock as an adaptor, Palmer and Boyd state that the proceeding collection of essays "reverses the common pattern," and "considers the centripetal process by which a diversity of literary sources are transformed into a coherent body of work by a single filmmaker" (8). This dissertation proceeds from a similar consideration and, specifically, endeavors to examine the processes by which texts from disparate authors and sociocultural contexts are made into such "unmistakably Hitchcockian [films] as *Sabotage, Rebecca,* and *Rear Window*" (Boyd 8). By examining the signifying structures in *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* as they relate to the signifying structures in their source texts, we can better understand Hitchcock's films as a whole. However, the investigations of *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* in this dissertation are more extended than many other examinations of textual influences within Hitchcock films. In keeping a limited scope, the signifying structures of these films and their treatment of issues raised in their source texts may be explored in greater detail. Further, this dissertation aims to more thoroughly outline considerations of embodiment, identification, and authenticity in both text and film.

By focusing on embodied identifications, embodied movements, and issues of authenticity, the investigations in this dissertation will outline signifying tropes, motifs, and structures rather than the particular constraints of the mediums of literature and film or the ways that certain aspects of prose are or are not simulated in cinema. However,

considerations of the differing capacities of the novel and the image to produce meaning very much inform this dissertation's focus on embodiment. Among the earliest discussions of film adaptations of stage plays and novels, such as Vachel Lindsay's 1915 work, *The Art of the Moving Picture* and George Bluestone's 1957 text, *Novels into Film*, the actor's body and countenance framed on screen is cited as one of film's most potent signifying means.

When Vachel Lindsay compares the signifying affect of the stage actor to actors in film, he remarks, "It was a theatrical sin when the old-fashioned stage actor was rendered unimportant by his scenery. But the motion picture actor is but the mood of the mob or the landscape or the department store behind him, reduced to a single hieroglyphic" (164). Here, Lindsay asserts the heightened importance, in film, of the actor's relationship to their environment, to animate as well as inanimate objects. Despite Lindsay's unusual use of the term "hieroglyphic" to describe the signifying capacities of the image, this configuration nonetheless emphasizes film actors as being involved in the production of images, the semantic effects of which are only partially informed by that actor's personality or capacity for realizing fictional narratives.

George Bluestone more clearly delineates the importance of the actor in film as a body within an environment. Bluestone writes, "Within the composition of the frame, the juxtaposition of man and object becomes crucial," and further, "Not only has the film discovered new ways to render meanings by finding relationships between animate and inanimate objects, but the human physiognomy itself has been rediscovered" (26). While Lindsay compares the signifying mechanisms of images (and the bodies and faces represented within them) to hieroglyphs, and Bluestone refers to these signifying schema as "plastic thinking" (26), both outline the heightened importance of embodiment in film as compared to that of prose or even stage plays.

In some of the earliest discussions on film and adaptation, then, the acting body in film is identified as a crucial aspect of the medium's capacity to produce meaning. Before discussing more recent developments in adaptation studies, it is worth also briefly discussing the heightened importance of the relationship between the camera, the bodies on screen, and the viewer in film theory more generally since at least the 1970s. In Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," the body on screen is held as being of crucial importance in the ways they relate to the subjective and gendered positions of the viewer. More specifically, Mulvey employs the Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts of the gaze and the mirror stage to establish an understanding of the ways film "reflects, reveals and even plays on the straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle" (Mulvey 14). Mulvey suggests that the (male) viewer, in identifying male protagonists on screen, is afforded a viewing pleasure that is enabled and structured by "patriarchal culture" (15). In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," this pleasure is posited as an active male gaze which asserts mastery over a passive, female object of desire. Applying this framework to *Vertigo*, Mulvey states that protagonist John "Scottie" Ferguson (James Stewart) "has all the attributes of the patriarchal superego" and that the film "focuses on the implications of the active/looking passive/looked-at split in terms of sexual difference and the power of the male symbolic encapsulated in the hero" (24). As Tania Modleski's analysis of *Vertigo* shows, Mulvey's characterization of Scottie as a "patriarchal superego" is at odds with the decidedly non-masculine ways he is depicted throughout the film. Following his accident, for example, Scottie complains of the corset he is ordered to wear, asking his friend, Midge, "do you think many men wear corsets" (5:38). Moreover, overly rigid associations between the gaze and gendered structures of pleasure and mastery in

Mulvey's argument render the subtle and often subversive signifying possibilities of Scottie's relationship with Madeleine/Judy unseen.[1]

While Mulvey describes the film viewer as engaging in an act of viewing pleasure (or displeasure) that is always already structured by gendered sociopolitical relations, Christian Metz describes the film screen as being like a mirror which confronts the viewer with a visual and auditory expression that is marked (in comparison to the medium of theater) by the absence of what it presents. Metz writes:

> …the activity of perception which [cinema] involves is real (the cinema is not a phantasy), but the perceived is not really the object, it is its shade, its phantom, its double, its *replica* in a new kind of mirror. It will be said that literature, after all, is itself only made of replicas (written words, presenting absent objects). But at least it does not present them to us with all the really perceived detail that the screen does (giving more and taking as much, i.e. taking more). The unique position of the cinema lies in this dual character of its signifier: unaccustomed perceptual wealth, but at the same time stamped with unreality to an unusual degree, and from the very outset." (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* 45)

Metz proposes that film is characterized by the absence of the referents of its expression and, in turn, that film's signification belongs to the realm of the Lacanian imaginary, which is the realm of the ego. For Metz, the screen calls back to the Lacanian

[1] Regarding Mulvey's application of psychoanalytic theory, Clifford T. Manlove outlines the ways the Mulvey's conception of the gaze, as a gendered experience of social power relations, diverges from the writing of Freud and Lacan. Manlove writes, "Mulvey's explanation of the gaze focuses on the intersubjective characteristics of pleasure, whereas Freud and Lacan's theories focus on the interaction of pleasure and repetition necessary for subjectivity itself, whether masculine or feminine" (90). Ultimately, while Manlove critiques Mulvey's use and interpretation of the gaze theory, Manlove concludes by affirming that the application of the Lacanian gaze theory to film still promises to "be useful for understanding more about the visual dimension of power, gender, and subjectivity in human cultures" (103).

formulation of the mirror stage, in which the child recognizes itself "as an other, and beside an other" (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema* 45). Unlike the child apprehending their reflection in the mirror, however, the viewer finds that the film screen reflects everything but their own body. Mulvey asserts that the pleasure in narrative cinema relies upon woman as "[standing] in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning" (15). However, Metz presents the experience of film on more fundamental psychological grounds, describing every viewer (whatever their sex, gender, or position within culture) as encountering a vision of the mirror in which they apprehend everything but their own embodied self.

Both Mulvey and Metz figure the viewer's apprehension of the film screen (and the characters presented within it) as being uniquely and tellingly informed by the formations and reformations of their own ego. Given these psychoanalytically informed accounts of the signifying mechanisms of cinema, it would seem that no discussion of the bodies on screen in cinema is replete without considering the relationship of the body on screen to the viewer. Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological approach to film only reinforces this view. Sobchack conceives of the film experience as being one of intersubjectivity, a negotiation of meaning between an embodied spectator but also film itself, which expresses its own embodied perceptions. Sobchack writes, "A film is an act of seeing that makes itself seen, an act of hearing that makes itself heard, an act of physical and reflective movement that makes itself reflexively felt and understood" (*The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* 3). For Sobchack, the viewer's embodied, sensate experience of film has been largely neglected by film theories which focus predominantly on visual perception.

Using disparate methods of analysis, Mulvey, Metz, and Sobchack all emphasize the body on screen in film as being prefigured by certain ontological, psychological, sociopolitical, and kinesthetic qualities and strictures of apprehension which lead them to focus their analyses on the viewer in their delineations of the signifying mechanisms of film. However, the emphasis on the viewer as a vital component of conceptualizing film is not limited to these highly influential works. In their 2010 text, *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses*, Thomas Elsaesser and Malte Hagener reaffirm the importance of the viewer in the study of film: "The idea of the body as sensory envelope, as perceptual membrane and material-mental interface, in relation to the cinematic image and to audio-visual perception, is thus more than a heuristic device and an aesthetic metaphor: it is the ontological, epistemological and phenomenological 'ground' for the respective theories of film and cinema today" (11). In film studies, then, the focus on the viewer remains a highly valued subject of analysis.

If, however, the embodied, sensate, and apperceptive experiences of the viewer serve as the foundations of a great deal of highly influential thought on film, this focus has largely left the embodied characters on screen undiscussed. Clearly, the embodied character is more than only a site of identification, pre-inscribed modes of desire, or, as David Bordwell describes the presentation of characters typical in classical Hollywood cinema, "a consistent bundle of a few salient traits, which usually depend upon the character's narrative function" (Bordwell et al. location 726). Particularly in Hitchcock, bodies on screen mobilize networks of signification which this dissertation endeavors to outline. In the wake of Mulvey, Metz, and Sobchack, Bluestone's term "plastic thinking" neatly redirects our attention back towards the ways that landscapes, objects, and bodies on screen comprise interconnecting threads of signification which include but exceed the domains of narrative, characterization, and theme. Throughout this

dissertation, then, embodiment will refer not to the embodied perceptions of the viewer or even to the somatic embodied experiences of the characters in film, but to various configurations of embodied identity in particular characters, as well as gestures and poses which become tropes in and of themselves.

In tracing signifying threads from text to Hitchcock film, this dissertation treats the body on screen as facilitating and mobilizing a range of visual and aural markers which relate not only to other characters but to such objects as landscapes, abstract visual designs, and the frame of the film itself. Thus, while this dissertation does discuss the relationship between the camera, the bodies on screen, and the audience, it does so with the aims of identifying particular configurations of exhibition, voyeurism, embodied identity, and subjectivity that manifest within Hitchcock films.

Analyzing Hitchcock films that serve as adaptations of novels is one way to redirect critical attention away from the viewer and back towards the body on the film screen. While the novel has a vast capacity to express the subjective experiences of a given character, film primarily relies on dialogue and the expressive and gestural capacities of the actor to convey the same information. Thus, the signifying practices of the body on screen can scarcely be avoided when analyzing a film adaptation of a novel, and, indeed, the body on screen is a frequent point of discussion in contemporary film adaptation studies.

Thomas Leitch's essay, "Hitchcock from Stage to Page," demonstrates the importance of the body in film adaptations of novels. Here, Leitch explores Hitchcock's increasing predilection for using novels rather than stage plays as source material for his films as his filmmaking career progressed. In particular, Leitch calls attention to representations of consciousness in novels and in Hitchcock's adaptations of those novels. Using *Vertigo* as an example, Leitch writes:

> Viewers generally assume they can read the thoughts and emotions of characters shown in close-up reaction shots. As Hitchcock observed to Truffaut, however, these reaction shots are often objective in the sense established by Lev Kuleshov: they are essentially blank slates onto which viewers project their own desires (215-16). The challenge of reading Scottie's growing obsession with Madeleine through representational codes which, like Madeleine's actions, seem more transparent than they are makes the film's presentation both intensely subjective and critically detached. (Palmer and Boyd 25-26)

In place of the interior monologues which communicate the protagonist's innermost thoughts in Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's novel, Hitchcock uses cinematic techniques, such as filters, music, and reaction shots, to allow his audience to similarly empathize with *Vertigo*'s protagonist, Scottie. However, in Hitchcock films subjective treatments of characters, and apparent identifications of the camera with particular actors, are almost invariably counterbalanced by what Leitch describes as "ironic detachment" (Palmer and Boyd 30).

Leitch illustrates this sense of critical detachment by showing how shifts in subjective focus in Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* are approximated in Hitchcock's *Sabotage* (1936). While Conrad deftly shifts from focusing on the subjectivity of Winnie Verloc, who approaches her husband with a knife, to that of Adolf Verloc, who begins to understand his wife's intentions with growing horror, Hitchcock uses close-ups and the camera's shifting focus to accomplish a similar effect. Leitch praises Hitchcock's direction in this scene for its sense of "somnambulistic action" (Palmer and Boyd 29), which closely evokes Conrad's passage, but there is yet more to be said regarding the relationship between the camera, the actors, and the objects on screen.

In comparison to Conrad's passage, Leitch contends that this scene exhibits "a more limited rhetorical strategy to build sympathy for a heroine the film will rescue from the legal consequences of her actions" (Palmer and Boyd 30). However, Mrs. Verloc's murder of her husband is also typical of the ways that bodies are often used in Hitchcock films, as loci for shifting and intersecting identifications with particular roles, and their figures become a medium by which certain tropes, networks of signification, and narrative possibilities are established and explored. Consider, as a brief example, how Mrs. Verloc's hands, framed in close-up, are visually isolated from her face and are depicted as acting on thoughts, needs, and desires of which even Mrs. Verloc does not appear fully cognizant. When Mr. Verloc is stabbed, the camera frames Mrs. Verloc's hand alone and the following shot shows her trying to hold her husband upright in concern for his well-being. Here, Mrs. Verloc's embodied identification is split, she occupies multiple, incompatible modes of being, and the disconnect between her embodied movements and her facial expressions recalls the problems posed about the act of sabotage which opens the film: "what's at the back of it" and "who did it" (*Sabotage* 2:13).

Mrs. Verloc's escape from legal ramifications is forced upon her by Detective Ted, who shows romantic interest in her throughout the film and who appears to intend to leverage his position at Scotland Yard in order to coerce Mrs. Verloc into a relationship. The final close-up of a hand in the film comes after Detective Ted cuts off Mrs. Verloc's attempts to confess to her involvement in her husband's death, and the camera reveals that Mrs. Verloc's hand is now firmly in Ted's grasp.

In Hitchcock films, bodies often signify in ways that deviate from, draw into question, or are even distinct from a character's apparent consciousness. The relationship between the camera, actors, and objects on screen is frequently highlighted

in order to draw attention to subtexts and tropes which, in turn, frequently signify beyond the bounds of the film in which they appear. Ted's grasp of Mrs. Verloc's hand, for example, calls back to comparisons between wedding bands and handcuffs made in *The Lodger*. In *The Lodger*, Detective Joe announces his intentions to marry Daisy as soon as he catches the film's villain, the Avenger. The film culminates in a chase scene in which the titular Lodger, who has been handcuffed by Joe under suspicion of being the Avenger, is chased through London by a vengeful mob. When the Lodger attempts to climb over a fence to escape, his handcuffs are caught on the fence and he is left defenseless, hanging by his hands, as the mob attacks him. Directly following this scene, the Lodger and Daisy are shown in their new home—evidently happily married—but, in a manner that is similar to *Sabotage*, Hitchcock leaves the film's associations between criminal culpability, sexual violence, overzealous law enforcement, and legal marriage unresolved.

In this dissertation's conclusion, a discussion of both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* as they relate to each other demonstrates the ways that Hitchcock films tend to establish, reinforce, and expand upon common tropes and signifying networks. Michael Walker's *Hitchcock's Motifs* provides a nearly encyclopedic account of certain tropes and images throughout Hitchcock's filmography and is evidence enough of the interrelatedness of Hitchcock's films. Included in Walker's text are subsections on "Male hands/Female hands," "Keys and handbags," "Handbags and keys," "Lights and the police," "Spectacles and the police," and six subcategorizations of the appearances of staircases in Hitchcock films, including (but not limited to) "Political variations," "Sinister staircases," and "Freudian overtones" (9-10). However, the delineation of signifying networks across Hitchcock films in this dissertation's conclusion is not aimed to prove Palmer and Boyd's assertion that "no filmmaker has ever produced a body of work

more coherent (narratively, thematically, and stylistically) than Hitchcock's" (7). Rather, the goal is to show that in adapting various source texts to film, Hitchcock films also serve as adaptations and reiterations of other Hitchcock films. This sense of adaptation as a reconsideration is explicit in Hitchcock's decision to remake his British 1934 film, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, in 1956 in Hollywood. However, by exploring the ways that particular signifying arrangements are extended and revisited in films as apparently unrelated as *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*, Hitchcock's work as an adaptor may be understood in a more multifaceted light.

More recently, adaptation studies scholars such as Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, John Bryant, and Jorgen Bruhn have pushed for discussing adaptations as processes rather than as works which relate unproblematically to a single source text. In arguing for a conceptualization of adaptation studies as "intertextual dialogism," Stam writes:

> An adaptation . . . is less an attempted resuscitation of an originary word than an ongoing dialogical process. The concept of intertextual dialogism suggests that every text forms an intersection of textual surfaces. All texts are tissues of anonymous formulae, variations on those formulae, conscious and unconscious quotations, and conflations and inversions of other texts. In the broadest sense, intertextual dialogism refers to the infinite and open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture, the entire matrix of communicative utterances within which the artistic text is situated, which reach the text not only through recognizable influences, but also through a subtle process of dissemination. (64)

Building on Stam's concept of intertextual dialogism, Bruhn calls for the "dialogizing of adaptation studies" more generally, and insists that "we should study both the source and result of the adaptation as two texts infinitely changing positions, taking turns being

sources for each other in the ongoing work of the reception in the adaptational process" (73). Of note, an adaptation's fidelity to its source text is of little concern in many contemporary discussions of adaptation studies. In conceiving of adaptation as a dialogical process, for example, the source text is always understood as being subject to recontextualizations brought about not only by adaptations, but also by cultural and political shifts and the "open-ended possibilities generated by all the discursive practices of a culture." John Bryant argues that the very framework of judging adaptations according to their fidelity to their source text "stems from a kind of 'textual narcissism' in which we not only assume that the goal of adaptation is to reproduce the original 'faithfully', [*sic*] but also presume that it never can be" (54). Rather, for Bryant, "adaptation has the entirely different agenda of revising the original, for whatever social or aesthetic end, through a re-performance or re-writing of it, in order to reposition the originating text in a new cultural context" (54).

As discussed earlier, Hitchcock films are infrequently read as adaptations, and they are even less frequently judged by their fidelity to their source texts. In arguing for a more serious consideration of Hitchcock films, early critic Robin Wood writes, "Hitchcock is no more limited by his sources than Shakespeare was by his" (18). Here, Wood clearly anticipates the critique that Hitchcock's films are undeserving of discussion precisely because so many of them are based on texts outside of the literary canon. However, far from arguing for a less elitist view towards texts deemed non-literary, Wood's comment implicitly argues that Hitchcock succeeds *despite* his source texts—that the Hitchcockian process of adaptation is one that elevates and transforms "the lowest of the low-brow" (Palmer and Boyd, 6) into worthy cinema. Despite Wood's insightful commentary towards many Hitchcock films, his comments

nonetheless exemplify the type of critical perspective which this dissertation (and Palmer and Boyd's collection of essays) seeks to address.

Certainly, viewing adaptation as a dialogical process is one means of emphasizing the influence of source texts on Hitchcock films. Hitchcock himself deemphasized the importance of his source materials, telling François Truffaut "What I do is to read a story only once, and if I like the basic idea, I just forget all about the book and start to create cinema" (Truffaut 71). However, even taking Hitchcock at his word, his comments do not diminish the inevitable and myriad influences of other texts on his work, whether those texts be direct, announced source materials or not. Of course, the influence of Hitchcock's films on their source texts is also self-evident. Within and without scholarly criticism, Hitchcock's films have recontextualized and caused reconsiderations of both announced, adapted texts and indirect influences, as evidenced by critical works like *Hitchcock and Poe: The Legacy of Delight and Terror* by Dennis R. Perry, or the re-release of source texts like *D'entre les morts* under the title of Hitchcock's film adaptation, *Vertigo*.

Although dialogical conceptualizations of adaptation inform this investigation's approach to Hitchcock films, this investigation's focus is on the ways that signifying configurations within Hitchcock's source texts survive (and do not survive) within Hitchcock films. Thus, the ways that source texts are recontextualized and re-apprehended by emerging investigations of their film adaptations is of secondary interest. Of course, it is unavoidable that the treatments of Marie Belloc Lowndes' *The Lodger* and Boileau-Narcejac's *D'entre les morts* found in this dissertation are already (and continue to be) informed and altered by their film adaptations. However, the ways that understandings of these texts necessarily shift in light of re-viewings and reconsiderations of Hitchcock films will remain largely unexplored. Similarly, this

dissertation will focus less on the sociohistorical context of these works, what Robert Stam describes as "a series of filters" shaping a novel's adaptation to film, such as "studio style, ideological fashion, political constraints" (Stam 69) etc., but instead privileges the discussion and elucidation of signifying networks in film and text.

The first chapter, "Avatars, Embodiment, and Knowledge in Hitchcock's Adaptation of *The Lodger*," outlines and explores the myriad changes made to Lowndes' plot in adapting her novel to film. Lowndes' novel centers on the subjectivity of Mrs. Bunting, the matriarch of the Bunting household, and her relationship to she and her husband's guest, Mr. Sleuth. In Hitchcock's film, Mrs. Bunting is a secondary character while Mr. Sleuth, known in the film only as "the Lodger," becomes the film's primary focus. In Lowndes' novel, Mrs. Bunting's fears and anxieties towards her guest as she becomes more and more certain of his guilt are mitigated by his high social standing and, more generally, by a view that he is a "blameless, quiet gentleman" (Lowndes 71). In Lowndes, Mrs. Bunting's admiration for the upper class and her concordance with Mr. Sleuth's adherence to the Bible prevents her from wholly condemning Mr. Sleuth for his crimes, or, for that matter, condemning herself for hiding him from the police. In Hitchcock's film, Mr. and Mrs. Bunting quickly grow suspicious of their gentleman lodger and much of the film focuses on whether or not the Lodger is, in fact, the serial murderer known as "the Avenger." Further, this ambiguity is exacerbated by dubious embodied movements in both the Lodger and the Buntings' daughter, Daisy, each of whom behave in ways that encourage the audience to fear for Daisy's safety (as well as the Lodger's innocence). In both novel and film, embodiment is framed as a means of not only acquiring knowledge but also of inscribing one's message onto bodies and onto London's socio-geographic landscape.

In addition to embodied roles and movements, the first chapter also explores the opposed imagery of "Golden Curls," which refers to the blonde hair of the Avenger's victims, and the Avenger's triangular calling card. The triangle, in particular, becomes associated with the love triangle between Daisy, the Lodger, and Joe, but also with sexualized violence, geographic movement, and illicit knowledge. "Golden Curls" raises concerns over artifice in representation and authenticity in embodied identifications. In ways that anticipate scenes Hitchcock would film some 31 years later in *Vertigo,* feminine sexuality is framed as being (in part) a commercialized, synthetic production which promises dubious opportunities for re-apprehending the past.

The second chapter, "Narrative Reiterations and Adaptations in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*," scrutinizes the similarities in plot and theme between Boileau-Narcejac's novel and Hitchcock's film to find crucial differences in signifying structures. Despite Wood's remark that, "Hitchcock took very little from *D'Entre les Morts* [*sic*]" (Wood 71), both novel and film share a rather confusing and outlandish plot in which a man is hired to follow and ensure the safety of a friend's wife who is supposedly possessed or haunted by the ghost of her ancestor. In both novel and film, it is later revealed that the woman the protagonist had been following (and had fallen in love with) was an impersonator and that her suicide had been faked so that the real wife could be disposed of without arousing suspicion. Most of the characters from *D'entre les morts* appear in *Vertigo* with relatively few changes made. The largest change made to the narrative is Hitchcock's decision to reveal the narrative twist concerning the impersonator and the faked suicide halfway through the film, while in *D'entre les morts* that information is reserved for the very end of the novel.

In *Vertigo*, Hitchcock's work as an adaptor is more subtle than in *The Lodger,* yet the effect of those changes is no less remarkable. As in the first chapter, the embodied

movements and identifications of the characters in *Vertigo* are the means by which differences in signifying structures are outlined and explored. The protagonists of *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo* both have an experience in which they nearly fall to their death, and these experiences prevent them from discovering that they are being deceived. However, Hitchcock uses his protagonist's fear of heights to mobilize signifying markers concerning a coinciding fear of and desire for death, desires to re-experience the past, and the dangers in realizing narratives from the past. Kim Novak plays the part of the impersonator (Judy Barton) and the murdered wife (Madeleine Elster), as well as the part of a Madeleine Elster who is possessed by the memories of her ancestor (Carlotta Valdes), and her portrayal of these disparate modes of embodied identification is used to highlight issues of authenticity in embodiment. Finally, if the Avenger's triangle and his victim's "Golden Curls" are the predominant visual markers in *The Lodger*, in *Vertigo* it is the spiral. In *Vertigo,* the spiral is associated with subjectivity, feminine interiority, and the limits of representation.

In both chapters, close examinations of the source texts reveal surprising similarities, not only between novel and film, but between the films themselves. In *The Lodger*, for example, Lowndes' focus on Mrs. Bunting's embodiment and on Mr. Sleuth's expressions of violent moral judgement on his victims corresponds to similar, yet reconfigured, issues of embodiment in Hitchcock's film. In *D'entre les morts,* the protagonist's awareness of the ways in which he projects his own desires and fantasies onto his material surroundings, and his according reluctance to ascribe significance to his own life, corresponds to similar concerns over representation and illusion in *Vertigo*. As is discussed in the conclusion, both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* share threads of signification that appear to have gone unnoticed by most critics, and these common threads evidence a process of adaptation that, withstanding recent efforts, holds much

potential as the subject of not only Hitchcock scholarship but adaptation studies more generally. By explicating changes in signifying structures made in the process of adapting text to film and by exploring signifying threads between films, the oft-praised "unity" (Wood 17) or coherence of Hitchcock's works and their status as revisions, reiterations, or reimaginations of other works can be better understood.

# CHAPTER I

## AVATARS, EMBODIMENT, AND KNOWLEDGE IN HITCHCOCK'S ADAPTATION OF *THE LODGER*

*The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927), based on Marie Belloc Lowndes' 1913 novel *The Lodger*, is Alfred Hitchcock's third film as lead director. As Maurice Yacowar points out, it is also Hitchcock's first work in the "suspense genre for which he became famous" (*Hitchcock's British Films* 20). Although Hitchcock directed the film when he was only 27 years old, it is instantly recognizable as a Hitchcock film, and in many ways serves as a kind of foundational structure which later films would expand upon. In his interview with François Truffaut, Hitchcock famously referred to *The Lodger* as "the first true 'Hitchcock movie'" (Truffaut 43), and critic William Rothman writes that "Hitchcock was not being arbitrary when he spoke of *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1926), his third directorial effort, as the first Hitchcock film, the one that inaugurates his authorship" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 6).

Despite general agreement that *The Lodger* is a seminal film in Hitchcock's career, it has received little critical attention compared to other Hitchcock films, and even less attention has been paid to the novel on which it is based. An examination of Hitchcock's film as it relates to Lowndes' novel works towards exploring these works in more depth, while also tracing the ways in which Hitchcock's first "true" film departs from and informs its adapted text.

If it is generally agreed that *The Lodger* is the first film to bear Hitchcock's signature, it is not obvious as to what that signature entails. Certainly, *The Lodger* incorporates a number of themes which recur throughout Hitchcock's films. The eponymous main character, known only as the Lodger, is wrongly accused of being the serial killer known as the Avenger. The Lodger's habit of going out at night in search of

the Avenger arouses the suspicion of his landlady, Mrs. Bunting, and later the Buntings' friend and Scotland Yard detective, Joe. This culminates in a double chase between the police, the Lodger, and the Avenger, wherein the Lodger, bound in handcuffs, is aided by the film's blonde romance interest, Daisy. Ultimately, we never see the 'real' Avenger, reminding us of so many Hitchcockian villains who elude the camera's gaze. As Superintendent Talbot (played by Matthew Boulton) remarks in *Sabotage* (1936), "They're the people we'll never catch. It's the men they employ that we're after."

The double chase, the wrongfully accused, and the blonde accomplice are all familiar Hitchcock tropes which resurface in films like *The 39 Steps* (1935), *Saboteur* (1942), and *North by Northwest* (1959). Perhaps more significantly, however, *The Lodger* exhibits an awareness of the power of the camera. Rothman writes, "A measure and expression of the modernity of the Hitchcockian film is its call upon us to acknowledge, at every moment, not only what is on view within the frame but the camera as well. . . . Another is that, in the camera's tense and shifting relationships with its human subjects, the author's and viewer's roles are intimately revealed" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 6).

*The Lodger* draws attention to the relationship between the camera, the director, and the actors on screen with its opening shot. The film opens with a depiction of a blonde woman being murdered by the Avenger, and, with the way the woman's face fills the screen, Hitchcock forces the audience to share the Avenger's perspective. This sequence immediately implicates the audience in the violence on screen, and places the Avenger behind the camera, a domain typically reserved for the director.

Through a self-aware use of the camera, Hitchcock's considerations of guilt and innocence extend beyond diegetic narrative. The film's first intertitle, "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS" (2:05), refers most obviously to the blonde hair of the victim we

have just seen murdered, linking this violence to a type of sexual exhibition, but it also acknowledges the audience's desire for such sexualized violence and promises more. This murder/intertitle sequence, which spans a mere fifteen seconds of film time, establishes that even very brief elements of the film, such as the text "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS," may have more channels of signification than can be accounted for on a first viewing.

The counterpart to the blonde victims' "golden curls" is the Avenger's calling card, which bears an image of a triangle. Golden curls and triangles appear throughout the film, calling back to the Avenger's retributive violence against women, but also being informed by new contexts. For example, there are several scenes in which the Lodger paces back and forth in his room. This causes the chandelier hanging from the lower floor's ceiling to sway back and forth, which causes the characters in that room (often Joe, Daisy, and Mrs. Bunting) to worryingly stare at the imagined space above them. One might notice, however, that the chandelier makes the shape of a triangular pyramid, invoking the Avenger's calling card. As a manifestation of the Avenger triangle, the chandelier acts as a sort of arrow that guides suspicions towards the Lodger. However, the focus on the verticality of the boarding house also connotes issues of class. The gentleman lodger stays in the best room in the house, while members of the working class stay in the lower floors. The triangle, then, is here linked to both the physical and metaphorical hierarchical structures through which the Lodger's anxiety reverberates, affecting the emotional states of those below him.

The triangle is a sort of signifying vehicle. It is first associated with the act of avenging, with violence, and with sexuality. In further appearances it calls back to the Avenger but is also endowed with the implications of differing contexts. It is, perhaps, a precursor to the pattern of diamonds and crosses in *Strangers on a Train* (1953) or the

grid patterns in *North by Northwest*. Triangles and golden curls alert the viewer towards the careful arrangements of material objects and designs in the set which inform our readings of the film. It is this treatment of objects, structures, and bodies as vehicles within a vast network of designs and patterns that best describes *The Lodger* as the prototypical Hitchcock film.

In many cases, manifestations of the triangle within the environment on screen indicate a constant threat of the Lodger slipping into the role of the Avenger. The inherent danger which this possibility poses to Daisy, or, for that matter, to the audience, is exacerbated by a romantic ending that leaves poignant narrative threads unresolved. Although the film ends with the Lodger being cleared of guilt, and he and Daisy, a newlywed couple, moving into the Lodger's mansion, this was not Hitchcock's intention. Originally, the film was to end with the Lodger "going off into the night and his innocence or guilt never clearly resolved" (Spoto 85). Yet, material markers indicate that signs of instability remain, even in the Lodger's opulent mansion, and even in the couple's conclusive romantic embrace.

In *The Lodger*, material markers denote underlying tensions that fail to be subsumed by the ostensibly romantic ending, and the original designs for a dubious and mysterious Lodger, uncleared of guilt, haunt the film. Here, Hitchcock's meticulous arrangement of sets, wardrobes, props, and bodies sets into motion a circulation of material signifiers that comment on and extend beyond the surface level narrative, beginning a consideration of gender, sex and violence, and exhibition and voyeurism that will be continued throughout his career. More specifically, this materiality marks the ways in which the Avenger and his triangular sign, as well as his blonde victims and their associated 'golden curls,' indicate a concern with sexuality, violence, knowledge, and authenticity.

**Lowndes' Novel**

In investigating the thematic and narrative elements, as well as the material markers which make *The Lodger* the first "true" Hitchcock film, it is worth exploring how those same elements were modified from Hitchcock's source material. Hitchcock did not originate the vengeful serial killer known as the Avenger, nor can he be credited with the creation of the Avenger's triangular calling card. The "first true Hitchcock picture" is an adaptation, and many of *The Lodger*'s plot points, characters, as well as spatial and geographical details are adopted from Marie Belloc Lowndes' novel. The Buntings' home, for example, was carefully reconstructed for the film: "[Hitchcock's] designs for *The Lodger* were meticulously executed, and soon every corner of the studio floor bore the stamp of Bloomsbury, where the story was set. A three-sided house was constructed, with narrow walls and low ceilings in the exact dimensions of a middle-class home" (Spoto, 86). Both stories take place almost entirely within the home itself, and both novel and film carefully document the characters' ingress and egress, with each excursion into the London streets posing risks.

The treatment of embodiment, and the characters' relations to their physical environments is a helpful point of entry to begin comparing these works. It is made clear in the beginning of Lowndes' novel that the Buntings are living in poverty, having sold off nearly all their valuable possessions. The prices of everyday items, such as tobacco, food, and newspapers are described in detail, and for the Buntings, tobacco and newspapers are an unaffordable luxury. These luxuries are described with a focus on the embodied experience of their lack: "As the shouts came through the closed windows and the thick damask curtains, Bunting felt a sudden sense of mind hunger fall upon him. It was a shame—a damned shame—that he shouldn't know what was

happening in the world outside! Only criminals are kept from hearing the news of what is going on beyond their prison walls" (5). Lowndes' term "mind hunger" suggests that information is a luxury only in the strictest sense, and that its deprivation imprisons the Buntings within the walls of their own home. Later, when Bunting gives in to his desires and buys a paper, it is again spoken of in terms of embodied experience: "Thanks to that penny he had just spent so recklessly he would pass a happy hour, taken, for once, out of his anxious, despondent, miserable self" (7). The paper offers him a brief escape from the limits of his immediate material reality.

If the Buntings are all but imprisoned by their destitute financial state, the Avenger appears to enjoy a kind of uncanny freedom. In Lowndes' novel the Lodger, also known as Mr. Sleuth, is in fact the Avenger, and we learn that he is very particular regarding his own habits of consumption. He abstains from alcohol, as do the Buntings, but he also abstains from "flesh meat" (15) and "[does] not often care to look at the public prints" (125). Considering that Mr. Sleuth readily pays one month's rent in advance, however, even these self-restrictions describe the luxury of one who can afford to choose what not to eat and what not to read. Moreover, in creating the Avenger avatar and perpetrating the serial murders of young women, Mr. Sleuth serves as the architect of the news stories which Mr. Bunting and so many others like him use to distract themselves from their daily lives. If Mr. Bunting is momentarily freed by the indulgences offered by the newspaper stories of the Avenger, Mr. Sleuth is the master and originator of this domain, unthreatened by the highest legal authorities. Only Mr. Sleuth's own paranoia, as well as his growing intimacy with Mrs. Bunting, threaten this form of fantasy.

In a similar manner to Mr. Bunting's "mind hunger," Lowndes also describes Mrs. Bunting as experiencing bodily reactions to knowledge. Accordingly, Elyssa

Warkentin points to Mrs. Bunting's body as a particularly female source of information, citing several instances in which Mrs. Bunting's embodied experiences alert her to new pieces of information before she has consciously acknowledged their relevance. Warkentin writes, "Throughout the novel, Mrs. Bunting accesses a form of embodied information about her lodger. As we have seen, Lowndes employs a metaphor of illness to describe her relationship with the lodger, and Mrs. Bunting's physical reactions always speak the truth" (par. 24). Mrs. Bunting values, above all other forms of institutional knowledge, first-hand experience. From the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Bunting harshly judges her husband's habit of reading newspapers: "There he was, doing nothing—in fact, doing worse than nothing—wasting his time reading all about those horrid crimes" (31). However, as Mrs. Bunting becomes more and more certain of Mr. Sleuth's guilt, she begins reading the papers herself, hoping to prove her suspicions wrong. While Mr. Bunting reads the paper to escape his embodied experience, Mrs. Bunting uses them to confirm her assessments of her immediate material reality.

As Warkentin points out, Mrs. Bunting uses her position as Mr. Sleuth's landlady to better investigate her suspicions. She searches his room for the strange bag over which he is highly protective, and she examines the "mass of black, gluey soot" which Mr. Sleuth leaves in her kitchen. In Lowndes' novel, women "are not victims—or at least, they are not solely victims—but are competent wielders of power and active collectors of information" (Warkentin par. 26). Mrs. Bunting's investigation of Mr. Sleuth, however, does not position her in strict opposition to the subject of her suspicions. Mrs. Bunting does not use the evidence she collects to report her lodger to the police, nor does she inform their friend and Scotland Yard detective, Joe Chandler, of her suspicions. Instead, Mrs. Bunting forms a protective relationship with the lodger that begins from their first meeting: "'I can see he will want a good bit of looking after,

all the same, poor gentleman" (17). Later in the novel, she even warns him of the heightened police presence in their neighborhood. After telling the lodger that it is a bad night to go out, Mrs. Bunting clarifies her reasoning: "'Oh, I wasn't thinking of revellers, sir; I was thinking'—she hesitated, then, with a gasping effort Mrs. Bunting brought out the words, 'of the police'" (115). Although Mrs. Bunting is shown to be a competent investigator throughout the novel, she is always primarily concerned with the events which take place within her own home. Mr. Sleuth's actions outside of the Buntings' home seem to concern Mrs. Bunting only insofar as they may jeopardize a tenant she has taken into her care.

If the moniker of the Avenger allows Mr. Sleuth to establish and expand upon his own domain of influence, then Mrs. Bunting's admission into that domain as a knowing non-victim grants her no small amount of power. Warkentin writes, "Mrs. Bunting's apparent collusion with the Avenger, potentially ideologically dangerous though it is, provides the basis for the construction of an alternative system of knowledge" (par. 18). However, Mrs. Bunting does not use this "alternative system of knowledge" to mitigate or even subvert Mr. Sleuth's activities, rather, she hides her knowledge of Mr. Sleuth's status as the Avenger from her husband and lies to Mr. Bunting about her intentions. Mrs. Bunting prioritizes the secret she shares with Mr. Sleuth over her relationship with her husband, with her friend, Joe Chandler, and certainly over the lives of Mr. Sleuth's victims.

Further, if Mrs. Bunting exhibits an alternative system of knowledge which is rooted in her embodiment and in her social position as a marginalized woman, that system of knowledge develops in relation to Mr. Sleuth's religiously dogmatic and misogynistic views on morality. It is revealed early in the novel that Mr. Sleuth studies the Bible, along with a real-world text called *Cruden's Concordance*. Through his

quotations of the Bible, Mrs. Bunting quickly learns of Mr. Sleuth's feelings towards women:

> When she was doing the staircase and landings she would often hear Mr. Sleuth reading aloud to himself passages in the Bible that were very uncomplimentary to her sex. But Mrs. Bunting had no very great opinion of her sister woman, so that didn't put her out. Besides, where one's lodger is concerned, a dislike of women is better than—well, than the other thing. (25)

Mr. Sleuth is a killer of women, or their lodger, but he is never their romantic partner. Mr. Sleuth not only abstains from romantic relationships, but his murder of lone women is framed as preventing those women from tempting men to sin. Early in the novel, Mrs. Bunting overhears Mr. Sleuth reading a Bible verse which makes his motives as a serial killer of women more explicit: "'A strange woman is a narrow gate. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men . . . Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death'" (20). For Mr. Sleuth, the female body is a site of moral contest and a medium through which he may communicate his religious convictions.

The Bible passage describing "a strange woman" as "a narrow gate" describes certain unethical women as tempting men to sin, but the term "narrow gate" may also reference female reproductive organs and, most interestingly, relates the female body to the structure of the home. Accordingly, Mrs. Bunting's management of her household is of key importance to Mr. Sleuth, and for both Mr. Sleuth and Mrs. Bunting the unscrupulous admission of guests is a grave error. As Ellen Turner writes, "It is Ellen Bunting who has the initial inklings about Mr. Sleuth and it is she who takes on the role of defender of the domestic sphere" (60). While conventional wisdom may dictate that Ellen Bunting should have reported her suspicions about Mr. Sleuth to the police, she

shares Mr. Sleuth's mistrust of the law and the public at large. That Mr. Sleuth and Mrs. Bunting share this perspective, which is evidenced by their behavior throughout the novel, goes some way to explain their mutual respect.

If the passage concerning "strange" women points towards a dark, perverse aspect of female sexuality, describing sexual relations with certain bodies as leading one to "the chambers of hell," then the Lodger avenges the injustices these bodies threaten. Mr. Sleuth believes himself to be "an absolutely sane man with a great avenging work to do in the world" (142). He approaches the Bible from a fundamentalist perspective, and his application of the Bible's teachings is absent of metaphor. His attacks on his victims make the womb a site of death, realizing the passage on "strange women" in a literal, material sense. If Mrs. Bunting demonstrates a kind of embodied hermeneutics, reading the world largely through her bodily reactions to events and knowledge as they unfold, Mr. Sleuth behaves in an inverse manner, inscribing his beliefs on the bodies of the women he murders.

Mr. Sleuth's heightened valuation of material reality is further demonstrated by the red "ink" which he uses to write his notes, as well as the Avenger calling cards. We are first given hints about Mr. Sleuth's strange ink when we are told that the Avenger leaves on his victims "a three-cornered piece of paper, on which was written, in red ink, and in printed characters, the words, 'THE AVENGER'" (6). We also learn that Mr. Sleuth conducts experiments in one of the Buntings' rooms: "I am a man of science. I make, that is, all sorts of experiments, and I often require the—ah, well, the presence of great heat" (12). Shortly after, Mr. Sleuth grows very concerned about his handbag: "there is something in that bag which is very precious to me—something I procured with infinite difficulty, and which I could never get again without running into great danger, Mrs. Bunting" (13). Later, when Mrs. Bunting investigates Mr. Sleuth's room,

she accidentally tips over a bottle in the cabinet, and is shocked to find a red liquid spilling out of the door. She quickly dismisses her fears, however, rationalizing that "she knew that the lodger used red ink. Certain pages of Cruden's Concordance were covered with notes written in Mr. Sleuth's peculiar upright handwriting" (53).

Mrs. Bunting suspects that Mr. Sleuth keeps something of his victim's bodies in his small bag and, further, that he uses their blood as ink for his notes, performing a writing that makes use of his victims' bodies as for its medium. We do not learn much about his experiments, except that they leave a "strong, acrid smell" (79). Whatever the specifics may be, Mr. Sleuth's references to scientific experimentation further indicate his desire to gain some knowledge through his physical manipulation of the bodies of his victims. While it is impossible to say whether this knowledge is spiritual or scientific in nature, it is clear that Mr. Sleuth cultivates a system of knowledge of his own.

Mr. Sleuth's and Mrs. Bunting's active roles in cultivating information, however disparate their means may be, lead to their sharing an intimate relationship. The possibility of turning Mr. Sleuth over to the police never surfaces, and Mrs. Bunting's opinion of him remains high throughout the novel. Even when Mrs. Bunting knows that he has just committed a murder, her primary concern is Mr. Sleuth's well-being. As for Mr. Sleuth's feelings towards Mrs. Bunting, Daisy remarks that "The lodger has a wonderful fancy for you, Ellen; if I was father, I'd feel quite jealous" (138). This remark is the only hint towards possible romantic feelings between Mr. Sleuth and Mrs. Bunting, and it anticipates the shift in character roles that occurs in Hitchcock's film.

In Lowndes' *The Lodger*, successful characters (successful on their own terms, at least) value first-hand information above all. Lowndes depicts a news media that is overly eager to capitalize on the Avenger murders and a police force that is too

unwieldy to capture a lone man. Instead, the narrative action is centered around the characters of Mr. Sleuth and Mrs. Bunting, whose modes of embodied agency uniquely enable them to develop their own systems of knowledge. However, neither of these systems of knowledge are fully accessible to readers, leaving questions concerning Mr. Sleuth's "religious mania" as well as Mrs. Bunting's unwavering sympathy towards her Lodger unresolved. In Hitchcock's adaptation of Lowndes' novel, these systems of knowledge are recontextualized and reconfigured in the tropes of the Avenger triangle and the "golden curls" marker. In Lowndes' novel, then, the Avenger triangle is already figured as a domain of knowledge, a domain of knowledge that is contrasted to a feminine system of knowledge centered on the embodied experiences of female characters. In Hitchcock's adaptation, these domains of knowledge are recontextualized and reconfigured as two contrasting tropes: the Avenger triangle and the "golden curls" marker.

**Hitchcock's Liminal Avenger**

In George Bluestone's seminal text on adaptation, *Novels into Film*, he compares the novel and the film's capacities to produce meaning. In novels, words are "filtered through the screen of conceptual apprehension" (20), expanding the novel's communicative power by utilizing the reader's own imagination. In contrast, "the moving picture comes to us directly through perception" (20), and so the cinematic trope must be achieved by other means. Bluestone describes embodiment as a critical method by which to produce unexpected meaning, or as Bluestone refers to them, "plastic comments" (26): "No one carries on conversation with objects, and that is why an actor's relationship to objects is of special interest to the film technician. Within the composition of the frame, the juxtaposition of man and object becomes crucial" (26).

Bluestone goes on to argue for the importance of the close-up, writing that "The face becomes another kind of object in space, a terrain on which may be enacted dramas as broad as battles, and sometimes more intense" (27).

*The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* serves as an apt example of the ways that the body on screen, and its relation to objects within its environment, bear a heightened importance in film. The film opens by lending the audience the Avenger's perspective as they murder a young woman. While Lowndes' Avenger performs his interpretation of scripture on female bodies, linking embodiment to a hermeneutics of literature, Hitchcock's Avenger shares perspectives with the audience and the camera, linking the Avenger's embodiment to a hermeneutics of cinema.

The Avenger's embodiment is unique within the film. In a practical sense, the Avenger is never truly embodied, as they never appear on screen and are never portrayed by an actor. Although a witness describes the Avenger as being "Tall" with "his face all wrapped up" (3:30), the Avenger's identity is never revealed. Thus, unlike in Lowndes' novel, in which the Avenger's motives are explicated through the character of Mr. Sleuth, Hitchcock's Avenger remains an abstract entity that is only identifiable through the triangular calling card and instances of sexualized violence. Without a singular embodied identity, any character on screen has the potential to reveal themselves as an Avenger, and to better understand the film's villain viewers are left to analyze the visual designs of the Avenger murders and the triangular calling card and to scrutinize the behavior of characters who *do* appear on screen.

Like Mr. Sleuth, whose own domain of informed movement transgresses socio-normative boundaries, Hitchcock's Avenger exhibits a freedom of movement that is unparalleled by other characters in the film: the Avenger is able to manipulate diegetic objects on the screen (both inanimate and animate) from outside the screen's boundaries

(see fig. 1). This shot, with the woman's head filling the frame, and her eyes and mouth opened wide in a terrified scream, is one that is reiterated three more times in the film. Its reiteration, and the camera's insistence on capturing this expression in close detail, makes a trope of the female victim and suggests that there is something to be gained in the study of her expression. Perhaps, like Mr. Sleuth's handbag which contains something "procured with infinite difficulty" (13), this view in and of itself is a partial reward for the Avenger's actions. However, with the audience and the Avenger sharing perspectives, it is clear that this view is not intended for the Avenger alone.

Fig. 1. The murder of a blonde woman in the opening scene of *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1:57).

By manipulating the diegetic world such that it becomes an enticing spectacle, effectively setting the film into motion, the Avenger acts on the viewer's behalf. Perhaps, as Rothman writes, "the Avenger enacts what to us can only be a fantasy—that of entering the world of the film and presenting ourselves to be viewed" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 8). While Rothman does not use the word 'embodiment,' the relations between the Avenger, the viewer, and the embodied characters on screen become key to

his conceptualization of this scene. The Avenger, allied with the camera, simulates the viewer's transgressive entry into the film's world, inhabiting the space between our world and the film's, yet unable to fully materialize in either.

The Avenger's entry into the film's world is predicated on murder and on reiterating the screaming woman trope. The camera's movements in capturing the Avenger's murders are repetitious and methodic, establishing a visual language of murder. Each murder scene (of which there are three) begins with a close-up shot of the victim's up-turned, screaming face, then shows her body on the ground, and ends by showing the discovery of the Avenger's calling card on her body. In these moments, the camera acts as a co-author to the Avenger's work, conveying only that which the Avenger intends for us to see. The victim's expression is used to indicate the Avenger's presence, but also to proliferate the trope of the Avenger victim, furthering the series of visual markers which oppose the "GOLDEN CURLS" marker and the blonde women associated with it.

This configuration of camera, female body, and viewer, in which the assault of young, blonde women serves as a visual spectacle for both the Avenger and the film's audience, would seem to exemplify the theory of film spectatorship established in Laura Mulvey's 1975 paper, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Certainly, the Avenger and the blonde victims correspond to the "active/male and passive/female" roles which Mulvey asserts comprise the "pleasure in looking" in Hollywood cinema (19). Aside from convincing challenges to "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" by critics like Clifford T. Manlove and Susan White, however, and reconsiderations of feminism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and Hitchcock by critics like Tania Modleski, the signifying mechanisms of the Avenger and the Avenger victim in *The Lodger* are not adequately explicated by frameworks centered on gendered embodiments and gendered

experiences of pleasure. To determine that the Avenger's murder of blonde women is an expression of a particularly masculine desire and, moreover, that the images coinciding with those murders correspond to "the neurotic needs of the male ego" (*The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* 26) would be to treat these signifying markers as being static rather than fluid, in suspension, and constantly shifting in relation to disparate contexts.

Because the Avenger is never embodied on screen and the question of what the murder of blonde women is meant to avenge is never addressed, the Avenger remains an abstract, non-material entity. Further, in the images produced by the Avenger murders, which emphasize the sexualized violence resulting in the coinciding of the Avenger and the "GOLDEN CURLS" marker, the victim's upturned face always indicates that which lies beyond the frame of the screen. The Avenger moniker marks designs which exceed the material realm of the film, manifesting only in images and in the gestures and embodiments elicited from Avenger victims. Rather than merely being characterized as a fetishizing and arresting male gaze, the Avenger comes to indicate a (notably non-gendered) visual and geographic schema that, despite its intangible nature, frames nearly every act of the male and female characters on screen.

In addition to the Avenger's abstract, triangular calling card, the unknowable aspects of the Avenger's designs are also suggested by a scene depicting two charts of the Avenger murders on two distinct maps. In this scene, we are shown detective Joe and his colleagues studying the Avenger murders on their map, then we are shown either the Lodger or the Avenger (it isn't certain) indicating the location of the next Avenger murder on their own map (see fig. 2).

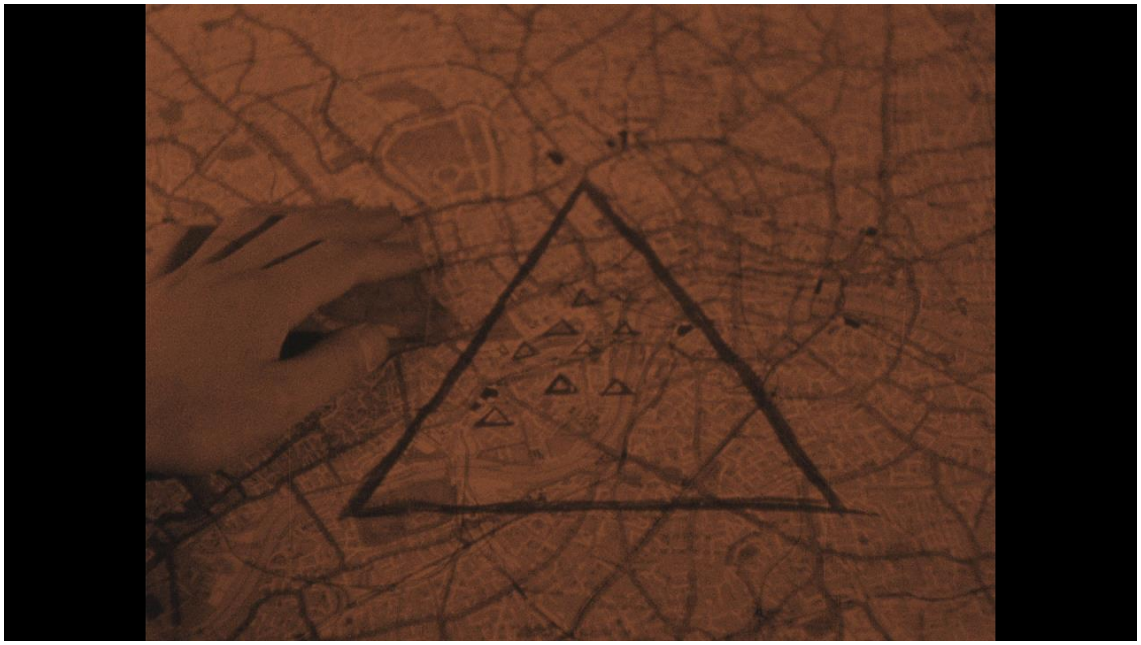

Fig. 2. A sequence which compares detective Joe's map of the Avenger murders to that of either the Lodger's or the Avenger's (50:20).

The detectives use circles to mark the Avenger murders and have outlined an area of potential crimes with a shape that resembles a heart. The detectives' outline recalls an earlier moment in which Joe displays his love for Daisy with an uncooked, heart-shaped cookie. When Daisy rejects his offer, Joe tears the cookie in half to show his injury. On the map, only half of the heart shape is filled with circles, echoing Joe's unrequited love for Daisy, and linking the detectives' manhunt to traditional, socio-normative conceptions of romance. When the circles and swooping outline of the detectives' map is contrasted to the careful arrangement of triangles on the next map, we are once again reminded of the apparent opposition between the Avenger and the "GOLDEN CURLS" marker. The map which follows is aromantic and almost mathematic. The map shows that the Avenger's murders follow a methodical, southward trajectory, suggesting that the murders are planned such that the bodies of blonde victims fulfill the Avenger's geographic design. To continue borrowing Warkentin's phrase, these sequences indicate a system of knowledge alternative to that

of the detectives or even the general public. Further, unlike in the case of Lowndes' Mr. Sleuth, this system of knowledge is only hinted at—its logic, the embodied agent(s) facilitating its proliferation, and the extent of its reach are kept largely beyond the audience's grasp.

**Accidents and Strategic Embodiments**

In relation to the Lodger, Daisy, and Joe, the Avenger is something of a specter, an entity that is not localized within a specific embodiment and that seems to always be lurking just beyond the frame of the film. The Avenger's reach from behind the camera transgresses the formal limitations imposed on other characters, and the knowledge of his presence haunts the world of the film. Given that the Avenger never manifests as an embodied entity on screen, we are left to scrutinize the movements of the characters who *do* appear on screen. Throughout the film, the Lodger, Daisy, and Joe each betray ulterior motives, missteps, and vulnerabilities. Often, the environment itself alerts viewers to the instability of the roles these characters play, hinting towards the possibility of their slipping into other roles, namely, the roles of the psychopathic killer or the numbered victim.

This instability is most clearly illustrated by a series of four accidents in the film. In these accidents, the bodies on screen behave as though they were reacting to a hidden knowledge of the Avenger's presence. While these accidents are a practical means of startling viewers, encouraging them to believe that the Avenger may manifest at any moment, they also illustrate the ways in which Hitchcock challenges the audience's trust in the main characters. In the course of these mishaps, there are hints that the characters involved know more than they let on, or that their reaction is, in part, an exaggerated performance designed to elicit a particular response from other characters.

An investigation of these moments promises to further reveal the ways that embodied performances mark subtextual knowledge in *The Lodger*.

The first of these four accidents coincides with the Lodger's arrival to the Buntings' home. Initially, the Lodger is the only suspect available to the audience, and his manner and appearance in this scene strongly link him to the Avenger. He arrives to the Buntings' house shrouded in fog, wearing a long coat, a hat, and a scarf wrapped around his face, perfectly matching the description of the Avenger, and only an hour after the previous Avenger murder was reported to have happened. At the same time, we see that the boarding house is unlucky number 13, and upon arriving, the lamp in the hallway grows dim. To further emphasize the Lodger's dubious nature, Mr. Bunting, while standing on a chair and reaching towards several bottles of alcohol, tumbles to the floor (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3. The Lodger's arrival to the Buntings' home coincides with Mr. Bunting's fall and is punctuated by the chiming of a cuckoo clock (15:50).

This scene establishes several of the film's recurrent tropes—that of the Lodger behaving in a self-incriminating manner, an accident denoting the possibility of, or

perhaps standing in for, an act of malice, and environmental cues which appear to mark the Avenger's presence. The Lodger's movements, with his hand held defensively across his chest and his gaze searching the Bunting's home, suggest that he is paranoid and emotionally troubled. Although we will be told that he is, in fact, hunting for the Avenger himself, his decision to don the Avenger's avatar (it can't have been accidental, as we are later given reason to believe that he has a privileged knowledge of the serial killer), also reveals a perverse aspect of the hero's nature. The Lodger embodies the Avenger role, imitating the entity he claims to hunt, and betraying a hidden knowledge of the killer.

Mr. Bunting's accident similarly illustrates the ways in which bodies come to mark subtextual activity. Unlike Lowndes' Mrs. Bunting, whose body reacts to her own subconscious knowledge, Hitchcock's Mr. Bunting has not seen the visitor at the door, and so could not reasonably suspect them of posing any danger. Mr. Bunting conveys information which his character cannot access, and his body reacts to this extradiegetic knowledge as though it were a ghostly presence.

Mr. Bunting's accident is coincidental, and to make a connection between his fall and the Lodger's arrival is to participate in superstition. Extra-diegetically, however, the fall clearly emphasizes the significance of the Lodger's entrance into the home. This is in part illustrated by the cuckoo clock, which visually and aurally punctuates the accident. While the 'cuckoo' sound is left to the viewer's imagination to produce, it nonetheless acts as a kind of anthropomorphic laughter and anticipates Daisy's amusement at her father's misfortune. The cuckoo clock also establishes a firm chronology, leaving viewers to infer the Lodger's movements in the time leading up to his arrival as well as to anticipate the Avenger's next move.

The second accident occurs at 25:30, in a scene in which Daisy and the Lodger play chess. As we have seen in the Lodger's arrival to the Buntings' home, the film develops tension by suggesting that the Lodger may be the Avenger and that Daisy may be his next victim. In the game of chess, however, Daisy proves to be a formidable adversary who both anticipates the Lodger's moves and works towards her own win state. As Bluestone asserts, in film the face becomes "a terrain on which may be enacted dramas as broad as battles" (27), and Hitchcock makes this metaphor explicit. By alternating shots of the Lodger and Daisy's mutual gaze with shots of the chess board, Hitchcock illustrates the power dynamics of a relationship that has potential for both violence and romance. We are shown enough of the chess board to know that the Lodger has been given the white pieces, giving him the advantage of the first move, yet the pieces on the board tell only half of the story. Daisy and the Lodger hold one another's gaze, and the Lodger expresses his infatuation with Daisy with the line "Beautiful golden hair" (27:56). The Lodger's obsession clearly puts him at a disadvantage, while also aligning him more closely to the Avenger, whose victims are solely blonde women.

The mishap in question occurs when Daisy knocks several of her own pieces onto the floor. This prompts the Lodger to bend down to help her, but he is distracted by the fire poker (see fig. 4). Here, the Lodger and Daisy are inattentive to each other's movements, each giving the other an opportunity to take advantage. The Lodger uses this opportunity to play the role of the Avenger, pointing the fire poker towards Daisy in a gesture that is both violent and phallic. While the Lodger's attention is occupied with stoking the fire (fire being another form of golden curls which associates blonde hair with light and warmth), Daisy is able to rearrange her chess pieces unobserved.

Fig. 4. The Lodger is distracted by a fire poker (26:10).

The manners in which Daisy and the Lodger compete reveal Daisy's subtle yet apparently conscious embodiment of the "golden curls" blonde, allowing the Lodger's infatuation with her appearance to distract him from the game at hand. While the Lodger's desire is plainly read in his facial expressions and through his manipulation of the fire poker, Daisy's intentions are subtler. Daisy smiles confidently when she takes the Lodger's pawn, impatiently taps her fingers while the Lodger contemplates his next move, and remains passive while the Lodger touches her hair, neither reciprocating nor rejecting the Lodger's advance. It is Daisy's calculated manipulation of the chess pieces, rather than her embodied movements, which mark her as no mere object of desire, but as a capable adversary with strategies of her own. The Lodger may make the first move, both in romance and in the game of chess, but Daisy seems to maintain command of the board.

Directly after the chess scene, Daisy is coerced into playing another game with Joe. Joe shows off a pair of handcuffs which he refers to as "A brand new pair of bracelets for the Avenger" (28:57) and proclaims, "When I've put a rope round the

Avenger's neck, I'll put a ring round Daisy's finger" (29:35). He then playfully chases Daisy with the handcuffs, placing Daisy in the precarious position of playing the role of both the Avenger and the potential marriage partner. Daisy appears to enjoy the chase, but when she finds the cuffs clasped around her wrists, she becomes upset—the stakes of the game have become too real.[2]

Joe's comments, which equate the Avenger's death with his marriage to Daisy, apply to the game of chess, as well, wherein the outcome portends marriage and/or death. In chess, however, power is equally distributed between both players, and moves are represented by small, inanimate, figures. Joe's game of chase pits his body against Daisy's, and when he binds her wrists, Daisy finds herself intolerably close to embodying the role of the Avenger. To escape, Daisy plays the role of the helpless victim. This forces Joe to act as the supplicant boyfriend rather than the authoritative tyrant and tilts the balance of power back towards Daisy. After receiving an apologetic kiss from Joe Daisy happily returns upstairs, presumably to resume her game of chess with the Lodger, a game at which she has a fairer chance at winning.

The third notable mishap occurs at 41:15, just after another Avenger murder has been discovered. The accident is conveyed in primarily four shots: a tray of coffee and sandwiches falls to the floor, we see a close-up of Daisy's screaming face, a portrait of a blonde woman falls, and Joe, responding to Daisy's scream, rises from the head of the table (see fig. 5).

[2] In a chapter of *Hitchcock's Cryptonomies: Volume 1. Secret Agents* entitled "A User's Guide," Tom Cohen notes that, "The cuffs bear a double-O or spool insignia (bicycles, spectacles, infinite eight). They enchain the hands, figures of human technicity or writing" (55). See also Michael Walker's discussion on handcuffs in *The Lodger* on pages 214 and 215 of *Hitchcock's Motifs*.

Fig. 5. The table in the Lodger's room falls to the floor, Daisy screams, and a portrait of a blonde woman falls (41:55).

This sequence gives the audience every reason to believe that the Lodger has finally revealed himself to be the Avenger. Directly after the portrait falls, and as Joe rises from his seat, Hitchcock even allows for a pair of shadowy legs to be seen passing by the window above Joe's head, as though to intone that a villain or an accomplice were fleeing the scene. The falling portrait recalls Mr. Bunting's earlier fall in that it is used to convey extradiegetic information. The falling portrait suggests that the drama of whatever occurred off-screen has shaken the very walls of the house, while also acting as an explicit metaphor for the Avenger murders. Like the cuckoo clock, the portrait also has an anthropomorphic quality—the painted woman's gaze meets the camera, and the frame's wire forms a triangle which points up towards the Lodger's room in an accusatory manner. Because the falling portrait immediately follows Daisy's enactment of the screaming woman trope, it also acts as a kind of stand-in or double, crudely illustrating a moment which the camera has thus far failed to record—that of the victim's fall.

However, when Joe arrives to the Lodger's room, he finds Daisy and the Lodger in a laughing embrace, and Daisy explains that she was "silly enough to be scared by a mouse" (42:50). The audience, having been equally misled into worrying over Daisy's safety, may share Joe's frustration. Joe, who has both romantic and professional motives for playing the hero, finds himself in an impossible situation. Not only is Joe's heroic moment stolen from him by the Lodger, but it is also clear that he is losing Daisy's interest. When Joe enters the room, Daisy remains in the Lodger's arms, her hands clasped around the Lodger's neck in a clearly romantic embrace. Daisy and the Lodger's embrace lasts longer than it needs to and establishes Daisy's lack of commitment to Joe's plans for her, much to Joe's displeasure. Daisy then takes offense to Joe's jealousy, publicly denying Joe any right to question her involvement with other men. Nonetheless, she allows Joe to apologize to her, and the couple reconcile with a kiss.

Daisy twice plays the role of blonde victim. In both cases she reproduces the trope of the screaming woman, and in both cases her scream initiates a confrontation between the Lodger and Joe. Daisy's embodiment of the role of the helpless victim enables her to manipulate those around her, giving hints that her embodied movements, whether by conscious design or not, follow an ulterior logic. It is not clear how much of the Avenger Daisy understands, but if the Avenger systematically produces the screaming face trope, then Daisy can be said to reappropriate that trope for her own means. If Daisy's fear is disingenuous, or even exaggerated, then her navigation of embodied roles betrays a deeper knowledge of the nature of the Avenger murders.

All of these mishaps raise doubts concerning the authenticity of the embodied identities of those on screen. The Lodger dons the Avenger's avatar and enjoys employing the gestures and innuendos of a villain and Daisy employs the role of the

victim to manipulate both the Lodger and Joe. Further, the camera takes care to show certain, minute, details (such as the pattern of triangles in the falling painting and in the chandelier, and the details of the chess game) and yet fails to record the Avenger's face, let alone the supposed mouse in the Lodger's room. The detective, too, is corrupted with conflicting interests, finding himself in the convenient position of both competing with the Lodger for Daisy's affection while also having legitimate reasons to suspect him of being the Avenger. Each of these characters embody certain incompatible roles that nevertheless advance their own motivations.

**Structures, Geography, and Myth**

The last mishap occurs in the film's final scene, which is set in Daisy and the Lodger's new home. Superficially, this scene resolves many of the film's threads. The Lodger has been officially cleared of guilt, and he and Daisy have moved into a mansion. Daisy appears to have made a painless transition to Britain's upper class, and gives her parents, who stand nervously near the entrance to the room, directions on how to behave. Daisy's upscale clothing further shows the extent of her transformation—rather than using her body to help produce and market a particular fantasy, Daisy has become the genuine article. Economically, socially, and aesthetically, Daisy is the authentic embodiment of that fantasy.

Upon closer inspection, however, the material and geographic details embedded in the Lodger's mansion provide hints that the Avenger crimes, and the logic behind them, are not entirely left in the past. The first, most obvious hint comes when Mr. Bunting slips and nearly falls on the marble floor, echoing the first accident in which Mr. Bunting falls from the ladder as the Lodger enters their home (see fig. 6).

Fig. 6. Mr. Bunting slips upon greeting Daisy and the Lodger in their new home (1:28:15).

This near miss highlights the class differences on display: Mr. Bunting is nervous in the Lodger's mansion, and his hesitant, shuffling steps are contrasted to the Lodger's graceful, practiced movements. The navigation of the material and social structures of the upper class poses risks for outsiders. The accident also suggests that, while the most pressing dangers have been evaded, possibilities for destabilizing change are ever-present. This instability is further indicated by the dark smudge on Daisy's front tooth in the final shot of the film. This is a reference to the Lodger's forgotten toothbrush which was returned to him by Mrs. Bunting, and the fact that Daisy's teeth are unclean may suggest a deep intimacy between she and the Lodger. The smudge is also a sign, however, that Daisy has not emerged from the Avenger ordeal unblemished.

Another indication of unresolved issues comes in the form of Big Ben and the flashing sign, "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS," that appear in the window behind them. The inclusion of these structures highlights Daisy and the Lodger's geographic distance from the scenes of the Avenger murders, while also suggesting that the issues

of sexuality, violence, and exhibitionism which surround those murders are still within sight (see fig. 7).


Fig. 7. Daisy's and the Lodger's final kiss (1:29:17).

For the first time, the "Golden Curls" sign appears not as an intertitle but as a geographically localized structure, and shares screen space with Daisy and the Lodger. We may even see, if only faintly, the building's well-lit doorway beneath the sign, looking from a distance quite similar to the blonde portraits once banished from the Lodger's room. Big Ben stands next to the "Golden Curls" building, marking the location of the Palace of Westminster, but also marking and broadcasting Greenwich Mean Time throughout the city of London, the ultimate in a series of clocks used to mark diegetic time throughout the film. Appearing at an angle, and topped with a pyramidal roof, its clock faces glow from the distance like an omniscient pair of eyes, effecting an omniscient, authoritative presence. These buildings serve to track the geographic and ideological origins of Daisy and the Lodger's relationship, as well as their eastward trajectory across the river Thames.

As discussed earlier, the maps belonging to the Lodger and the Scotland Yard detectives reveal different systems of knowledge and different conceptions of romantic relations. While the detectives use a heart-shaped outline and circles to mark the area of the Avenger's activities, the Lodger uses only triangles. Interestingly, they also anticipate different locations for the next murder, with the Lodger marking an area south, near Vauxhall Bridge Road, and the detectives marking an area east across the river from Big Ben and Westminster Palace. From the perspective of this final scene, the detectives' prediction of the next Avenger murder is roughly the same location of Daisy and the Lodger's new home. While the audience cannot be expected to make this connection upon a first viewing (or even multiple viewings), the emphasis on explicit geographic locations links the Avenger murders, which are carefully plotted and sequenced according to an undisclosed logic, to Daisy and the Lodger's new home. The Lodger's mansion is the site of a projected murder, and as such it marks the geographic and ideological crossroads of normative and radically non-normative sexual relations.

Lesley W. Brill reads *The Lodger* through a mythological lens, arguing that Daisy serves as a kind of Persephone figure to the Avenger's Hades. In this reading, the neighborhood surrounding the Buntings' home is likened to the underworld, and Daisy is "carried up from the persistently shadowy world of her parents' flat to the brilliant mansion in which she clearly belongs" (86). This mythic understanding of *The Lodger* explicates themes of fertility and birth from the "Golden Curls" marker. Like Persephone, who eats the seed of the pomegranate and is thereby obliged to spend part of the year in the underworld (Gantz 65), Daisy's stained teeth indicate that she, too, has partaken in something forbidden which indelibly links her to the Avenger's designs. Brill's comparison of the Avenger to a being that is "invisible and not able to be propitiated by sacrifice" is also apt, particularly when Brill writes that the Avenger

"seems to rise up from the underworld and disappear as abruptly as he came" (86). While Brill reads *The Lodger*'s underworld as pertaining to the streets surrounding the Buntings' neighborhood, it is also tempting to read the underworld as that place between the world of the screen and the world of its audience, a liminal space from which the Avenger draws attention to issues inherent in the production and consumption of film.

The on-screen space which most closely approximates *The Lodger*'s underworld, and what that underworld portends for the Avenger and their blonde victims, requires further exploration. Certainly, the very title of the film—*The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*—denotes the dark, murky, streets in which the Avenger's murders primarily take place. That said, the Buntings' home, particularly its kitchen, is depicted as a place of literal and figurative warmth. The Buntings' kitchen serves as a familial domain where food is cooked, news is shared, and romantic possibilities emerge. In contrast, the Lodger's grandiose mansion dwarfs its occupants and is comparatively bereft of personal effects. The mansion is constructed of stone and marble, as opposed to the wood and carpeting in the Bunting's home. The opulent fireplace, which is the focal point of the room (and the scene), remains unlit and a bear skin rug lays in front of it, further marking this as a space void of life. Atop the mantle sits a black elephant clock, surrounded by two ornate vases. The elephant most immediately conjures imagery of the ivory trade, which sees elephants hunted for their tusks in a similar manner to the way the blonde victim is hunted for her "Golden Curls." Finally, the presence of a servant indicates that the preparation and consumption of food is detached from its communal aspect. The social distinction between host and lodger in the Buntings' home is taken to its extreme in the Lodger's mansion, which is seen in the butler's short walk across the room. The butler's body language is calculated and

deliberate, masking his interiority in order to more effectively fulfill the role of a servant. It is a type of embodiment once employed by Daisy herself, a trained movement which subsumes individuality in service of producing a more socially and economically valued image.

The Lodger's sterile mansion is more evocative of an underworld than the London streets. The emphasis on the mansion being located on the other side of a great river reinforces this theory, and Daisy and the Lodger's embrace in front of the Thames may be read as Hades and Persephone lording over the river Styx. Afterall, Persephone is not only a herald of spring, but, as classical scholar Timothy Gantz notes, she also "seems to share Hades' powers and control over the dead" (64). In this configuration, the myth is only halfway told and Daisy's seclusion in the mansion, away from her parents' home, is something of a non-death. This non-death fulfills the Detectives' prediction of a murder occurring in the area surrounding the mansion, and metaphorizes the perversion of sexual relations suggested by the Lodger's map. Daisy's brief and appropriative embodiments of the blonde victim never cause lasting harm, and her attachment to an Avenger-like figure (the Lodger) imbues Daisy with no small amount of authority (for example, over her parents or over the servants in the mansion). Daisy might be read as the non-victim, one who, by suffering an impermanent death, is able exercise authority over her own objectification and victimization.

This reconfiguration of Brill's mythological reading of the film also encourages an exploration of the ways in which the Lodger may be seen as a villainous, Hades-like figure. While the film shows Joe being told that "The real Avenger was taken red-handed" (1:23:34), thus forestalling any declaration that the Lodger (and actor Ivor Novello) is *the* Avenger, the Lodger is certainly an Avenger *type*. As Yacowar writes, "He may not be *the* Avenger, but he aspires to be *an* avenger" (*Hitchcock's British*

*Films* 26). The Lodger's map demonstrates his intimate understanding of the Avenger's logic and movements, and at times, the Lodger dresses, moves, and speaks in an Avenger-like manner. Finally, the camera's illicit cooperation with the film's murderer, which ensures that we never see the Avenger's face, let alone the scene of their capture by the police, warrants no small amount of audience mistrust.

**Inscribed Guilt**

Visual omissions and behavioral inconsistencies undermine the narrative's insistence on the Lodger's innocence and on the stability of he and Daisy's domestic future. Brill asserts that "The mild suggestions of tarnish on the hero of *The Lodger* must not be exaggerated, however, or the central themes of the film are rendered incoherent" (92). However, in response to Brill, Richard Allen points out that "The Lodger's attraction for Daisy clearly consists in what sets him apart from 'the average Joe', [*sic*] and what sets him apart from Joe places him in proximity with the Avenger. The heroine's desire for a romantic hero, a true gentleman, contains within it a desire for that which lurks beneath the gentleman's benign exterior" ("Hitchcock, or The Pleasures of Metaskepticism" 391). While it would be an overstatement to declare the Lodger and the Avenger as being equally culpable or morally corrupt, associations between the Lodger and the Avenger, and Daisy with the golden curls marker, are central to not only the development of these characters but to the ways that the Avenger triangle and golden curls marker signify throughout the film. In this light, it is particularly important to note scenes which bar viewers from completely absolving the Lodger of guilt. If the golden curls marker and the Avenger denote modes of sexual exhibition and a mode of transgressive, sexualized violence that responds to that exhibition, then the Lodger's transgressive and suspicious behaviors towards Daisy situate this romance as a central

vehicle through which these modes of embodiment and expression manifest. The question of the Lodger's guilt is subtly navigated throughout the film and the extremes of his wavering ethics are in deliberate excess of casual dismissal.

There are two particular scenes which ensure that the Lodger's guilt is not easily resolved. In the first scene we see that it is raining heavily, indicating that it is an unlikely night for the Avenger to commit another murder. Daisy is taking a bath downstairs, and the Lodger approaches the bathroom door (see fig. 8). Here, the Lodger's furtive attempts to open the closed bathroom door produce the image of an obsessive Avenger-like. Before his approach, we see that Daisy is singing, making it clear that the Lodger is aware of her presence inside the room, and leaving us to assume that the Lodger had hoped to catch her off guard.

Fig. 8. The Lodger attempts to intrude on Daisy's bath (56:10).

The camera lends us both the Lodger and Daisy's perspectives. We assume the Lodger's position when the Lodger's hand, cut off from his body, tries the doorknob. This shot echoes the shots which convey the Avenger's murders, in that they both put the audience in positions of culpability. Contrasted to the Lodger's perspective, which

appropriates the film's visual language of serial murder, is a view inside of an intimate female space. The first shot frames Daisy in the bathtub, visible only from the shoulders up. Directly behind her is the bathroom door, emphasizing the presence on the other side. The second shot grants us Daisy's perspective and shows her legs and feet playing in the water. Daisy appears to delight in the manipulation of her own body, and her feet make small ripples in the water, causing the light to dance and reflect in the bath—another manifestation of "Golden Curls." However, while the "GOLDEN CURLS" marker is, from its first appearance in the film, associated with the exhibition of young, blonde women, Daisy's performance in the bath is intended only for herself.

Daisy's bath recalls the dressing room scenes from earlier in the film, in which the models are caught applying and removing the cultural markers (stockings, wigs, makeup, etc.) which construct the fantasies they are meant to convey. Here, Daisy is without any material cultural markers, yet her embodied movements, with the camera's cooperation, nonetheless produce a rendition of the exhibitionist blonde. Daisy's playful movements, coupled with her singing, suggest a reflexive performance. That Daisy's feet are isolated, cut off from her body in much the same manner as the Lodger's hand, suggests their mutual embodiments of corresponding roles. As Rothman notes, it is "an intimate, erotic image" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 32), but it also acts as a counterpart to the Avenger's perspective. If the shots which comprise the Avenger's murders systematically elicit and record a particular expression of the blonde victim which concurrently obscures her body, Daisy reemphasizes and reclaims that which has been obscured.

The bathroom scene makes it clear that the Lodger intended to violate a highly intimate and vulnerable feminine space. Moreover, the camera records this attempted intrusion using the visual language of the Avenger murders, which visually divides the

human subject into distinct parts. Like the Avenger murders, the Lodger's and Daisy's desires are depicted by way of compartmentalizing their bodies, drawing their specific embodied movements into question by isolating them from the subject as a whole. While the Lodger's attempt to peek at Daisy in the bath is in no way commensurable to the Avenger's murders, it nonetheless reveals a predatory aspect of his character and further aligns him with the film's villain.

The second scene of interest is one in which the Lodger explains to Daisy his motives for hunting the Avenger. In a flashback sequence, the Lodger tells Daisy that his sister was murdered by the Avenger at her own "coming-out ball" (1:17:26) and that his mother made him swear to avenge her death. The ball is held in a bright, spacious hall, with ornate, golden, railings twisted in circular, curling designs in the foreground, and a pair of narrow, arched, doorways to the side. A pair of dark-haired women exit the ball room just before a hand switches off the lights, the Lodger's sister cries and falls to the floor, and a crowd forms around her (see fig. 9).

Fig. 9. A flashback depicts the murder of the Lodger's sister at her coming out ball (1:18:10).

Before discussing the questions this sequence raises concerning the Lodger's guilt, it is important to note the ways this flashback expands upon tropes associated with the Avenger and the "GOLDEN CURLS" marker. Immediately, the twin arched doorways to the right of the ball room and the curved, ornate designs in the building's windows are reminiscent of the curved portals and circuitous pathway of the model show floor. If the golden curls intertitle denotes a particular mode of blonde exhibition which is linked to Daisy by her work as a model, the Lodger's sister's "coming-out ball"—a celebration of the sister having become an eligible romantic partner—is also a venue for the exhibition of feminine sexuality and a referent of the golden curls marker. The golden curls descriptor is evoked in the sweeping, spiral-like movements of the dancing couples in the brightly lit hall,[3] which, in turn, recall the movements of Daisy and her fellow models as they walk in a circular path from one arched doorway to its twin, turning and pivoting to show their clothing as they do so. The Avenger interrupts and co-opts the sister's transition into the public sphere as a romantic object, appropriating that event for the proliferation of the Avenger's own designs, and this is visually communicated via the darkening of the hall, the sister's embodiment of the Avenger victim with head upturned and mouth agape, and the disruption of the circular movements of the dancers who immediately converge into a crowd around the sister's body. This flashback, then, serves not only as the Lodger's justification for his obsessive hunt for the Avenger, not only as an account of the inaugural Avenger murder, but as an elaboration on the relationship between the impetuses of the Avenger avatar and those of the golden curls marker.

[3] The shot of dancing couples in this flashback sequence is notably similar to the shots of dancing couples in the opening credits of Hitchcock's 1946 film, *Shadow of a Doubt* (00:30) and to the sequence in which protagonist John "Scottie" Ferguson dances with Judy Barton in *Vertigo* (1:46:04). An explication of this visual motif in its various iterations in Hitchcock films may reveal similar concerns over disparate modes of embodiment and the exhibition feminine sexuality.

The ways that the Lodger's flashback informs and expands upon configurations of the Avenger avatar and the golden curls marker are inextricable from the ambiguous ways in which it frames the Lodger's guilt/innocence. Despite ostensibly serving as an appeal to Daisy's and the audience's sympathies, this flashback fails to account for the Lodger's movements and location during and after his sister's murder. Once again, and now coinciding with the most crucial exposition of the Lodger's guilt throughout the film, the camera confuses the audience's relationship between the Avenger, the Lodger, and the events on screen.

The ambiguity of the Lodger's flashback clearly serves Hitchcock's desire for the Lodger's guilt to be left unresolved, but it also further emphasizes the Avenger's seemingly privileged relationship to the camera and raises questions concerning the perspective which the camera conveys in cinematizing the Lodger's memory of his sister's murder. If the flashback is taken as a faithful cinematic recreation of the Lodger's oral history, then the omission of key details may be attributed to the Lodger. However, it is unclear whether the camera portrays a subjective or objective perspective, first capturing the Lodger and his sister at a close distance before panning back to reveal its position outside a window, as though to indicate the diegetic presence of an unseen voyeur. David Bordwell notes, "[the flashback's] *presence* is almost invariably motivated subjectively, since a character's recollection triggers the enacted representation of a prior event. But the *range of knowledge* in the flashback portion is often not identical with that of the character doing the remembering. It is common for the flashback to show us more than the character can know" (*Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader* 25). Although Bordwell is here referring specifically to classical Hollywood cinema, his comments aptly frame the ambiguous perspective in the Lodger's flashback. Here, we are shown more *and less than* the character knows.

This is an odd amalgamation of apparently subjective and objective perspectives. The camera captures the hand which turns off the light switches but not the body belonging to it, and captures Daisy in the moment of her assault, reiterating the cinematized motif of the blonde victim, while failing to alibi the Lodger. The Lodger's flashback is communicated via the visual language associated elsewhere in the film with the Avenger, prioritizing the cinematization of the blonde victim to the exclusion of capturing a perpetrator or absolving the Lodger, and further, this flashback posits the Lodger and the Avenger as emerging into the world of the film simultaneously and in relation to the same object—that of the Lodger's deceased sister.

Even if we were shown an embodied Avenger, and even if we assume that the Lodger is not a murderer, the Lodger's hunt for the Avenger sees him embodying the Avenger's role by imitating the Avenger's dress and manner. In the most optimistic scenario, the Lodger, having witnessed the deaths of his mother and sister, spends weeks obsessing over the murder of his sister, studying the Avenger's eccentricities and adopting what the Lodger imagines to be their frame of mind. This projected, simulated psyche perhaps grants the Lodger insights into the Avenger's agenda, as evidenced by the Lodger's map, but it also appears to influence the Lodger's own behavior, as evidenced by his attempt to intrude upon Daisy's bath. Whether or not the Lodger's obsession with blonde hair is related to his sister's murder, the Lodger's romance with Daisy is inextricably linked to his perception of Daisy as a potential victim at the Avenger's hands.

William Rothman outlines several possibilities which would explain the Lodger's behavior. Of particular interest, Rothman speculates that the Lodger "believes himself somehow responsible for the murder, as if his sister were killed to punish him for his love for her or as if he had secretly wished her to die so he could be freed from his love

for a woman he could never possess" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 46). Rothman also suggests that the Lodger "is the Avenger's innocent, righteous enemy, but he is also the Avenger's vengeful double. He acts autonomously, but also under his mother's command. Yet the 'mother' who dominates him is his projection and creation, to be kept alive within himself" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 47). In either scenario, Daisy serves as a kind of substitute for the Lodger's deceased (blonde) mother and sister.[4] Daisy offers the Lodger a socio-normative path through his obsession with the Avenger and with the death of his family, but their relationship is nonetheless rooted in Daisy's eligibility as an Avenger victim.

The events which precede the bathroom scene further complicate the Lodger's attraction to Daisy. After visiting the boutique where Daisy works, the Lodger buys the dress he sees her modeling, but that gift is intercepted by Daisy's parents, who by this point have begun to suspect him of being the Avenger. The Lodger's pretense for going to see Daisy in the bathroom is to ensure that she wasn't offended by his gift. In gifting Daisy the dress, the Lodger reveals his desire to realize the fantasy which Daisy participates in as a model and foreshadows the end of the film wherein Daisy's embodiment of that fantasy is complete. His attempt to free a fantasy from its limited contexts and to see it enacted in the 'real' world also serves as the central theme of *Vertigo*. While the Lodger is a very different character from *Vertigo*'s John "Scottie" Ferguson, they both fetishize and attempt to (re)create a particular type of blonde woman, and their obsessions result from traumatic events in their past.

[4] Richard Allen, identifying "the feminine sensitivity of the dandy that aligns [the Lodger] with the heroine," entertains the possibility that the Lodger is, in fact, the Avenger: "His motivation then might be explained by a kind of overidentification with his sister that renders the efflorescence of her (hetero)sexuality at her coming out ball something that is intolerable to him and results in her murder by his hand" (*Hitchcock's Romantic Irony* 110).

The comparison of the Lodger to Scottie becomes even more interesting when we observe the similarities between Daisy on the boutique show floor and the Lodger's sister at her coming out ball (see figs. 9 and 10). The dress which the Lodger buys for Daisy is very similar to the one which his sister wears in the flashback which depicts her coming out ball. Both are similarly cut, somewhat sheer, and adorned with what appear to be sequins in a fleurette or curling design. Additionally, both Daisy and the Lodger's sister wear three strand pearl necklaces, and they wear their blonde hair short, with the Lodger's sister having curled her hair into buns, an image that would later come to evoke the spiral with all of its associations (most clearly, time and memory) in *Vertigo*.

Given these striking similarities, it is difficult not to read the Lodger as attempting to recapture his sister's image in Daisy. The salon in which Daisy works is itself a place where fantastical conjurations take place, where working-class women are transformed into brides, queens, Sunday picnickers, and daring partygoers. Two elves guard the arched doorways through which these women emerge, suggesting that there is something supernatural in these transformations, and that this space is free from the ordinary constraints of time and space. The room's twin portals are repeated in the Lodger's flashback sequence as a pair of closed doors outside the ballroom, linking this fantastical space to the process of storytelling and memory, and anticipating a phrase spoken by the character of Gavin Elster in *Vertigo*, "portals of the past" (15:35). Through those arched portals and along the looping path, a great variety of possible modes of embodiment are offered to visitors. By embodying these roles, the models allude to the experiences, memories, and fantasies which those roles may allow one to

access. When Daisy dresses as the Lodger's dead sister, she demonstrates her near-perfect ability to revivify the object of his obsession (see figs. 10 and 11).[5]

Fig. 10. Daisy modelling the dress which the Lodger buys for her. Daisy's appearance is remarkably similar to that of the Lodger's sister (49:20).

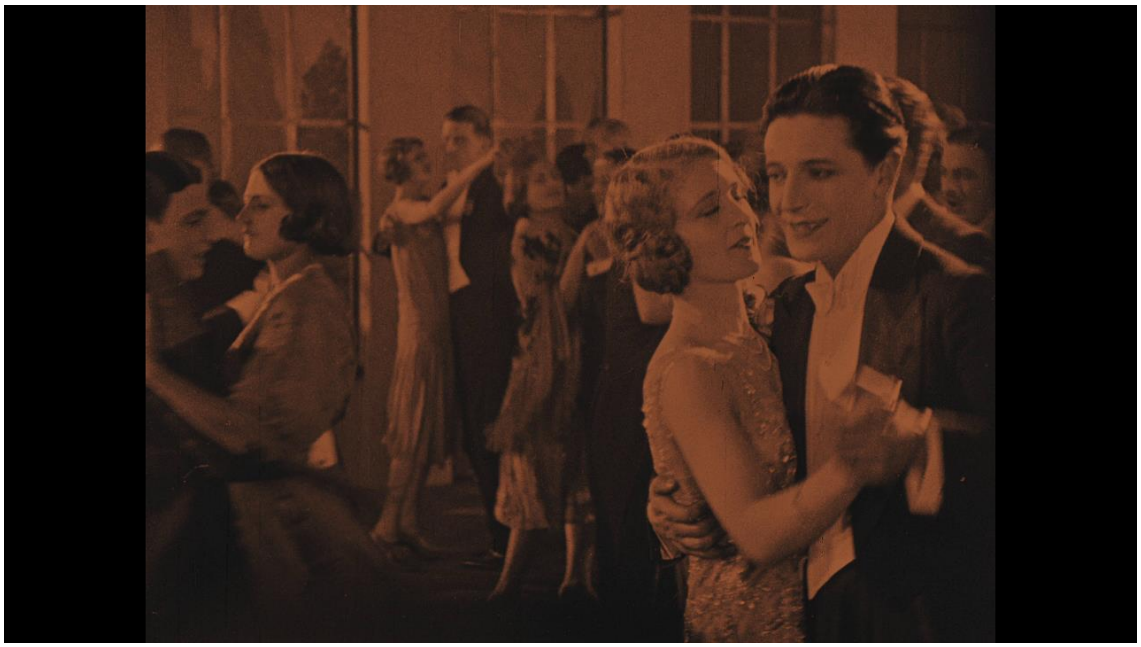

Fig. 11. The Lodger dancing with his sister at her coming out ball (1:17:45).

[5] It is worth noting that, in the scene in which the Lodger tells Daisy the story of his sister's murder, Daisy wears a horseshoe-shaped pin in her hat which strongly evokes the shape of the model show floor. This open circle is itself a kind of golden curl, a counterpart to the Avenger's triangle.

**Authenticity and Appropriation**

Authenticity and originality are central to *The Lodger*'s concerns. Upon hearing of the Avenger's penchant for blonde women, one model remarks, "No more peroxide for yours truly" (10:29). This comment highlights the danger for blonde women who inhabit the same world as the Avenger, but also makes a distinction between natural blondes and those who use chemicals to alter their appearance. Authenticity, as in the case of Daisy's naturally blonde hair, is both a commercially valued and life-endangering trait. This logic is perpetuated by the bear-skin rugs and fur coats seen in the salon, wherein the value of such items is directly related to their authenticity, that is, their status as being the genuine, sterilized remains of once living creatures.

Similar questions of authenticity surround the Lodger. The audience is tasked with determining whether the Lodger dresses, acts, and moves *like* the Avenger, or *as* the Avenger. The authenticity of the Lodger's self-presentation, which is made suspect from his first appearance in the film, runs parallel to the question of his guilt. The Lodger is also tested in ways other than appearance—Joe examines the currency the Lodger uses to pay for his room, holding them up to the light. While the Lodger's currency holds up to the Detective's scrutiny, the Lodger's embodied behavior is similar enough to that of the Avenger to warrant the suspicion of those around him. Detective Joe, the Buntings, and the public at large readily accept the Lodger as a surrogate in the Avenger's absence, and for a few cathartic moments the frustrated desires of an unruly mob are unleashed upon him.

In the Avenger's absence we are left with crude parodies, such as the man who draws his collar above his nose and mouth to frighten an eyewitness to the film's opening murder (4:00), and the model in the dressing room of Daisy's salon who wields

a knife (9:29). These facsimiles improve in fidelity as the film progresses, growing nearest to a 'real' Avenger crime in the incidents where Daisy is frightened by a mouse and where the Lodger lingers outside Daisy's bathroom door. Although the Avenger's motives remain murky, these embodied and cinematic references to the Avenger nonetheless frame considerations of violence, sex, and gender in the film. As a result, the visual language of villain and victim permeate the majority of Daisy and the Lodger's romantic scenes. Neither the camera nor the characters themselves seem able to imagine this romance progressing without the threat of violence lurking somewhere beneath the surface.

The scene in which Daisy and the Lodger first kiss is one of the best examples of the way that the Avenger's absence, and the memory of the Avenger's deeds, structures the interactions of these characters. In this scene, the couple's desires and internal conflicts appear more genuine than at any other point in the film. A long, slow shot of the Lodger approaching Daisy suggests that, in a rare moment, all pretense is dropped (see fig. 12). The Lodger's face approaches the camera for an uncomfortable fourteen seconds of film, until he is close enough that we can see the wrinkles around his eyes and the makeup on his skin. In this unsettling shot, the Lodger opens himself to the camera, revealing his vulnerabilities and deficiencies. Here, the Lodger's relationship to the camera is opposite to that of the Avenger's furtive movements beyond the reach of the camera.

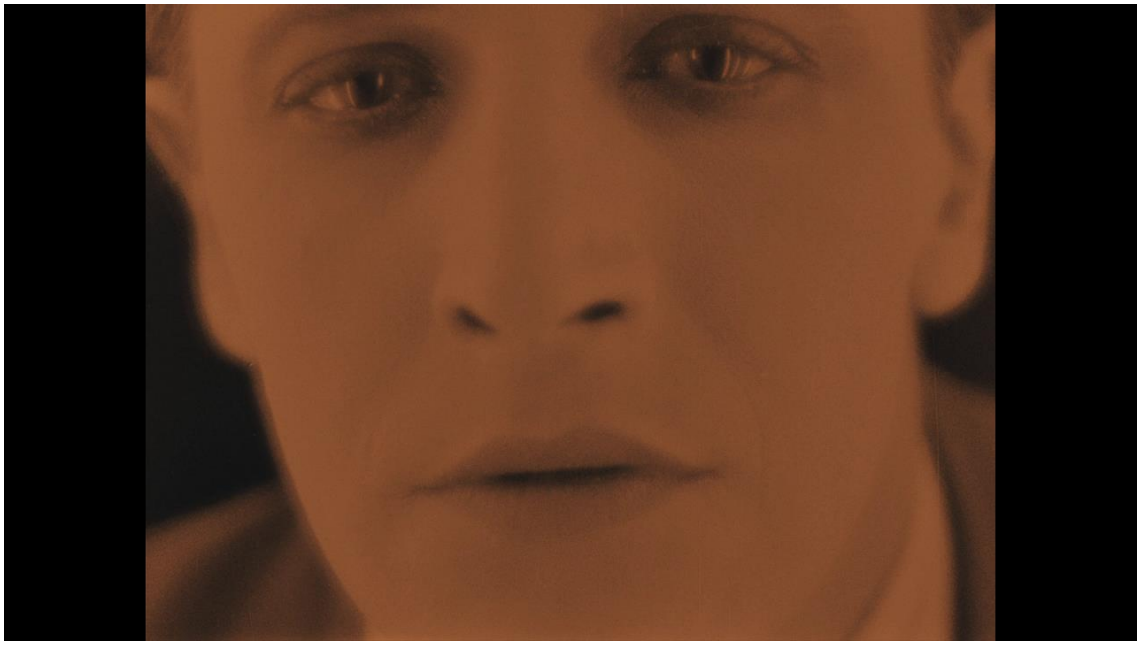

Fig. 12. The Lodger approaches the camera in an extreme close-up shot (1:05:20).

The long, painful buildup to the couple's kiss emphasizes the dark circumstances surrounding this romance. When the couple finally do kiss, the camera switches to a shot slightly above and behind the Lodger to document Daisy's eyes shooting open and staring at something above her (see fig. 13).

Fig. 13. Daisy stares up at the ceiling while embracing the Lodger.

The Avenger's victims stare towards a similar space above the camera, towards the Avenger, as do Joe, Daisy, and Mrs. Bunting when they hear the Lodger pacing back and forth in his room. When the Lodger anxiously paces in his room, he causes the triangular chandelier hanging in the room below to sway back and forth, capturing the attention of those below him. Perhaps Daisy sees such an indication of instability in the space above the Lodger's own room. In any case, Daisy's upward glance recalls the paranoia and fear of moments earlier in the film and once again draws attention to the space beyond the frame of the film, the space from which the Avenger strikes. The audience is made aware of the limitations of the viewing experience—we do not know what has captured Daisy's attention. We know only that Daisy reproduces a glance that has elsewhere been associated with murder, that she does so in the film's most intimate scene, and that, in contrast to Daisy's performance in the scene with the mouse, this upward glance appears more genuine and less performative or exaggerated.

In the shot which immediately follows, the portraits of blonde women which the Lodger had removed from the room frame the couple's embrace. These absences, which take the form of white relief on the dirty wallpaper, are reminders of the women who have fallen victim to the Avenger, with the Lodger's mother and sister chief among them. As Tom Gunning writes, these reliefs in the soot-stained walls demonstrate the pictures' ability, in Hitchcock, "to imprint themselves on a consciousness even when apparently removed from view" (17). This is supported by the image of a photograph of the Lodger's deceased sister which precedes his flashback, an image firmly held in the Lodger's mind, and one which seems to have no small influence over his attraction to Daisy (see fig. 14). Even when Daisy and the Lodger appear to display their most genuine embodied selves they are surrounded by conspicuous absences.

These absent images recall Christian Metz's comments on the "Scopic Regime of Cinema," in which he remarks, "The cinema only gives [spectacles and sounds] in effigy, inaccessible from the outset, in a primordial *elsewhere*, infinitely desireable (= never possessible), on another scene which is that of absence and which nonetheless represents the absent in detail, thus making it very present, but by a different itinerary" (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* 61). If the Avenger murders produce a series of tropes of the blonde victim, employing the camera and a shadowy entity to elicit the victim's embodiment of a certain gesture, in the Lodger and Daisy's romantic climax they are confronted with those productions in the form of their acute absence. Daisy's upturned gaze seems to betray an uncanny understanding of that relationship between the camera, the body on screen, and the entity which would avenge some unknown slight. With Daisy and the Lodger always relating to one another in the context of the Avenger murders, and the film figuring each character as a potential embodiment of Avenger or Avenger victim, their troubled romantic coupling may indicate the further displacement of the objects of their desires to an elsewhere that now lies beyond themselves. The conflict of this embrace suggests that Daisy and the Lodger's romance must succeed despite the ways in which they have embodied or related to the roles of Avenger and Avenger victim, that the allure of those inauthentic embodiments, and the artifice of the visual representations of blonde women throughout the film, poses a barrier to any socio-normative relationship they may hope to develop.

Fig. 14. Daisy's and the Lodger's romance is framed by the conspicuous absence of the blonde portraits banished from the Lodger's room (1:06:03).

In addition to the absent portraits of blonde women, this scene calls also attention to a series of anthropomorphic eyes throughout the film. A pair of oval portraits in the center of the wall peers back at the couple like a pair of eyes. These eyes echo the Lodger's own eyes in his long closeup, as well the eyes formed on the back of a news truck which delivers the latest Avenger story throughout London (see fig. 15). In these anthropomorphic series of eyes, the world of the film seems to acknowledge and reciprocate the audience's gaze, as well as the gazes of the characters on screen. In one sense, these eyes mark the Avenger's ghostly presence, a presence that stares back from the world of the film towards the viewer. Like Daisy's upturned gaze, and like the Lodger's gaze into the camera, these anthropomorphic eyes emphasize the space beyond the screen. These gazes acknowledge the film's artifice, calling attention to the medium specific boundaries which enclose the diegetic world. However, they also insist on the violability of that world by transgressive, non-disclosed agents. If Metz conceives of the cinematic screen as presenting the audience with a remarkably life-like

illusion that is always a "phantom" (*Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* 45), the Avenger acts as the phantom of those captured on film, rendering the diegetic world more immediate while also emphasizing its representational borders. When the viewer encounters the "eyes" of the news truck or those of the oval-shaped portraits, they encounter a liminal gaze, a gaze not belonging to the camera, the audience, or even the characters on screen. Existing in the space beyond the frame of the screen and outside of the material reality of the viewer, this liminal entity contradicts the notion that the world on screen is self-enclosed or safe from intrusion.


Fig. 15. The windows on the back of a news truck, with the heads of the driver and passenger inside, resembles a pair of eyes (6:22).

It is appropriate that this liminal gaze first manifests in relation to the news media, especially as the news truck appears in a sequence which draws attention to the gaps between representations and what is being represented. In particular, this sequence highlights the technological and social processes by which events are narrativized and marketed to a mass audience. Sanford Schwartz describes both the news media and the fashion industry in *The Lodger* as "the media-saturated machinery for the production of

hyperbolic desire" (200), and Hitchcock's depiction of a news industry armed with technology certainly satisfies this description. We are first shown an eyewitness relaying her version of the murder to a police officer while a reporter takes notes nearby. The witness then retells the story to a crowd at a coffee stand while the reporter telephones a news agency. We then see the reporter's information transcribed via telegraph, and we witness a group of gentlemen, presumably owners or shareholders of the news agency, overseeing the transmission. The feed then reaches a newsroom where Alfred Hitchcock, making his first cameo, constructs a printable story from the condensed language of the telegraph (a form of adaptation). The news is then fed through a press, loaded into trucks, and delivered throughout London. Finally, we are shown a crowd of young men and women reading the news on a ticker, and the facial contortions of those listening to the news as it is broadcast over the radio.

The murder is quickly and expertly mined for its economic and social value. The intertitles which accent these sequences suggest that there is something illicit, yet substantive and gratifying in the news of a young girl's death: "MURDER: WET FROM THE PRESS" (5:58); "MURDER: HOT OVER THE AERIAL" (7:26). Most notably, these intertitles (and the sequence itself) emphasize the immediacy of the news. The close chronological proximity to the event is itself a selling point and draws the reader closer to the event. However, like the liminal gaze, these headlines also emphasize the gaps between representation and what is being represented, between illusion and verisimilitude. The adjectives "WET" and "HOT" infuse the murder of the young woman with a sexual overtone, but they also promise the reader a sensate experience. These headlines almost suggest that the newspapers' narrativizations might offer them some approximation of what the Avenger or their victim *felt* during the event. Like Daisy, who gives the illusion of bridging an impossible gap of time and

space to transport the Lodger back to the evening of his sister's coming out ball, the news media advertises its ability to bring its audience closer to the originating events, or even to imagine the sensate, embodied experiences of those involved.

**Conclusion**

We enter the world of Hitchcock's *The Lodger* by occupying the Avenger's perspective and witnessing an Avenger murder first-hand. From the film's opening, the audience is trained to watch for visual clues which would indicate a repeat performance and warn of the Avenger's presence. However, the Avenger never materializes, and Hitchcock offers scant details as to the Avenger's identity, let alone the motives or logic behind their actions. Instead, the audience is left to exercise their paranoia on the behavior of Daisy, Joe, and the Lodger, all of whom behave in ways which engender audience mistrust. Additionally, elements of the set and wardrobe inform our understanding of the Avenger murders both in diegetic and non-diegetic ways. The blonde portraits displaced from the Lodger's room and the chandelier which sways with the Lodger's agitated steps are both prime examples of such material markers.

The missing Avenger recontextualizes both commercial and domestic spaces, framing such disparate spheres as the news industry and interpersonal relationships as being similarly underpinned by unresolved threats of violence. The Scotland Yard report of the Avenger's capture bars any satisfactory resolution of the missing villain and leaves the Avenger a far more mysterious and powerful entity for audiences to contend with. Lacking a face, save perhaps for the pair of eyes on the back of the news truck or on the Lodger's bedroom wall, the Avenger is something of a dehumanized entity. Lacking embodiment, the Avenger manifests through a web of plastic signifiers and becomes a marker of instability, inhabiting the space beyond the frame of the film.

In contrast to Hitchcock's Avenger, Lowndes' Avenger is a distinctly humanized character with fears and vulnerabilities. Long after the Buntings are certain of Mr. Sleuth's guilt, they nonetheless sympathize with his plight. Towards the end of the novel Mr. Bunting says, "Aye, aye, the lodger was quite an honest gentleman, Joe. But I feel worried, about him. He was such a poor, gentle chap" (145). Warkentin asserts that "Neither Bunting nor his wife report their suspicions to the police, fearing the financial loss his arrest would entail" (par. 5), but in truth neither Mr. Bunting nor his wife show any inclination to turn Mr. Sleuth over to the authorities. The primary problem for Lowndes' Mr. and Mrs. Bunting is not to ascertain the Avenger's identity, nor is it to stop the Avenger from committing further crimes. Instead, the Buntings are tasked with navigating the conflicting demands of the social, religious, and legal spheres in light of their knowledge of the Avenger's identity.

Lowndes leaves no mystery as to the identity of her villain. For both Mrs. Bunting and for the reader, knowledge of Mr. Sleuth's guilt is certain. Moreover, Lowndes does not give readers any reason to fear for the Buntings' lives, and, through Mr. and Mrs. Buntings' sympathy for Mr. Sleuth, she gives no indication that any kind of satisfactory justice might be achieved through London's legal system. Instead, Lowndes' story focuses on the embodied experiences of a working-class woman who, having acquired deadly information, struggles to keep her domestic sphere in order. Lowndes figures the female body as the crucial point of contention in the novel, as is made clear in Mr. Sleuth's quoting of the scripture, "A strange woman is a narrow gate . . . Her house is the way to hell" (20). It is the improper mode of feminine embodiment which Mr. Sleuth cites as the reason for his murders, and it is Mrs. Bunting's discrete and alert mode of embodiment which allows her to emerge from the novel's events unscathed.

While Lowndes emphasizes Mrs. Bunting's embodiment as the primary means through which she is able to gather information about the world, Hitchcock emphasizes the ways in which embodied experiences convey information *to* the world, often in misleading ways. Lowndes' novel is grounded in the interiority of a woman who must come to terms with irrefutable information: Mrs. Bunting's embodied experience is a mediator of information, for both herself and for the reader. In contrast, Hitchcock's film is grounded in paranoia and uncertainty. The lack of an embodied villain encourages the audience to question the intent and authenticity of the behaviors of the characters on screen. Further, it is made clear (in scenes like the Lodger's flashback) that these characters possess information to which the audience does not have access. The viewer's experience is grounded in the certainty that they do not know and have not seen enough.

Hitchcock's decision to withhold vital information, and his effort to cultivate paranoia in his audience, helps to train audiences to scan the film for diegetic and nondiegetic markers which form a broader critique of embodiment, authenticity, exhibitionism, and sexual violence which extends beyond the film. Brief moments, such as the model's reference to dying her hair blonde, draw attention to issues of authenticity and veracity, which in turn broaden the scope of the "GOLDEN CURLS" intertitle. Hitchcock links the cinematic portrayal of murder to issues of exhibitionism and voyeurism, to the narrativization and technological amplification of sex and violence, and to issues of role playing, performance, and embodiment. Further, a myriad of objects and referents in the film add to and mobilize the web of signifiers which spans so many of Hitchcock's films. These include the portraits banished from the Lodger's room, the handcuffs which are clasped around Daisy's and the Lodger's wrists, the coffee and sandwich which crash to the floor, and the fire which so quickly

captures the Lodger's attention. These markers alter the possible interpretations of the scenes in which they appear, but they are also interconnected, and link their specific contexts to moments in a great variety of other Hitchcock films. For example, when Kim Novak spends hours staring at a portrait of her supposed ancestor, Carlotta Valdes, in *Vertigo*, its significations inform and are informed by the blonde portraits in *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*.

Michael Walker's book, *Hitchcock's Motifs*, extensively examines and cross-references the motifs, such as handcuffs and paintings, which run throughout Hitchcock's filmography. A limited examination of Hitchcock's motifs as they appear in his film adaptations of novels may cover similar ground but differs by taking the whole of the film and the whole of the adapted text as its primary focus. By first considering the relation of a Hitchcock film to its adapted text, one may more closely examine the possible significations and the specific contexts of the system of tropes within that film. Additionally, tracing the process of adaptation from novel to film often reveals unexpected ways in which a major element of a Hitchcock film sustains, develops and recontextualizes an element of the novel from which it has been adapted. These tropes not only inform readings of other Hitchcock films, but inform and are informed by adapted texts.

A reading of Hitchcock's film as it relates to Lowndes' novel, for example, reveals that both Lowndes and Hitchcock portray the Avenger as having an unparalleled creative influence over their diegetic worlds. In Lowndes' novel, the Avenger's actions are based on a literal interpretation of scripture, thus figuring the Avenger's influence as being derived from a hermeneutics of text; the victim's body becomes a medium upon which Mr. Sleuth's interpretation is inscribed. In Hitchcock's film, the Avenger coopts the camera to capture and propagate the trope of the screaming face, using the victim's

body to create a visual language of sexual violence. While Lowndes' Avenger enacts a literal interpretation of text, Hitchcock's Avenger provides the impetus for the film itself, setting the stakes for its narrative as well as drawing attention to the limitations imposed on the film's audience.

The Avenger's triangular calling card, which remains unchanged in Hitchcock's adaptation, is an image which condenses many of the motifs shared between these texts. In both Lowndes and Hitchcock, the triangle indicates the Avenger's domain of influence, but also points to the threat which the Lodger's presence poses to the characters' interpersonal relationships. In Lowndes, Mr. and Mrs. Bunting's marriage is briefly undermined by Mrs. Bunting's devotion to her Lodger, and Hitchcock's adaptation centers on the love triangle between Daisy, the Lodger, and Joe. Given that Lowndes' Mr. Sleuth is motivated by his Christian faith, it may not be a stretch to suggest that the "three-cornered piece of paper" (6) refers to the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Hitchcock indicates the Buntings' faith by leaving several crucifixes on the walls of their home, but perhaps the Lodger's abuse at the hands of an angry mob, which has been compared to a crucifixion (Rothman, *Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 50; Brill 91) may be another reference to the Avenger's religious origins in Lowndes' novel.

Hitchcock's use of the triangle in *The Lodger* provides inexhaustible possibilities for interpretation. The triangle motif connects disparate concepts, moments, and geographic locations (quite literally, in the case of the Lodger's map, but also environmentally, as in the example of the triangle-shaped chandelier), and thus allows for unexpected signifying possibilities. In studying Hitchcock's adaptions of novels, it is possible to trace such motifs not only across Hitchcock's own career, but also across mediums. In considering Lowndes' novel and Hitchcock's film together, their shared

concerns over embodiment, knowledge, and creative influence allow each text to inform and to be informed by the other. By examining Hitchcock's *The Lodger* alongside its adapted text, motifs like the Avenger's triangle and the "golden curls" marker are revealed as recontextualizations and reconfigurations of concerns over differing systems of knowledge and differing modes of embodiment in Lowndes' novel. Further, these recontextualizations form central aspects of the network of tropes and motifs present in Hitchcock films as a whole. Despite focusing on a film made some thirty years after *The Lodger*, the next chapter, "Revivifications of Narrative in *Vertigo*," explicates similar processes of adaptation and concerns over inauthentic embodiments, unseen entities, and the space beyond the frame of the screen that echo those found in *The Lodger*.

# CHAPTER II

## REVIVIFICATIONS OF NARRATIVE IN *VERTIGO*

Upon its release in 1958, Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* was met with unenthusiastic reviews and achieved only moderate box office success. As Dan Aulier writes, "If grosses are any indication of success, *Vertigo* was neither winner nor loser" (location 2378). Nearly 60 years after the film's release, however, *Vertigo* received the most votes in *Sight & Sound*'s 2012 critic poll, besting Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* and establishing *Vertigo* as not only one of Hitchcock's greatest achievements, but as one of the most critically celebrated films of all time. Aulier attributes some of this change in critical opinion towards *Vertigo* to Robin Wood's 1965 book, *Hitchcock's Films,* in which Wood calls for a reassessment of Hitchcock's work and more specifically asserts that, "*Vertigo* seems to me Hitchcock's masterpiece to date, and one of the four or five most profound and beautiful films the cinema has yet given us" (71).[6]

What is particularly interesting about Wood's text, however, is an evident anxiety concerning the bulk of Hitchcock's films being adaptations of other texts, and, in particular, adaptations of non-literary texts. Wood defends Hitchcock's adaptation of these texts by stating that, "Hitchcock is no more limited by his sources than Shakespeare was by his" (18), yet this statement itself hints at a hierarchy between Hitchcock's films and his source texts. In his 1961 book *Novels into Film*, George Bluestone characterized the historic relationship between novels and films as "overtly compatible, secretly hostile" (2), which aptly characterizes Wood's argument wherein Hitchcock's films are found deserving of further critical attention in spite of, not

[6] Wood was not the first critic to suggest that Hitchcock's films were critically underappreciated. *Cahiers du Cinema* writers Claude Chabrol and Eric Rohmer published *Hitchcock* in 1957, one of the first texts to treat Hitchcock's films as works of significant importance, and in 1966 François Truffaut recorded and published hours of in-depth interviews with Hitchcock, anticipating Hitchcock's rise within the canon of film studies.

because of, the lesser-known novels from which their themes, narratives, and structures were often adapted.

While Wood's comments denote a contemporaneous concern over Hitchcock's status as an adaptor, rather than as a creator of wholly original narratives, *Vertigo* has since been frequently read as a film which draws inspiration from other texts. In a 2011 *Sight & Sound* article titled, "Forever Falling: *Vertigo*," critic Miguel Marías suggests that *Vertigo*'s late ascension to critical acclaim may be attributable to "the fact that it gathers together a strange synthesis of various myths of Western culture, connected to the mystery of artistic creation, which is perhaps the film's ultimate subject" (paragraph 21). Marías goes on to list the myths of Pygmalion, Prometheus, Orpheus and Eurydice, "the double or Döppelganger of the romantics and German expressionists, filtered through the schizoid sieve of Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*" (paragraph 22), and half a dozen other referents as influences which resonate throughout *Vertigo*. Other critics have drawn similar comparisons: Royal S. Brown has read *Vertigo* as an "Orphic Tragedy," Saviour Catania has compared *Vertigo* to the poetry of John Keats, Cameron Golden has compared *Vertigo* to the works of Paul Auster, and Dennis R. Perry has written extensively about the links between Hitchcock's films and the works of Edgar Allan Poe. Although *Vertigo* is rarely analyzed as a direct, announced adaptation of its source material—Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's 1954 novel, *D'entre les morts*—it is frequently read as an adaptation, or a narrative and signifying link, to many other texts.

That it is so difficult to find readings of *Vertigo* specifically as an adaptation of *D'entre les morts* might be interpreted as an implicit comment on the quality of Boileau and Narcejac's novel. In beginning his analysis of *Vertigo*, Wood describes *D'entre les morts* as "a squalid exercise in sub-Graham Greenery" and insists that, "Hitchcock took

very little from *D'entre les morts* apart from the basic plot-line, and then proceeded to minimize the importance of even that" (71). Ken Mogg disputes Wood's comments, writing that "[*D'entre les morts*] represents one of the best novels Hitchcock filmed in America" and that "nothing could be further from the truth than claims by Wood and others that 'Hitchcock took very little from 'D'Entre les Morts' [*sic*]" (Mogg). However, even Mogg's defense of *D'entre les morts* appears as only "A brief note" within a paper subtitled, "*Vertigo* and its Sources," perpetuating the apparent trend in which *Vertigo*'s source text receives less critical attention than other influences.

*Vertigo* is faithful to its source text, sharing not only the general structure of the original text but many significant details, such as Gavin's shipbuilding business, Madeleine's hairstyle, and Madeleine's fascination with the portrait of her ancestor. Moreover, both works share the conceit of a woman playing the role of a double, pretending to be haunted so that a man's murder of his wife can be made to look like a suicide, a conceit outlandish enough to have prompted one contemporary critic to describe *Vertigo* as "farfetched nonsense" (Aulier, location 2347). Yet, despite these parallels, even an emphatic defendant of *D'entre les morts* (Mogg) gives more critical attention to other texts when discussing *Vertigo*'s influences. Setting aside questions of quality, the apparent inaccuracy of Wood's assertion that "Hitchcock took very little from *D'entre les morts*" nonetheless invites a more serious consideration of his claim that "in passing from book to film, we find total transformation" (72). That *Vertigo* is more frequently read as an indirect than a direct adaptation of Boileau and Narcejac's novel, despite the clear influence of that novel on Hitchcock's film, suggests that *Vertigo* signifies in ways fundamentally different than *D'entre les morts* and that the networks of signification in *Vertigo* allow for a far broader range of productive readings.

Like Mogg, Barbara Creed refutes Wood's claim regarding the influence of *D'entre les morts* on the production of *Vertigo,* but provides a more thorough comparison of text and film to support her claim. Interestingly, Creed also echoes Wood's analysis in claiming that "Hitchcock *transformed* the original [text] by introducing his own personal obsessions, values, and aesthetic concerns, rendering these through the stylistic prism of surrealism" (Creed 240; emphasis added). Although Creed outlines several critical similarities and dissimilarities between *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo*, including the "idea of woman-as-death" (244) common to both works, she ultimately departs from this comparative analysis in order to read *Vertigo* through an approach that is common within Hitchcock criticism, that of Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Creed employs the Lacanian concept of the sinthome to develop an argument concerning not only *Vertigo* and its relation to *D'entre les morts*, but also Hitchcock's practice of adapting texts to film. In a paper titled "Hitchcockian *Sinthoms*," Slavoj Žižek describes a sinthome as "a signifier's constellation (formula) which fixes a certain core of enjoyment, like mannerisms in painting—certain details which persist and repeat themselves without implying a common meaning" (126). Creed asserts that Scottie, in recreating Madeleine, creates a sinthome "which cannot be interpreted but which offers him (and he alone) a special arrangement of jouissance that has the potential to save him from madness" (250). Creed compares Scottie's relationship to Madeleine to Hitchcock's relationship to his star actresses, a "process of creating, destroying, and recreating the object of his desire" that, in turn, "parallels the process of the adaptation of the novel into film" (252). For Creed, the destruction and recreation of various elements of a source text are inherent in Hitchcock's work as an adaptor.

Although the explication of the differences between systems of signification in *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo* in this chapter will not employ Lacanian psychoanalytic

theory, it will proceed from a point of general agreement with Creed's analysis of Hitchcock's work as an adaptor. As Peter Lev asserts, "D'entre les morts [*sic*] and *Vertigo* are mutually illuminating" (183), and too little attention has been paid to the relationship between these works (the writing of Creed and Lev notwithstanding). More specifically, keeping in mind that Hitchcock's process of adaptation is also a "process of creating, destroying, and *recreating* (emphasis added)," this examination will focus on aspects of *D'entre les morts* which appear to have been most faithfully preserved in Hitchcock's film. As signifying nodes within Hitchcock's work, these aspects necessarily operate differently than in Boileau and Narcejac's text. As an example, Scottie's re-creation of Madeleine has its origin in *D'entre les morts* but is used by Creed (and numerous other critics) as an analogy for Hitchcock's practices as a director and a creator; further, these scenes are often characterized by critics as being particularly Hitchcockian. That these scenes *do* appear indicative of Hitchcock's work, despite their origins, marks them as particularly potent points of investigation.

Of course, the very term "Hitchcockian" suggests that any analysis of Hitchcock's adaptation of *D'entre les morts* need not be limited to *Vertigo* and may, in fact, be best understood in the context of Hitchcock's filmography. The significations in *Vertigo* link to and expand upon the greater network of significations established and continually remobilized and recontextualized by many of Hitchcock's other films. This is perhaps best exemplified by Hitchcock's 1927 film, *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, a film that Hitchcock himself called "the first true 'Hitchcock movie'" (Truffaut 43). *The Lodger* features a story of a Jack the Ripper-type character known as "the Avenger" who exclusively targets young, blonde women. In both films, Hitchcock raises concerns over the re-embodiment of certain roles and the desire to recontextualize or to re-experience narratives of tragic loss. In *The Lodger*, the main character's quest to avenge

his sister's murder leads him to dress and behave in a manner that is identical to that of the Avenger. Similarly, in *Vertigo*, Scottie's efforts to reconcile with Madeleine's death leads him to embody the role of her 'murderer,' Gavin Elster. In both films, the protagonists' loss of a young, blonde woman impels them to replace her with someone of a nearly identical appearance, and the protagonists buy these new women clothing to more accurately replicate the woman they lost. Further, the figure of the blonde woman signifies as far more than only an object of sexual desire. "Golden curls" in *The Lodger* and the blonde, spiral bun of Madeleine's hair in *Vertigo* are both linked to feminine sexuality, inauthentic embodiments, and the reification of narratives from the past.

Although the scope of this examination is limited to *Vertigo* and *D'entre les morts*, its aim is to explicate networks of signification that link to and are informed by those in other Hitchcock films. Further, while many critics have focused on *what* these networks signify, this examination will prioritize outlining these networks and will address the implications of signifiers primarily to identify links and recontextualizations in other areas of the film. As a point of contrast, Robert J. Belton proposes a metaphorical "hermeneutic spiral" method of interpretation, one in which a viewer's understanding of the film constantly shifts as they identify new contexts and possibilities of analysis. Belton writes, "The meaning of the text cannot be determinate because there is an inexhaustible number of other locations filled with other objects whose contrasts produce a dizzying variety of other interpretive possibilities" (18). In demonstrating this reading method, Belton interprets *Vertigo* through a variety of other texts, identifying textual links and using those links to explicate new possibilities for understanding Hitchcock's film. However, the aim of this investigation is to avoid becoming decentered by "the dizzying variety of other interpretive possibilities" and maintain a limited focus on *Vertigo* and its source text. While many of *Vertigo*'s

significations are indeterminate, this examination aims to map and explicate certain convergences of those significations, such as the image of the spiral, issues of embodiment and identification, and the trope of reiteration. In investigating Hitchcock's treatment of these signifying mechanisms in comparison to their treatment in *D'entre les morts*, aspects of *Vertigo* which impel endless re-viewings and reinterpretations will gain a more stable clarity.

**Gavin and Gévigne**

The plots of *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo* follow the same basic plot: a detective (Flavières in *D'entre les morts*; John Scottie Ferguson, played by James Stewart, in *Vertigo*) is called by an old friend (Gévigne/Gavin Elster, played by Tom Helmore) and asked to follow that friend's wife (Madeleine Gévigne/Madeleine Elster, played by Kim Novak). In both stories, the old friend owns a ship-building business and in both stories the old friend suggests that his wife's affliction may be supernatural in nature. Specifically, the old friend suggests that a deceased relative may be influencing her, that the wife may be a reincarnation of that deceased relative, and that that same deceased relative is driving her to commit suicide. After reluctantly agreeing to take on the job, the detective follows the wife and finds her behavior to support the friend's theory of reincarnation/possession. The detective first meets the woman when he saves her from drowning herself in a body of water, and from this point the detective and the wife develop a relationship. Just as the detective begins to fall in love with this woman, she jumps from a church tower to her death, and the detective's fear of heights prevents him from following her and preventing her death. After some time, the detective sees a woman who looks nearly identical to the woman who died, and, certain of her resemblance to the deceased woman he once loved, convinces her to go out with him.

The detective's determination to prove to himself that this woman is, in fact, the woman he thought had died, culminates in a cosmetic makeover to make her look even more exactly like the deceased woman, and finally the 'double' confesses to her part in the murder of the 'real' wife. In both *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo*, the twist is the same: the detective never knew the "real" wife; he was only following her double or her imposter. Rather than the double falling to her death at the church tower, she met with her employer, the old friend, who was hiding at the top of the tower and who threw his wife over the edge to fake her suicide, with the detective acting as a witness.

While there are countless differences between these works, not least of which are a change in time period and geographic environs (*D'entre les morts* takes place in Paris and Marseilles during WWII, while *Vertigo* takes place in 1950s San Francisco), it is, ironically, an examination of their similarities that best explicates the changes Hitchcock made in adapting *D'entre les morts* to film. The novel opens with Flavières' first meeting with Gévigne, a scene which Hitchcock reproduced fairly faithfully in *Vertigo*, and these scenes are a perfect example of the ways in which Hitchcock glosses over certain details in Boileau-Narcejac's work while heightening the importance of others.

Although Gavin Elster appears in *Vertigo* in only three scenes (four if you include the scene of Scottie's nightmare after Madeleine's death), his character is critical to framing Scottie's experience of Madeleine and to demonstrating the ways that, in *Vertigo*, narratives from the past serve as objects of obsession. In both works, the Gévigne/Gavin character is an old friend from school and is currently in the ship-building business. As *D'entre les morts* is set during the second World War, Gévigne's career positions him as profiting off of the war, a fact which does not go unnoticed by the novel's narrator, Flavières, who notes that, "This war was going to make the fellow

a millionaire" (location 136). Gévigne is primarily characterized by greed. When Flavières begins to unravel Gévigne's plot, he muses that, "The motive was plain as a pikestaff: [Gévigne's wife] held the purse-strings" (location 2152). As though to doubly emphasize the banal nature of Gévigne's motives, Renée Sourange, Gévigne's mistress and the woman who played Madeleine's double, remarks, "'She had the money… We were intending to go abroad'" (location 2119).

Gavin Elster's motives are decidedly less simplistic than Gévigne's. In describing Gavin to Midge, Scottie says, "he sort of dropped out of sight during the war, somebody said he went East—I guess he's back."[7] While Gévigne is portrayed as positioning himself in order to make a profit from the war, Scottie's remark suggests that Gavin had removed himself from the war entirely, or at least, that Gavin's activity in the war is uncertain. Further, Scottie's suggestion that Gavin "went East" begins to outline a pattern of geographic, global movements that stands in contrast to Scottie's own movements around the San Francisco area. In *Vertigo,* geographic movement is consistently portrayed as a means of realizing narratives. Gavin's scheme to convince Scottie that Madeleine is possessed by the specter of Carlotta Valdes, and that her death is a suicide rather than a premeditated murder, relies on Madeleine repeatedly leading Scottie around the San Francisco area. These geographic circuits lead Scottie to learn more about Carlotta as he visits landmarks associated with her, but they also lead him to attribute Gavin's iteration of Carlotta's narrative to these landmarks, endowing them with a significance that only Scottie perceives as being genuine.

While Gavin employs a series of circuitous, local, geographic routes to engage Scottie in his narrative, Gavin himself moves on a global scale. Upon Madeleine's

[7] Midge is Scottie's ex-fiancée and close friend. While her character does not originate in Boileau-Narcejac's novel, Peter Lev posits her as "the equivalent (in a functional sense) of Flavières's more rational and critical thoughts in the novel" (180).

death, Gavin tells Scottie that he will go to "Europe, perhaps," continuing his East to West trajectory that began vaguely in the "East." If, throughout the film, Scottie becomes more immersed in a narrative produced, in part, by Gavin Elster, and that narrative involves visiting and re-visiting geographic locations associated with Madeleine, Gavin's own movements from continent to continent indicate his ability to realize and then extract himself from such narratives. While Scottie takes offense at Midge's suggestion that he "go away for a while" following his injury, responding, "you mean to forget," Gavin's utilization of the apocryphal narrative of Carlotta Valdes demonstrates that geographic movement can also be a particularly potent means of not only remembering (and re-remembering) narratives of the past but, further, re-experiencing those narratives in the present.

This contrast between Scottie's and Gavin's means of moving throughout the world is also reflected by their technological means of transportation. While Scottie is associated with his car, a white DeSoto, Gavin is associated with ships. Gavin's status as a shipbuilder associates him with the traversal of oceans and the bridging of distant continents, and this is never clearer than in Scottie and Gavin's first meeting. When Scottie enters Gavin's office Gavin is seated at a large, ornate desk, and his back faces a window looking out to the ship-building operations in the shipyard (see fig. 16). The interior of Gavin's office serves as a stark contrast to the modern operations outside, as every surface is adorned with historic illustrations of ships, shorelines, and architecture, historic newspaper articles, and model ships. The decorations in Gavin's office celebrate the maritime accomplishments of the past, the traversal of large bodies of water and the spread of civilization to foreign lands.

Fig. 16. Scottie greets Gavin in his office (11:37).

Gavin's office conflates Gavin's intercontinental travels with the history of global exploration by Europeans, thus, Gavin is characterized not only by a particular manner of (global) movement, not only by an ability to engage those around him in certain narratives, but also with a preoccupation with past. This is made explicit when Gavin complains that "San Francisco's changed. The things that spell 'San Francisco' to me are changing fast" (12:10), and later admits that he would have liked to have lived in San Francisco in the 1800s, citing the "color, excitement, power, [and] freedom" of old San Francisco. Gavin's interest in the past fundamentally alters the significations produced by Scottie's experience of the Carlotta narrative. Scottie is not merely "[taken for] a fool, or someone with a screw loose" (Boileau-Narcejac, location 2130); rather, Scottie is framed as contending with a narrative that originates in Gavin's desire for the "power [and] freedom" of the past.

Gavin's motives are further explicated in a scene where Scottie and Midge ask a local book shop owner, Pop Leibel, about Carlotta Valdes. Leibel says that Carlotta was discovered by a "rich man, a powerful man" who seduced her and built a house for her

in San Francisco. After Carlotta gave birth to the man's child, Leibel explains that "He had no other children, his wife had no children, so he kept the child and threw her away. You know, a man could do that in those days. They had the power, they had the freedom" (35:20). Leibel's use of the words "power" and "freedom" when describing Carlotta's seducer draws clear parallels to Gavin's desires for the "power [and] freedom" of old San Francisco. An implicit comparison is drawn between Gavin and Carlotta's seducer and the audience is invited to consider Gavin's desire for the past as also being a desire to emulate the "power" and "freedom" which the other man exercised in using Carlotta to give him a child and then abandoning her. However, if the aim of Carlotta's abuser was to father a child, Gavin's aim in appropriating the Carlotta narrative is less certain.

As stated earlier, in *D'entre les morts* Gévigne's lover admits that she and Gévigne were "planning to go abroad" with his wife's money; in *Vertigo*, however, Gavin's ex-lover admits that Gavin abandoned her once he had executed his plan. Gavin, then, does not murder his wife in order to run away with his lover. While we might then assume that Gavin murders Madeleine for her money, to assume that Gavin's motives are purely monetary would be to ignore his professed desire for the power which old San Francisco afforded certain men, and, in particular, to ignore that desire as it is contextualized within the framework of Pop Leibel's story. In the film's final scene, where Scottie confronts Judy for her role in Madeleine's murder, Scottie says "Oh, Judy, with all of his wife's money and that freedom and that power and he ditched you—what a shame" (2:06:20). While Gavin does not abscond with a child as in the case of Carlotta's abuser, here Scottie's dialogue frames "freedom" and "power" as being quantifiable assets that, like Madeleine's money, Gavin was able to secure for himself following the murder of his wife. Crucially, Gavin's power and freedom were

obtained only through his appropriation of the Carlotta Valdes story. It is as though realizing the Carlotta narrative in the present and engaging those around him in that narrative had enabled Gavin to not only feel *as though* he were endowed with the freedom and power of the patriarchal figures of America's past, but actually to appropriate that power and freedom for himself in the present.

Gavin's relationship to the past, and particularly to the Carlotta narrative, is portrayed as being far more complex than Gévigne's use of the story of Pauline Lagerlac, which in *D'entre les morts* is never depicted as being anything more than a pretext for Madeleine's suicide. By depicting Gavin as someone with a strange obsession with the past, Hitchcock ensures that Scottie is not merely "[taken for] a fool, or someone with a screw loose" (Boileau-Narcejac, location 2130). Rather, in *Vertigo*, Gavin's character establishes the appropriation of narratives of the past as being a potent means of effecting change in the present.

While in *D'entre les morts* Gévigne dies in a manner which is unrelated to his murder of his wife, from gunfire near his office, Gavin succeeds in executing his plan. Where Gévigne is a flawed, humanized character who is fatigued by his life experiences—"his eyes were always on the move and only too ready to take refuge beneath those heavy drooping eyelids" (location 39)—Gavin never betrays the least concern that his plan may fail, even at the inquest for his wife's death. Gévigne's weaknesses and failures ultimately trivialize the significance of the Pauline Lagerlac story along with the pretense that Madeleine is a reincarnated form of Pauline. On the other hand, Gavin's success in executing his plan and his apparent psychological investment in the Carlotta narrative prevent Scottie's experience from being perceived as *only* a result of a cruel, elaborate deception. Rather, Gavin's character suggests to

viewers that narratives of the past hold potential for producing significations in the present that they themselves do not entirely understand.

Gavin is, on a fundamental level, inscrutable; the precise nature of his desire for "power" and "freedom" is never disclosed, nor are his activities in the "East" or in Europe. Gavin's association with ships and the traversal of oceans frame him as having a breadth of influence that is unparalleled by other characters in the film (with, perhaps, the exception of Carlotta) and as operating on a scale beyond Scottie's imagination and in such a manner that Gavin's narrative designs converge with the film's extradiegetic narrative. As a result, upon re-watching the film it is often impossible to determine to which identity or to whose agency Madeleine's behavior is most appropriately ascribed. When, for example, Madeleine insists that "one shouldn't live alone" (50:30), it is unclear whether, diegetically speaking, it is Madeleine speaking this line, Carlotta who is speaking through Madeleine, or if it is spoken by Judy Barton (the woman playing the role of a Madeleine who is possessed by Carlotta). As Madeleine, this line would imply that there are problems with Madeleine and Gavin's marriage; as Carlotta, this line references her abandonment by her lover; and as Judy, this line references Judy's single-room residence at the Empire Hotel. This line signifies as being spoken by all three identities simultaneously, which is to say that Gavin's intradiegetic narrative allows for various signifying possibilities to be suspended indefinitely. The audience cannot know which aspects of Madeleine's behavior are products of Gavin's designs, which are attributable to Judy Barton, and which are Judy's performative improvisations of Gavin's designs.

In *D'entre les morts*, Renée Sourange's performance of a Madeleine who is possessed by the specter of an ancestor produces far less ambiguous significations. As Madeleine, Renée's dialogue seldom sustains speculations concerning the identity of

the speaker. For example, when Flavières confesses his love to Madeleine the narrator notes that "[Madeleine] was pale and seemed afraid" (location 753). Knowing that Madeleine is, in fact, Renée, this reaction hints that Renée may be disconcerted that her and Gévigne's plan has become more complicated; however, if one reads Renée/Madeleine as Madeleine, this reaction is less coherent. Madeleine, who is certain that her own death is imminent, has few imaginable motivations to fear Flavières' affection, or her husband's discovery of that affection. The identities of Renée Sourange, Pauline Lagerlac, and Madeleine are always distinguishable from one another and never appear to voice the same utterance at the analogous moment as do Madeleine Elster, Carlotta Valdes, and Judy Barton in *Vertigo*.

Another example of synchronous embodiments of distinct identities in *Vertigo* can be seen in the first scene at the bell tower where Madeleine appears to commit suicide. When Scottie attempts to stop Madeleine from running away from him Madeleine says, "If you lose me then you'll know I loved you and I wanted to go on loving you" (1:15:30). As with the line, "one shouldn't live alone," this utterance signifies as being spoken by Madeleine, Carlotta, and Judy simultaneously. In one sense, this line signifies as Judy assuring Scottie that, despite her role in deceiving him, her feelings for him were genuine. As Madeleine possessed by Carlotta, however, this line also signifies as Madeleine assuring Scottie that, despite her feelings for him, she is too strongly compelled to end her own life for him to help her.

In producing his own adaptation of the Carlotta narrative with Judy Barton playing the star role of Madeleine, Gavin has, as Leslie Abramson writes, "surreptitiously occupied an illicit directorial position" (74). When Scottie confronts Judy for her complicity in Gavin's scheme, Scottie describes how meticulously Gavin had planned "not only the clothes and the hair, but the looks and the manner and the

words, and those beautiful, phony trances" (2:04:50). Unlike a director of a film, however, Gavin's designs are not perceived within *Vertigo*'s world to be performative or artificial; rather, the success of Gavin's plan relies on moderating Scottie's perception of his surroundings such that he acts as a "made-to-order witness" (2:05:25) of his own volition. In achieving this goal, Gavin establishes his own adaptation of the Carlotta narrative as not only a scheme, but, like Pop Leibel's account of Carlotta, an apocryphal story of the local history of San Francisco.

The scene of the inquest following Madeleine's death makes it clear that Gavin has succeeded not only in getting away with the murder of his wife, but also in establishing Madeleine as having a history of suicide attempts that are mysteriously related to the death of her great-grandmother, Carlotta Valdes. This scene shows the coroner's commentary on the circumstances of Madeleine's death, a commentary that is being transcribed and made a matter of public record. The coroner harshly reprimands Scottie for failing to ensure Madeleine's safety, but equally troublingly, also inscribes Gavin's inauthentic narrative of Madeleine's death into historic, legal record. In this light, the "power" and "freedom" which Gavin longs for might be described as the ability to impress upon others a perception of reality that facilitates the machinations of one's own desires. As indicated by the framed newspapers in Gavin's office which impress upon their reader the importance and appropriate context of recent events, or the myriad ships which reference an era in which the globe was rapidly mapped and remapped and topographies were drawn and redrawn, Gavin's role in *Vertigo* is both directorial and imperialistic, employing narrative to appropriate the landscapes and persons around him and to realize a form of "power" and "freedom" that is otherwise unattainable. Gavin succeeds in realizing not only his own adaptation of the Carlotta Valdes narrative that Scottie struggles to understand throughout the film, but he also

succeeds in realizing Leibel's version of the Carlotta narrative in which a "rich" and "powerful" man seduces a young woman and uses her to achieve his desires before abandoning her.

Marilyn Fabe argues that the fiction surrounding Madeleine and the Carlotta Valdes narrative contributes to the sense that *Vertigo* frames not only Scottie but viewers as desiring an object that is impossible to attain. Fabe draws on Christian Metz's conceptualization of cinema as presenting its audience with an image that bears a striking likeness to reality but is, in fact, only the projection of an illusion. Thus, for the audience, Madeleine is "an *imaginary* imaginary signifier" (347). Scottie's desire for Madeleine is a desire for an impossible object, impossible because she is purported to be possessed by the ghost of an ancestor, then because even that supposed possession is revealed to have been a fiction. This doubling of the imaginary in *Vertigo*, Fabe argues, leads the audience to engage with the film in a way that is similar to Scottie's relationship to Madeleine, the impossible object of desire. Fabe writes:

> Those who desire to return to the places where *Vertigo* was shot, I contend, replicate or perform the actions of its hero throughout much of the second half of the film. Just as Scottie is unable to accept the loss of Madeleine, and instead obsessively embarks on a quest to find her, to get back what he has irretrievably lost, so viewers try to restore something of the eerie romance and mystery of *Vertigo*—the pleasure/pain state of mind the film induces—by returning to the physical locations where it was filmed. (345)

Although Fabe states that *Vertigo* tourists hope to "restore something of the eerie romance and mystery" of the film, it can also be said that these viewers engage in the film's unresolved significations through embodied geographic movement. Both Scottie and tourists of *Vertigo's* landmarks follow the peculiar logic in *Vertigo* which suggests

that visiting certain landmarks promises to elucidate unresolved significations and to allow one some access to experiences lost to the past. Even when Scottie realizes that his experiences of the Carlotta narrative are fundamentally inauthentic, his recourse is to reiterate the climax of that narrative for himself at San Juan Bautista. Given that so many of Scottie's efforts throughout the film take the form of reiterated geographic movements, it is especially appropriate that *Vertigo* tourists reiterate those movements in their attempts to re-experience and re-explore the film's significations. Both Scottie and tourists of *Vertigo*'s landmarks realize certain aspects of inauthentic narratives through embodied movements—Scottie reifies Gavin's adaptation of the Carlotta narrative, and *Vertigo* tourists re-perform that reification.

The phenomenon of *Vertigo* tourism draws further attention to the differing relationships to narrative seen in Gavin and Scottie and the corresponding differences in their geographic movements. As Scottie becomes absorbed in the Carlotta narrative, he is increasingly drawn towards the series of landmarks which, experienced in the context of Gavin's narrative and Judy's performance of Madeleine, helps to legitimize the Carlotta narrative. Scottie's understanding of the narrative is always focused on his immediate surroundings, always focused on the particular, localized details of Carlotta/Madeleine's story. In contrast, Gavin's interest in the narrative is a desire for "power" and "freedom," goals that are abstract insofar as they are achieved by various methods and in various contexts. While Scottie is fixated on Madeleine/Carlotta and repeatedly visits the landmarks associated with her, hoping to rediscover her after her death, Gavin easily extracts himself from those particular signifying markers and, more concretely, from San Francisco entirely. If Scottie is focused on Gavin's localization of a particular narrative, regarding which Pop Leibel asserts, "there are many such stories" (36:25), Gavin is more concerned with the metanarrative—the adaptation, production,

and exploitation of such stories in order to experience the "power" and "freedom" of the past.

While Gévigne creates a scheme by which he hopes to secure his wife's money and live with his lover, Renée, Gavin constructs a narrative which allows him to embody an outmoded position of power. Both Flavières and Scottie are deeply invested psychologically in Gévigne's and Gavin's renditions of Madeleine, and in both works this investment is framed as a longing to regain an experience that is irretrievably lost. In *Vertigo*, however, Gavin's genuine affinity with the past prevents Scottie's fixation on Madeleine from becoming as desperate and hopeless as Flavières' does in *D'entre les morts*. Moreover, Gavin's apparent success in retrieving something of the past that was thought to have been outmoded by modern social and cultural norms—"all of that freedom and all of that power," as Scottie says to Judy—ensures that the significations associated with Madeleine are not invalidated by the revelation that they are less than authentic.

**Portals of the Past**

Hitchcock's decision to set *Vertigo* in 1950s San Francisco as opposed to the setting of *D'entre les morts*—WWII France—appropriately contextualizes Gavin's characterizations as a man associated with the conquest of newly discovered continents, global mobility, and the power and freedom that he perceives to have been afforded to certain of America's early colonizers. In addition to the cultural and historical context it provides, San Francisco's landscape, with its steep hills and large bodies of water to the west, north, and east, visually frames Scottie's struggle to overcome his fear of heights as being constrained by the surrounding landscape and in contrast to the intercontinental movements of Gavin, the shipbuilder. Above all, Hitchcock's treatment of geography,

geographic movements, landscapes, and landmarks in *Vertigo* forms the basis for the film's underlying theme of narrativization and re-narrativization that is set into motion with the character of Gavin Elster.

As discussed earlier, Scottie's and Gavin's movements are contrasted to one another, with Scottie's repetitive visits to certain landmarks and landscapes in and around San Francisco being opposed to Gavin's movements from continent to continent. Of course, it is Gavin who, with his appropriation of the Carlotta narrative, is first responsible for impressing upon Scottie the significance of these locations. However, even after Madeleine's death and Gavin's escape to Europe, even up until the end of the film, the significations produced by this circuit of narrativized landmarks remain productive and indeterminate. This is a crucial difference from the way that locations are treated in *D'entre les morts*, in which locations are rarely revisited and, when they are revisited, are not endowed with significations associated with the specter of Pauline/Madeleine.

Scottie's initial surveillance of Madeleine, and his induction into Gavin's plot, begins with Ernie's restaurant, which marks Madeleine's first appearance on screen. In the following scene, Scottie follows Madeleine from her apartment to the Podesta Baldocchi flower shop, then to Mission Dolores, where Scottie sees Madeleine visiting Carlotta's grave. Scottie then follows Madeleine to the Legion of Honor Museum, where Madeleine sits in front of Carlotta's portrait and Scottie (as well as the camera) notes that Madeleine carries the same arrangement of flowers as her ancestor and wears her hair in an identical, circular bun. This sequence of Scottie's initial surveillance of Madeleine ends with Madeleine's inexplicable (both diegetically and extradiegetically) disappearance from the McKittrick hotel, which is Carlotta's former home.

These initial scenes wherein Scottie begins to investigate Madeleine characterize Madeleine as Gavin would like Scottie to understand her. In these scenes, Madeleine is a quiet, isolated woman who is strangely obsessed with an ancestor that she is supposed to have no knowledge of. Her routine visits to places associated with Carlotta suggest that she is devoted to Carlotta's memory, feels a strange affinity to Carlotta, or that she is, as Gavin suggests, possessed by Carlotta's ghost, in which case the woman we see is Madeleine only in appearance.

Madeleine's disappearance at the McKittrick Hotel is the most perplexing scene in this sequence. The woman at the front desk assures Scottie that no one has entered the hotel, and when the pair investigate the room in which Madeleine was seen it is empty. Further, when Scottie looks out of the same window as Madeleine did only several minutes earlier, Madeleine's car is no longer parked outside. Marilyn Fabe suggests that "we can surmise in retrospect that the hotel manager is in on the conspiracy; perhaps she was hired by Elster to deny that Madeleine had entered the hotel in order to deepen Scottie's (and our) belief in Madeleine's mystery" (352). In any case, this sequence marks another instance in which the unknowable extent of Gavin's influence renders signifying markers indeterminate. The disappearance can either be attributed to Hitchcock or to Gavin, and both Hitchcock and *Vertigo*'s intradiegetic director have ostensibly similar aims: to further draw their audience into believing that Madeleine is, in fact, something of a specter, and that her immediate, embodied presence is only tenuous.

Just as Hitchcock and Gavin seem to share similar goals as directors of duplicitous productions of adapted narratives, their audiences also experience these narratives in a cinematic manner. The camera closely identifies with Scottie as he follows Madeleine, focusing on details concerning Madeleine's relationship to Carlotta

as Scottie notices them so that the audience shares some of his experience. Additionally, much of Scottie's surveillance work is accomplished in his car and the camera often alternates between showing Scottie's expression as he navigates the city streets and occupying Scottie's point of view from the driver's seat. Here, Hitchcock uses the camera not only to encourage the audience to more closely identify with Scottie but also to frame Scottie's experience of Madeleine as being that of a cinematic spectator. Scottie's automobile cinematizes the world around it, its front window acting as a kind of cinematic screen through which all of San Francisco is newly contextualized by the performance of Hitchcock/Gavin's star actor, the woman who is Madeleine's double, Carlotta's reincarnation, and the product of Judy Barton's performance. That Scottie drives a 1956 DeSoto, a model named after Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, associates this cinematizing mode of traversal to the mapping and plundering of the North American continent, as though there were something similarly imperialistic about Scottie's cinematic view from his car. As a driver, Scottie is both director and audience, framing his environment through a window that moves and focuses according to his will. Of course, Scottie is unaware of the extent to which his trajectory is predetermined.

Throughout most of *Vertigo*, Scottie's behavior as Gavin's private detective is passive. This is passivity is interrupted when Madeleine jumps into San Francisco Bay and Scottie jumps in to rescue her, but even this activity only marks Scottie's unknowing adherence to Gavin's designs. When, several scenes later, Madeleine shows up to Scottie's apartment complaining of nightmares, Scottie enthusiastically takes her to San Juan Bautista in the hopes that Madeleine will realize that her dreams are only the result of repressed memories. Of course, Scottie is unaware that this solution is not strictly his own, but rather a course of action that Gavin has anticipated and guided him

towards. Scottie is, in his own words, “a made-to-order witness,” an audience so carefully manipulated by inauthentic embodiments and recontextualizations of his environment that he subconsciously anticipates the next act in the intradiegetic narrative in which he is immersed.

In *D’entre les morts,* Boileau and Narcejac characterize Flavières as being passive in a way that is similar to Scottie’s depiction in *Vertigo*. When the narrator describes Flavières as being relieved that “The German offensive had begun” and explains, “Events would now take charge of things, making decisions for him which he shirked making for himself. Yes, the war was coming to his rescue. He had merely to let himself go, float down on the stream” (location 899). However, Flavières’ reluctance to become overly involved in Gévigne and Madeleine’s affair (he even offers to quit) is markedly different from Scottie’s earnest enthusiasm to help Madeleine. In *D’entre les morts,* Madeleine drives Flavières to the church where her suicide is staged under the pretense that they are going out for a leisurely drive. By allowing Scottie (and the audience) to believe that going to San Juan Bautista is entirely Scottie’s idea, Hitchcock emphasizes inauthentic embodiments and duplicitous narratives as having a pernicious, nearly imperceptible influence over their audiences. Further, the power to create and realize such narratives in the present moment and thus to shape the desires and aims of those immersed in those narratives is attributed to Gavin Elster.

It isn’t until after Madeleine’s staged death and Gavin’s disappearance that the series of locations is recognizable as “portals of the past” (15:35), to use Gavin’s language. Although Gavin is the character responsible for recontextualizing these landmarks and for establishing much of the system of significations associated with Carlotta’s intrusion into the present, that system of significations operates

independently from Gavin and continues to make new connections following Gavin's disappearance.

**The Spiral and Effaced, Feminine Subjectivity**

The primary visual marker in *Vertigo,* and one that resurfaces throughout the film, is the spiral seen in the film's opening credits. *Vertigo* opens on a close-up shot of a woman's mouth and chin before panning up to frame her brow and eyes, then panning once more to frame only one eye which opens wide in alarm. A red filter is then imposed over the image and a spiral shape appears over the woman's eye. Immediately, the spiral marks a particular relationship between the camera and a subject who, in meeting the camera's gaze, acknowledges her place within the cinematic frame. However, in the film's first scene, a rooftop chase that depicts Scottie's near-death experience and contextualizes his fear of heights, the spiral is also linked to the image of the impending fall which recurs throughout the film. In the opening credits the film's title, *Vertigo,* the spiral, and the credit, "Directed by Alfred Hitchcock" all seem to emerge from the dark pupil, the illegibly small text expanding until it fills the screen, and when Scottie's colleague falls from the roof, his body visually inverses this trajectory, twisting in a circular motion and appearing smaller as it descends into the space of the screen that had just been occupied by the woman's pupil (see figs. 17, 18, and 19). If Scottie's trajectory throughout the film is spiral-like, visiting and revisiting landmarks and monuments associated with Carlotta, his encounters with the impending fall which punctuate that trajectory are also encounters with a particular feminine subjectivity.

Fig. 17. A spiral emerges from the eye of the anonymous woman in *Vertigo*'s opening credits.

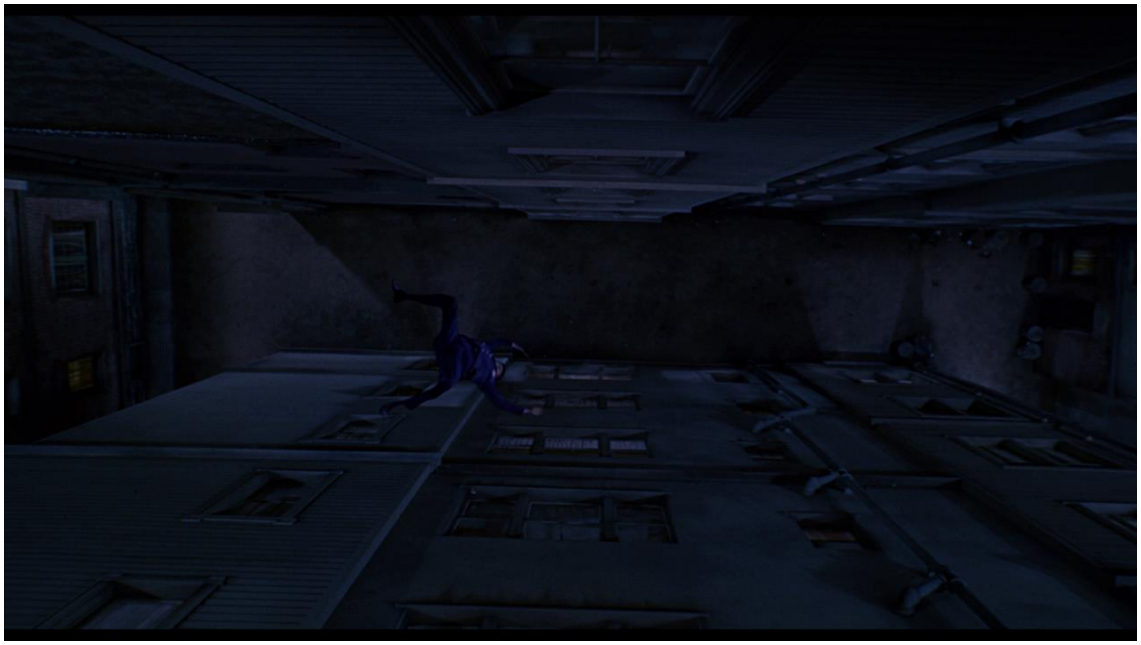

Fig. 18. Scottie's colleague falls from the roof to his death (4:42).

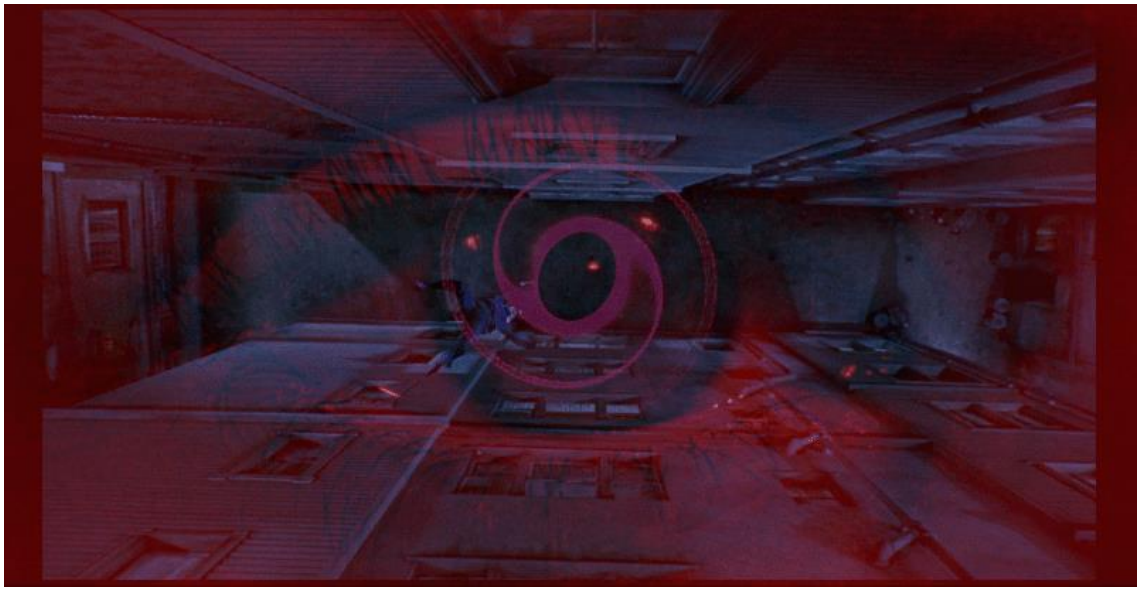

Fig. 19. The image of the spiral (fig. 17) is imposed over the image of the falling police officer (fig. 18). The image of the falling policeman has been made brighter for visibility and is played at 20% of the original speed to better match the sequence of the spiral.

In filming the anonymous woman's face like a landscape, as a topography divisible into distinct regions, the eye is likened to an abyss. This female eye is figured as a threshold to a feminine subjectivity, a threshold through which the film's title and Hitchcock's credit appear, as though the cinematization of *Vertigo*'s narrative were contingent on this feminine subjectivity. Simultaneously, the penetration of this feminine subjectivity is likened to death, an experience that is unrepresentable, paralyzing, and yet imminently fascinating for Scottie. In this sense, the spiral indicates a frustrated desire to experience that which is synonymous with death, to disclose inaccessible subjectivities. Madeleine, and thus, the spiral, promises the satisfaction of just this desire, the opportunity for Scottie to transgress the boundary between the present and the past by way of Carlotta.

The association between the spiral and an impenetrable feminine subjectivity is first established in the opening credits but is continued in the spiral shape in which

Carlotta fixes her hair in her portrait and which Madeleine mimics. This is yet another example of the ways that Hitchcock adapts minute details from his source material while expanding upon them and even establishing them as crucial visual markers for the larger system of signification within his work, as an almost identical scenario is present in *D'entre les morts*.

In Boileau and Narcejac's novel, Gévigne attempts to convince Flavières that his wife is possessed by Pauline by telling him, "we've got a portrait of Pauline Lagerlac at home… Madeleine has spent hours staring at that picture, as though fascinated. More than that: I once caught her with the picture propped up beside a mirror—she had the amber necklace on and was trying to do her hair like the woman in the portrait" (location 116). In *D'entre les morts* these details never signify beyond their utility as plot devices, however, in *Vertigo*, the scenes in which Madeleine stares at Carlotta's portrait critically counterbalance Gavin's seemingly boundless influence over *Vertigo*'s other characters by indicating a feminine subjectivity that is neither wholly effaced by Gavin's efforts nor entirely representable.

As an adapted work itself, *Vertigo* also narrativizes the act of adaptation as it tells the story of a man who adapts a diegetic narrative to achieve his desires. There are several analogs to the practice of adapting and re-adapting or doubling and re-doubling objects, identities, and narratives to varying scales and in varying levels of detail throughout the film. The most prominent example of this is Judy's embodiment of a woman who herself is embodied by yet another distinct identity. Gavin hires men to follow the man (Scottie) he has hired to follow the woman he has hired to play the double of his wife, and his office is filled with scale models of ships which are facsimiles of the full-scale ships visible just outside of his window. It is appropriate, then, that Carlotta's portrait is on display at the Legion of Honor Museum, as this

museum is a replica of "the French Pavilion at San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition" which was itself a replica of the "Palais de la Légion d'Honneur in Paris" ("History of the Legion of Honor," second paragraph).

That Carlotta's portrait is housed inside of a replica of a replica again suggests that Scottie's immediate surroundings are fundamentally inauthentic or deserving of scrutiny. In the first scene at the Legion of Honor, the camera records Scottie watching Madeleine while she gazes at Carlotta's portrait. Here, issues of authenticity in representation and embodiment are figured as being central to the significations associated with Madeleine and Carlotta, but also as being rife with ironic contradictions. Marilyn Fabe reads *Vertigo* through Christian Metz's assertion that all of cinema "is not really the object, it is its shade, its phantom, its double, its *replica* in a new kind of mirror" (Metz 45). In the space of the Legion of Honor Museum, however, the painting of Carlotta can be seen as having a more legitimate claim to originality than Madeleine herself. Despite Carlotta's portrait being a representation of a woman whose pose, makeup, clothing, and even expression has been managed to effect a particular visual impression, Madeleine is the would-be double of that representation. To use Metz's term, Madeleine is Carlotta's *phantom,* a less substantial embodiment than the specter who is supposed to haunt her insofar as she is always primarily figured as the medium by which Carlotta returns from the past.

Fig. 20. In this first scene at the Legion of Honor Museum, the camera invites comparisons between Madeleine (Kim Novak) and the portrait of Carlotta Valdes (26:18).

In the first scene at the Legion of Honor, Hitchcock's use of the camera recalls the anonymous woman in the opening credits and alerts viewers to issues of authenticity in visual representation. Scottie finds Madeleine sitting on a bench, staring at Carlotta's portrait, and enters the room to examine her more closely. As Scottie approaches, the camera pans to the flowers at Madeleine's side, then pans up to reveal that they are identical to the ones held by Carlotta. The camera then zooms in on Madeleine's hair, which is tied in a circular bun, and pans up to reveal that Carlotta's hair is done in the same manner (see fig. 20). Tom Gunning, in his examination of Hitchcock's use of paintings in his films, states:

> There is more involved in this elegant scene than a detective noticing significant details. Through the dolly-in, the camera seems to sink into and open up the space of the painting, not only directing Scottie's (and our attention), but seemingly confusing the space of the observer and painting, of representation and reality.

> However, the closer we get, the more the flatness of the painting, a barrier to our penetration, asserts itself. We must linger over this paradox, because it lies at the core of Hitchcock's use of the painting and its frame. (18, 19)

Carlotta's portrait offers an ostensibly authentic identity which serves as a foundation for the mystery surrounding Madeleine but also, paradoxically, hints at the artifice of Madeleine's embodiment. As Gunning asserts, however, our understanding of this comparatively authentic identity is limited to a flat, static representation. Yet, if the camera's focus on Carlotta's portrait emphasizes the painting as a "barrier to our penetration" in our desire to discover more about Carlotta, this limitation stands in contrast to the camera's focus on the unidentified woman in the opening credits. As in the case of Carlotta's portrait, the camera "seems to sink into" that woman's visage, allowing her features to fill the frame. Further, as the scene of Scottie's rooftop chase seems to emerge from or is at least intimately linked to the woman's eye, the camera's framing of that eye certainly raises questions concerning the nature of the reality that the film portrays. Perhaps this is an indication that here, unlike in the case of the painting, the camera's gaze succeeds in penetrating into a feminine interiority that allows for and mediates the cinematization of *Vertigo*'s world.

The implicit comparison drawn between these two subjects—that of the woman in the opening credits and that of Carlotta in her portrait—associates these women with a knowledge of or relationship to the space beyond the frame of the camera that is inaccessible to viewers or to characters within the film. The woman in the opening credits occupies a liminal space that is outside the diegetic world of the film but that is vulnerable to the operations of the camera, which so restrictively frames her image that the totality of her face, and thus her identity, are lost. Carlotta, too, occupies a liminal position in *Vertigo*, as she is a diegetically authentic individual whose identity is

invoked only to be editorialized and synthesized. Authentic instances of Carlotta exist only in spaces outside the limits of the screen, as she is diegetically extant but only represented by her portrait, her grave, and in suspect oral histories.

The anonymous woman and Carlotta are figured as being sources of originary, authentic experiences because of, rather than in spite of, the liminal spaces they occupy. Gunning writes that the spaces which Hitchcock frames "recurringly open onto another space, onto energies that remain beyond the grasp of the visual and beyond the limits of the frame" (30). The camera's interaction with Carlotta's portrait suggests that if Carlotta were animated, as the anonymous woman is, if only her gaze would acknowledge the camera's presence, her acquiescence to the camera might yield an understanding of the signifying networks which extend beyond *Vertigo*'s visual realm. Regarding Scottie's encounter with Madeleine and the portrait of Carlotta, Tania Modleski suggests, "These constant forward tracking shots do more than simply trace Scottie's observations; in their closeness and intensity they actually participate in his desire, which, paradoxically, is a desire to merge with a woman who in some sense doesn't exist—a desire, then, that points to self-annihilation" (*The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* 95). However, Scottie's obsession with the downward gaze and his desire towards Carlotta are complicated by the associations made between the feminine eye, the limits of visual representation, and the desire (as exemplified by Gavin Elster) to realize narratives of the past. In light of these associations, Scottie's desire for a romantic union with Carlotta is also a desire to glimpse that which eludes representation, that which is always beyond the space of the screen and which is associated with, but not limited to, the experience of death.

While issues of representation are also raised in *D'entre les morts*, Boileau and Narcejac ultimately treat the feminine image of Pauline Lagerlac or Madeleine as an

ephemeral fantasy, a product of Flavières' desires that is delegitimized by the revelation that he has been deceived. Upon seeing Madeleine for the first time at a play, Flavières likens her image to a portrait and struggles to resist viewing her in the context which Gévigne has described her, as being the reincarnation of Pauline Lagerlac: "He mustn't let his imagination run away with him… Perhaps he ought really to have been a novelist, with this host of images which so readily and of their own accord flooded his brain. They weren't vague ones either: they had all the relief, the dramatic intensity of life" (location 265). Even before Flavières realizes Gévigne's deception, he acknowledges that his perception of his immediate surroundings is distorted by his own desires and fantasies. Further, Boileau and Narcejac employ Gévigne's intradiegetic narrative to draw attention to the artifice of the extradiegetic text. Flavières cannot help but understand Madeleine in light of the significations Gévigne assigns to her, and the reader, likewise, is challenged not to overattribute significance to the fantastical narrative of *D'entre les morts*. To become overly invested in the characters and plot of *D'entre les morts* is to "let [one's] imagination run away with [them]," and this implicit comparison anticipates Boileau and Narcejac's ultimate disavowal of the mystical, often supernatural tone that characterizes Flavières' attraction to Madeleine.

In *Vertigo*, Hitchcock posits Gavin's masculine productions of narrative as exploiting (and being potentially undermined by) the fundamentally inaccessible authentic interiority of Carlotta Valdes. Due to Hitchcock's treatment of Carlotta and the spiral, Scottie's attraction to Carlotta is not a naive obsession with the supernatural but a desire to transgress the boundaries of representation, to access authentic experiences of a past that has become apocryphal, obscured and exploited over time. To identify with Scottie and to invest one's hermeneutic activities in his experience is to be

confronted with issues of representation, authenticity, and relationships to the past in ways that inform one's understanding the film as a whole.

In contrast to Hitchcock's treatment of Scottie, Boileau and Narcejac portray Flavières as viewing himself and others as making cowardly efforts to ignore an implied lack of meaning in their lives. The narrator writes, "The truth was that they were all like him, Flavières, trembling on the edge of a slope at the bottom of which was the abyss. They laughed, they made love, but they were afraid" (location 277). Like Scottie, Flavières strongly identifies with Madeleine's fascination with death. Unlike in *Vertigo*, however, Flavières' fascination with the world of the dead is framed as his sole alternative to an ultimately disconnected, nihilistic mode of being. Moreover, Flavières' attraction to Madeleine, as someone who shares his disillusionment but who similarly espouses belief in a mode of being that is alternative to the world of the living, never signifies beyond the level of a fantasy. Although Boileau and Narcejac raise the issue of inauthentic representations through Flavières' comments on portraits and by his sarcastic comments on being a novelist, these allusions do not hint at metadiegetic concerns over representation as Hitchcock seems to do through encounters with the spiral in *Vertigo*.

**Non-kinesthetic Movement**

In sharp contrast to the use of Madeleine's "heavy bun" as a plot device in *D'entre les morts,* Hitchcock links the bun to a series of spirals, which in turn concern exploited feminine subjectivities, the limits of representation, and pernicious instances of the past influencing the present. If Gavin's narrative designs are an artificial means of reproducing experiences of the past, the spiral hints at the authentic remainders of those productions. In *Vertigo*, narrative productions are associated with men like Gavin Elster

and Pop Leibel, while the subjects of those narratives, such as Carlotta Valdes and the "original" Madeleine Elster, remain beyond the frame of the screen and are not given opportunities to correct masculine narrativizations of their experiences. While Gavin Elster says that he heard the story of Carlotta from his mother-in-law, we are not given access to that more originary narrative and, in a similar manner, the "authentic" Madeleine's sole appearance on screen is as a corpse, already dispossessed of agency. The exception to this rule is Judy Barton, whose unique relationship to the camera as another instance of an exploited feminine subjectivity marks a fundamental shift in the film and more fully explicates the complex ways that issues of inauthenticity and representation signify throughout *Vertigo*.

Before examining the final third of the film, however, it is important to detail Scottie's identification with feminine interiority. If, in *Vertigo*, Gavin's masculine production of inauthentic narratives is contrasted to authentic feminine experiences that remain beyond the limits of visual representation, Scottie and Judy Barton occupy mediatory spaces between these seemingly opposed forms of agency. Scottie's identification with feminine interiority is also a crisis between these two modes of being and two modes of embodiment. The first mode is that of a mobile, embodied agency that would, on one level, enable his heroic prevention of Madeleine's death and, on another level, empower him to expose Gavin's ulterior motives and the artifice of the Carlotta narrative. The second mode is that of the wielder of undisclosed subjectivity who, in identifying with the camera, is paralyzed and dispossessed of embodied agency.

Scottie's crisis of embodiment is first suggested in the rooftop chase. When Scottie hangs precariously from the gutter, his downward gaze at the alley below renders him unable to heed the policeman's plea, "give me your hand" (4:30). From this moment, Scottie's mobile, embodied agency is figured as being debilitated by his prior

downward gaze and his concurrent encounter with death. This is further indicated in the following scene, wherein Scottie complains to Midge of having to wear a corset and use a cane. While, as other critics have pointed out, these details serve to infantilize or emasculate Scottie and help to establish Midge as a motherly figure, they also emphasize Scottie's fixation on a downward gaze as directly impeding his ability to wield embodied agency. Scottie's fixation on the downward gaze, which is also an attraction to the deceased Carlotta, is characterized by non-kinesthetic movement, a gravitation towards a mode of being that is similar to that of Carlotta in her portrait: static, yet suggestive of an interiority bearing unresolved semantic markers.

The dizzying visual effect that communicates Scottie's fear of falling in the rooftop chase, simply referred to as "the vertigo shot" (Aulier location 1368), first communicates this sense of non-kinesthetic movement. The camera zooms in while dollying out to create a sense of falling without falling, a sense of movement that is at once terrifying and captivating. This is repeated in the scene of Madeleine's apparent death at the San Juan Bautista bell tower, which serves as a reiteration of the rooftop chase. As before, a deadly fall is preceded by a chase and, as before, Scottie fails to keep pace with his mark. The vertigo shot here communicates Scottie's struggle to ascend the helix-like stairs of the tower. Like before, Scottie is paralyzed by his downward gaze; unlike before, Scottie's fixation on his own potential fall is interrupted by his apparently earnest desire to prevent Madeleine from experiencing that fall for herself. Ultimately, Scottie is unable or unwilling to wield embodied agency. His gaze down the stair well is only broken by Madeleine's scream, which Scottie takes as a cue

to look out of the window that, for a brief moment, perfectly frames Madeleine's headlong fall (see fig. 21).[8]

Fig. 21. Scottie is impeded by vertigo as he chases Madeleine up the bell tower at San Juan Bautista (1:16:48).

Scottie's fixation on his potential fall is satisfied vicariously through Madeleine. When Scottie descends the stairs after Madeleine's death, the shot is framed identically to the vertigo shots that had earlier communicated his downward gaze. However, this shot has no special camera effects, suggesting that Scottie has already suffered the psychological impact of that fall and that the downward gaze has lost its tantalizing horror.

For some time after Madeleine's death, Scottie, like Madeleine, acts as though he identified with the memories of a death that was not his own. At the inquest for Madeleine's death, the Coroner notes with evident suspicion that Scottie, "claims he

[8] Maurice Yacowar writes of stairs in Hitchcock films, "The danger that always lurks around the stairs is the anxiety that undercuts all confidence (in the Hitchcock vision), all sense of secure footing, and that provides both the central metaphor and title for both *Downhill* and for *Vertigo.* The source of the latter was a novel titled *Between Two Deaths*, but 'Vertigo' conveys Hitchcock's primary interest: man's uncertainty in stepping between two moments of living" ("Hitchcock's Imagery and Art" 27).

suffered a mental blackout and knew nothing more until he found himself back in his own apartment in San Francisco several hours later" (1:20:45). Despite the Coroner's skepticism, Scottie having "blacked out" would support the notion that he has experienced Madeleine's death as his own. Scottie's "blackout" draws attention to a bifurcation between embodied movement and consciousness that is first suggested in Madeleine. In a sense, this suggests a type of mundane "possession" in which one's embodied movements are irreconcilable with one's conscious self-identification and are instead in accord with unseen forces. In Madeleine, this possession first indicates the literal presence of the deceased, disembodied Carlotta and later indicates the unseen machinations of Gavin's designs. In Scottie, this "possession" indicates his failure to reconcile the significations of Madeleine's supernatural death with his understanding of material reality and his subsequent failure to dispel the allure which his identification with that death holds.

The cleaving of embodied movement and interiority is most explicitly portrayed in Scottie's nightmare. After the inquest, Scottie visits Madeleine's grave. This is, perhaps, an extradiegetic means of assuring the viewer that Madeleine is, in fact, dead, but it also recalls Madeleine's attendance of Carlotta's grave and thus compares Scottie's experience of Madeleine's death to Carlotta's possession of Madeleine. After this, we see a night shot of the San Francisco horizon that is nearly identical to the horizon which backdropped the rooftop chase, indicating an impending repetition of that fall. Scottie's nightmare begins with the camera closing in on Scottie's face. Scottie opens his eyes, and, as though in a reverse shot, we see Carlotta's bouquet of flowers occupying the center of the frame, like the woman's eye in the opening credits, before it transmorphs into a cartoon likeness that swirls around the screen. We then see Gavin Elster, Carlotta Valdes in person, and Scottie standing before the window in the room

where the inquest had taken place (see figs. 7 and 8). The camera then zooms in on Carlotta's amber necklace and the screen flashes red, like the red filter that was applied to the image of the anonymous woman. Next, we see Scottie approaching Carlotta's grave at the Mission Dolores, but the grave is open and empty. The camera then moves forward and down into the grave. Finally, the silhouette of Scottie's prostrate body falls from the center of the screen towards the roof at San Juan Bautista, but the image of San Juan Bautista is replaced with a white background and Scottie continues to fall.

Critics such as Robin Wood argue that the flowers in the beginning of the sequence, which transform from an image of a real bouquet to an illustration, indicate that Scottie subconsciously understands that Madeleine is a fraud. However, it is important to note not only the narrative implications of this nightmare sequence but also that the ways that it extends the allusions to a perverse relationship between authenticity and representation that is introduced in the scenes at the Legion of Honor museum. Gunning asserts that Carlotta's appearance in this sequence should not be read as a "'real' person" but as "an image visualized from Scottie's memory of the portrait, imprinted on his consciousness" (20). Yet, the visual configuration of Scottie's nightmare also explicates the relationship between the spiral, representation, and embodiment in ways that signify beyond the scope of Scottie's psychological state.

If the nightmare suggests that, subconsciously, Scottie is struggling to acknowledge that he has been deceived by Gavin, that struggle is communicated via Carlotta's newfound embodiment. Carlotta's emergence from the limits of the frame, her intrusion from the space of her painting into *Vertigo*'s material reality, leaves a grave-shaped void, a semantic debt that even Scottie's substitution cannot make whole. In this light, Barbara Creed's description of the spiral as an "unmistakable signifier of woman, the grave, and death" (247) could not be more accurate. Gavin's narrative

activities have succeeded in mobilizing Carlotta as a semantic marker, allowing him to experience the power and freedom of the past. According to the visual logic of Scottie's dream, Gavin's prize is not his wife's money nor the freedom to elope with Judy (as Gévigne hopes to elope with Renée), but the possession of, as Marilyn Fabe describes her, "the impossible object," Carlotta. With Madeleine dead and Gavin escaped to Europe, Carlotta, too, is absent, and Scottie is left to fill the blank void of her death.

Throughout the nightmare sequence, Scottie's identification with Carlotta's death (and thus, with effaced feminine interiority) is characterized by non-kinesthetic movement. Immediately after the camera descends into Carlotta's grave Scottie's movements are no longer voluntary, he is victim to the forces of his surreal environment. Scottie is depicted as a disembodied head traveling through an abstract, illustrated passage, his face growing closer to the camera until his prostrate body emerges from without the borders of the frame and over an image of the San Juan Bautista roof where Madeleine's body once lay. It is almost as though in the cut between those two shots Scottie passes through the camera's gaze, penetrating the two-dimensional plane of visual representation that is first suggested by the camera's interactions with Carlotta's portrait. If this sequence may be read as Scottie's imagined experience of the space vacated by Carlotta, the space beyond the frame, his penetration into that space renders him utterly unable to wield embodied agency. This is further suggested in the scene in the mental hospital that follows Scottie's nightmare, in which Scottie sits silently and rigidly in his chair and acknowledges Midge's presence only by his gaze. Scottie's experience of the interminable fall leaves him unable to affect embodied agency and, likewise, his statue-like pose suggests that his gaze masks an interior sensate experience that resembles his nightmare.

**A Logic of Reiteration**

Scottie's identification with Madeleine/Carlotta's death, of course, does not mark the end of his fascination with the spiral. Rather, the nightmare sequence and the scene in the mental hospital only further emphasize the impossibility of Scottie's desire. After the mental hospital, Scottie is still unable to dissociate the significations produced by his experience of Carlotta from the significations of the spiral, and he is unable to dispel the fascination of that gaze. Scottie visits Madeleine's apartment building, Ernie's restaurant, the legion of honor museum, and the Podesta Baldocchi flower shop. If Scottie's movements are predominantly passive as they are guided by Gavin's designs, Scottie's immediate re-tracing of the circuit of landmarks associated with Madeleine indicates a shift in Scottie's embodied movements. Scottie's return to these locations is not merely repetitive but iterative, and recontextualizes his prior abdication of embodied agency.

These scenes emphasize the logic of reiteration that can be read throughout the film. Gavin wishes to re-live an experience of the past, Madeleine appears to re-experience Carlotta's death, and Scottie repeatedly suffers vicarious falls. When Midge shares with Scottie her doctor's comment that "there's no losing [your acrophobia]," Scottie announces his intention to overcome his fear of heights by climbing to progressively higher heights. Standing on a stool, Scottie says in a lilting voice, "I look *up*, I look *down*. I look *up*, I look—" (10:10). As is characteristic of Scottie's interactions with Midge, Scottie's pride in conquering the modest heights of a stepstool, along with his singsong voice, infantilizes him and trivializes his genuine fixation on falling to his death. More importantly, this dialogue questions the efficacy of repetition as a means of overcoming Scottie's fascination with (and fear of) death. Scottie's self-narration anticipates his future encounters with the spiral and the downward fall and

reduces them to their most basic visual and linguistic expressions—"I look up, I look down"—while insisting that each iteration brings him closer to resolving his fears. On seeing Scottie emerge from the mental hospital only to continue searching for Carlotta/Madeleine's specter, then, viewers are urged to consider whether this is a progressive, remedial trajectory or merely an indication of Scottie's psychological decline.

Complicating questions of reiteration, Scottie's visitation of these landmarks is not only a repetition of his own activities before Madeleine's death but also, as Barbara Creed writes, "just like the dead Carlotta, searching the streets of San Francisco in vain for the one he has loved and lost" (245). Each time Scottie visits these locations he finds a possible Madeleine and is visibly disappointed when the woman in question, upon scrutiny, breaks that illusion. Scottie behaves as though his pilgrimages to these landmarks should invoke Madeleine's presence, not only as an ephemeral vision but as an embodied manifestation. This is the logic suggested by Madeleine's possession: in visiting these locations Madeleine comes to embody Carlotta more and more completely until she not only identifies *with* Carlotta but speaks *as* Carlotta (as seen in the scene in the stables at San Juan Bautista). Of course, Madeleine's possession is inauthentic and Scottie's efforts to invoke her presence should fail. It is particularly troubling, then, that Scottie's efforts *do* reveal another iteration of Madeleine when he discovers the woman who played Madeleine's double, Judy Barton.

Scottie's discovery of Judy Barton, and the subsequent scenes in Judy's room at the Hotel Empire, mark another beginning within the film, a re-centering in which new intradiegetic narrators struggle to establish mutual frames of signification. Scottie's fixation on the downward gaze and his identification with Carlotta has led him in geographic, temporal, and semantic circuits. Madeleine had been a means for Scottie to

further indulge in his fixation on the downward gaze and the unknowable experience of death until, finally, in wandering the streets of San Francisco as Carlotta had once done, he had reached the productive signifying limits of that mode of embodiment. His discovery of Judy Barton comes at the coda of his identification with Carlotta, the moment just before, in Leibel's telling of the story, Carlotta dies "by her own hand" (36:18).

In Leslie Abramson's reading, Gavin's appropriation of the Carlotta narrative constitutes a "legacy that Elster bequeaths to Scottie, who becomes similarly fated to shifting from the role of audience to Carlotta's story to would-be director of its contemporary adaptation" (75). Certainly, Scottie discovers Judy as though he were a Hollywood director "discovering" a new, young actor, and Scottie's later demands that Judy dress and wear her hair as Madeleine clearly positions him as mimicking Gavin's directorial designs. However, the context surrounding Scottie's rediscovery of Judy/Madeleine hints at a logic of reiteration that signifies as more than a jealous deference to sociocultural regimes. While Scottie encounters Judy ostensibly by chance, it is also by way of his repetition of the geographic movements that first mobilized the significations associated with Carlotta and that is, simultaneously, a reiteration of the embodied movements of the "Mad Carlotta" who "[stopped] people in the street to ask, 'where is my child'" (36:00). Another hint of this logic of reiteration can be seen when Judy disappears inside the Empire Hotel and later reappears within one of its windows, just as Madeleine appears in the window of the McKittrick Hotel. These scenes suggest that Judy is not only being recruited for a repeat performance of her role as Madeleine Elster, but that she is to Madeleine as Madeleine is to Carlotta—the means by which the dispossessed regain embodied agency. Further, that specific form of embodied agency

is crucial to reiterating the cycle of loss and revivification outlined by the Carlotta/Madeleine narrative.

If the spiral is a visual marker of the seemingly endless repetitions of certain geographic movements and iterations of narrative throughout *Vertigo*, Scottie's trajectory within that spiral forms a kind of descending helix. Each reiteration adheres to the structure of prior iterations while allowing for changes in embodied roles and the particulars of signifying practices. According to the logic of iteration throughout the film, each iteration results in a substitutive loss impelled by another, more originary loss, with each loss serving as the signifying impetus of the next iteration. Scottie's loss of his colleague in the rooftop chase is the first iteration of this pattern in *Vertigo,* with the policeman's death, which was to be Scottie's, serving as an originary loss. Scottie's fixation on the downward gaze, which is compounded by his experience of the policeman's death, finds new means of signifying practices in his relationship to Madeleine, who is similarly haunted by a death that is and is not her own. Thus, the helix-like pattern of substitutive loss extends further back into the past and into the future simultaneously.

The lack of a truly originary beginning to the pattern of substitutive loss in *Vertigo* is best exemplified in the scene in which Scottie and Madeleine visit the Big Basin Redwoods State Park. While Carlotta's loss of her child (and her subsequent death) is the most originary traceable loss within the context of the *Vertigo*'s narrative, Carlotta's identification of her own death on the cross section of the Redwood tree (59:20) places it within a context of American/European history which is mapped as far back as 909 AD. Abramson writes that the cross section of the Redwood tree "points to the United States' founding document itself as an assimilation of a British text" (76); equally important, however, is an unmarked, feminine account of loss that is sustained

primarily through private oral histories. In this sense, Gavin's masculine production of inauthentic narratives, and the authentic, inaccessible and feminine counterparts to those narratives, is a paradigm stretching back to prehistory. The Redwood tree indicates a helix of reiterations which has no beginning or end, a pattern that allows for the historicization of masculine narratives but that is unable to subdue the resurfacing of effaced feminine interiorities.

Scottie's encounter with Judy marks a beginning that is impelled by the yet increasing momentum of significations of the past. Judy's attempts to avoid this circuitous trajectory are, of course, hopeless. Although Judy insists that she is not Madeleine, this is only a partial truth—Judy is caught in a crisis of embodiment following her involvement in Madeleine's death that precedes Scottie's arrival. This is evident upon Scottie leaving the room, at which point the camera, for the first time, breaks its association with Scottie and identifies with Judy. This break in identification re-centers the film's signifying networks around Judy who, in staring directly into the camera, serves as another instance of an exploited feminine subjectivity.

As before, when the pupil of the anonymous woman prefigured a flashback of Scottie's near-death as being somehow mediated by or cinematized by a feminine interiority, Judy's acknowledgement of the camera leads to a flashback of Madeleine's death that reconfigures our understanding of the fundamental signifying designs of the film. In this flashback, the camera ascends beyond the trap door that Scottie had failed to penetrate and reveals that Gavin was waiting for Judy with his already deceased wife, the authentic Madeleine, in his arms. It was not Madeleine, then, who purported to be possessed by Carlotta, but her double. Already the site of a multitude of identities, Madeleine herself is revealed to be a plurality, a mode of embodiment that is iterated with varying degrees of authenticity. However, while this revelation ostensibly portrays

the Carlotta narrative as fraudulent, the relationship between the two Madeleines in this scene emphasizes the ways in which these modes of embodied identification signify over more overt concerns of authenticity.

Before Gavin throws the deceased, originary Madeleine over the edge of the tower, Judy rushes towards them as though to prevent her double's fall. Here, Judy not only identifies as Madeleine's double, but she identifies *with* Madeleine; she acts as though her double were not already deceased, or, more troublingly, as though *she herself* were experiencing her double's redundant death. This is further emphasized by Judy's scream, which, from Scottie's perspective below, seamlessly unifies both Madeleines into one embodiment. As though to emphasize Judy's profound identification with Madeleine, Judy's panic leads her to take the same position in Gavin's arms as her recently discarded double, visually filling the void left by the late Madeleine while simultaneously placing herself in the same danger of suffering a fatal fall (see fig. 22). Judy's glance towards the trap door indicates that she is concerned that Scottie may yet make it to the top of the tower, but it also serves as an acknowledgement that she occupies the self-same position that her double had occupied only seconds earlier, mutely awaiting the arrival of a double that would mark her own redundancy.

Fig. 22. Judy's flashback depicting her emergence through the top of the bell tower and the disposal of her double (Gavin's dead wife) (1:38:48).

The revelation of Judy's identification Madeleine's death reconfigures prior conceptions of possession. Gavin suggests to Scottie that, "someone dead can enter into and take possession of a living being" (13:45), and while Judy's confession appears to dismiss this notion it also details an example of a mundane possession, one in which living beings are not possessed by ghosts but by alternate, malignant embodiments. In one sense, Judy's embodiment of Madeleine not only dictates the manner of her appearance and behavior but also, as is suggested by her empathetic scream, reflects an inward identification as Madeleine insofar as she fears the fall of her double as if it were her own. Judy's reflexive identification with Madeleine hints that this embodiment is more than the result of a well-rehearsed performance, but a genuine adoption of that mode of being. This is similar to Scottie's behavior following his identification with Carlotta's death, where he acts as though he were possessed by the secondhand memory of Carlotta's loss of her child, helpless but to wander the streets of San Francisco in search of the lost object.

In another manner, Judy's embodiment of Madeleine *dis*possesses Gavin's wife of her own embodied identification. In performing Gavin's narrativization of a history originating in Madeleine's matriarchal lineage, Judy aids in realizing a masculine iteration of that history over its feminine, covert counterpart. Judy's identification as Madeleine's double leads to the other's dispossession of embodied agency, leaving Madeleine a specter. It is cruelly appropriate, then, that Judy's relationship to Scottie is contingent on her abdicating her own sense of embodied identity in favor of revivifying Madeleine.

After her flashback, Judy drafts a confession to Scottie in which she writes, "Carlotta was part real, part invented" (1:40:40) and, "if I had the nerve I'd stay and lie hoping that I could make you love me again, as *I* am, for myself" (1:41:00). This is, as Abramson notes, Judy's own form of narrativization, "a plot to leave upon being discovered by Scottie" (81). However, as though in rising to her own challenge, Judy decides to meet Scottie for dinner and attempts to assert her identity over their shared memory of Madeleine. Judy's own confession, however, hints at the difficulties inherent in this attempt. All of Judy's efforts to win Scottie's affection *as* Judy, the Salina, Kansas department store employee, only make Madeleine's absence more conspicuous. Moreover, Judy's efforts to differentiate her own, ostensibly authentic identity from Madeleine's are lies of omission. The purple dress that Judy chooses to wear for her first date with Scottie serves as an apt example of the paradox of authentic identification confronting her. Wood writes, "After Judy has torn up the letter she hides Madeleine's grey suit right at the back of her cupboard, selecting a dress as unlike it as possible" (93). Judy's very attempts to express the primacy of her own, authentic identity lead her to editorialize and exaggerate her differences from Madeleine, thus, that authentic identity is always already insincere and, to an uncertain extent, artificial.

Scottie's remark in convincing Judy to dye her hair, "it can't matter to you" (1:51:00), ironically emphasizes the crucial signifying aspects of outward appearances. Judy's refusal to change her appearance is expressed through indignation: "couldn't you like me, just me the way I am" (1:50:25). Underlying these protests is an implicit fear that Scottie will realize her deceit upon seeing her uncanny resemblance to Madeleine, however, Judy's exact resemblance to Madeleine is not what triggers Scottie's realization. When Judy emerges from the bathroom wearing Madeleine's grey suit and with her newly blonde hair tied in a spiral bun, she *is* Madeleine, a specter from the past who materializes in a haze of green fog. Scottie's embrace with Madeleine initiates the 360-degree shot which briefly transposes their image onto an image of the stables at San Juan Bautista, back to the moment of Madeleine's ultimate identification with Carlotta. Although, as Wood notes, Scottie's expression during this kiss is "troubled and perplexed, divided between surrender and suspicion" (95), following the kiss Scottie is cheerful for the first time since Madeleine's death. As Barbara Creed suggests, it appears that "In recreating Judy as an exact copy of Madeleine, [Scottie] gradually regains his sanity and a sense of enjoyment" (250).

It isn't until Scottie sees the reflection of Judy/Madeleine wearing Carlotta's amber necklace that Scottie compares that image to Carlotta's portrait and realizes Judy's duplicity. As in Judy's reaction to her double's death, her embodiment of Madeleine is replete, reflecting an inward identification with Madeleine that results in her behaving according to the significations of the spiral. As Wood writes, "When Judy/Madeleine re-enters after dressing for dinner, it is Madeleine we see moving, Madeleine we hear talking: Judy is quite submerged… She has re-entered Madeleine's world" (95). Wood's description of Judy as "re-entering Madeleine's world" aptly indicates the totality of this transformation. Judy's re-embodiment of Madeleine figures

her as being once again reflexive to the networks of signification associated with the spiral; this is not a superficial identification but a transformative mode of being.

Abramson characterizes Scottie's efforts to re-experience Madeleine/Carlotta through Judy as indicating that he is "incarcerated by and submissive to the mechanisms of Hollywood directing that produce him as a recreator of the longed-for image, reiterating past-instituted conventions of image manufacture, plotting, and standards of beauty" (79). However, Scottie's interest in Madeleine is not strictly in her image, nor is it strictly a desire to re-cast her for a re-adaptation of Gavin's narrative. Similarly, it is not merely Judy's visual likeness to Madeleine, or her identification as Madeleine, that leads to her death. Judy's re-embodiment of Madeleine, and Scottie's continued fixation on the downward gaze, lead them both to behave reflexively to a host of signifying networks that have been revivified and expanded upon throughout the film and which stretch immeasurably back into the past.

Scottie's realization of Gavin and Judy's deceit does not extricate him from that network of significations, but rather reorients his position within it. In driving himself and Judy/Madeleine back to San Juan Bautista, Scottie performs a re-iteration of both his own past behavior and Gavin's. Scottie's return to the bell tower is not only a "second chance" (2:02:30) to ascend the tower and prevent a loss, but a re-treading of Gavin's role in that loss. Scottie drags the reluctant Judy/Madeleine up the spiral staircase as though she were, as Gavin's wife had been, already dispossessed of embodied agency (2:05:55). Scottie, in contrast, has regained a sense of the embodied agency he had lost in his identification with Madeleine's death. For the first time since that death, we see Scottie confidently behind the wheel of his car, apparently feeling himself in control of the narrativization of his environment as he intends to re-narrativize his experience of Madeleine's death. In interrogating Judy/Madeleine for her

role in Gavin's scheme, Scottie acts like the protagonist of a murder mystery, taking pleasure in revealing the killer's methods and thereby exhuming the episode of its mystery. Scottie's re-narrativizing efforts also corresponds to his freeing himself of his fixation with the downward gaze as, looking down the stairs from the top of the tower, Scottie declares, "I made it" (2:05:40). By all accounts, it appears as though Scottie has vacated the mode of being which before had led to his identification with Carlotta's death. In what should by now be an ominous indication of things to come, however, Scottie resolves to reiterate Madeleine's death in its entirety, as he insists on ascending through the trap door to "look at the scene of the crime" (2:05:50).

As Scottie and Judy kiss for the final time Judy glances sideways at the trap door, reiterating a look that has occurred twice before and that alerts viewers to an unseen threat beyond the frame of the screen (see fig. 23). The first instance of this glance occurs in the first scene at San Juan Bautista, in which Scottie urges Madeleine to stay with him (see fig. 24). In this instance, Madeleine's glance indicates converging disparate signifying threads expressed in a single gesture. In one sense, this glance indicates Madeleine's anxiety that Gavin has arrived and awaits her at the top of the tower; in another sense, this glance indicates Carlotta's paranoia that forces beyond her control are compelling her to confront her own death. In both readings, it is a glance beyond the borders of the screen, an acknowledgement of forces unknown to Scottie or the audience and which thus mark this gesture as an instance of the feminine recognition of the gaze. This glance is reiterated in Judy's memory of the top of the tower (see fig. 22), in which her glance at the trap door marked her anticipation of the arrival of a third party. In its third and final iteration, the paranoid sideward glance is validated by the apparition of a silhouette whose obscured visage drives Judy/Madeleine to plunge over the tower's edge.

Fig. 23. Judy's glance beyond the frame of the film anticipates the arrival of an unknown figure, and that figure, still shrouded in darkness, prompts Judy's plunge over the edge of the tower (2:07:32).

Fig. 24. In the first scene at San Juan Bautista, Madeleine is fixated on the space beyond the frame of the screen (1:15:00).

With Judy's death, the logic of reiteration throughout the film is finally reinstated, framing both Judy and Scottie as having expanded and perpetuated the networks of

signification from which they attempted to deviate. That which occupied the space beyond the frame of the screen materializes, if only momentarily, as a dark apparition, and the portents of that intrusion are made unknowable, lost to Judy's transformation into yet another specter, another wielder of immobile, impenetrable feminine subjectivity. Scottie steps out onto the ledge, his posture reminiscent of that in his unending fall in his nightmare, and gazes down, once again paralyzed by his fixation on the spiral and its signifying mechanisms, once again occupying a mode of embodiment that is reflexive to apparitions of the past.

**Textual Reiteration and Transformation**

From *Vertigo*'s opening credits, Hitchcock figures Scottie and Judy as being subject to unseen forces lurking from without the frame of the screen, forces that destabilize, and are thus omitted from, cohesive systems of representation. Scottie and Judy occupy modes of being that facilitate the perpetual reiteration of the dynamic between systems of representation and that which is effaced or superseded by such signifying systems. In this configuration, the semantic distinctions between authenticity and artifice, or originality and mimicry, are obscured. Gavin's inauthentic narrativization of a past loss effaces the originary Madeleine's lived experience and renders her a liminal entity who occupies the boundaries of *Vertigo*'s frame. In *Vertigo*, inauthentic representations are reified and made to perpetuate networks of signification that are never wholly authentic or original. Each iteration, and each loss, affords another confrontation with that which eludes representation, and which lies beyond the threshold between the world of the living and the world of the dead.

It is by explicating the signifying mechanisms of the spiral and the logic of reiteration that the extent of Hitchcock's work in adapting *D'entre les morts* to film

becomes apparent. In *Vertigo*, Hitchcock's conceptualizations of embodiment and identity, of authenticity and artifice, and originary and reiterative narrativizations borrow imagery and plot devices from *D'entre les morts* while forming disparate signifying networks. This is most evident when comparing the ways in which the plots of each work are and are not resolved. In *Vertigo*, Scottie's efforts to re-narrativize his experience of Madeleine/Carlotta are severely compromised when, in a semantically unresolvable sequence, Judy plunges to her death and marks those efforts as yet another iteration of that narrative, reifying influences of the past which he had hoped to dispel.

In *D'entre les morts*, Flavières' efforts to recontextualize his understanding of Madeleine/Pauline are quickly abandoned. Boileau and Narcejac pose Flavières' conflict as being a choice between facing the truth of his deception or willfully deluding himself into believing in ghostly possessions. Flavières' murder of Madeleine makes it clear that he has chosen to live in a self-imposed delusion and moreover, that the choice was his to make. Given the opportunity to extract himself from the system of signifiers which served as the immediate means of his deception, Flavières is unable or unwilling to commit to such a radical reconceptualization of his past and present modes of being:

> And Flavières suddenly realized that this was the end of everything. . . . Weakly, [Madeleine's double] had agreed to play her part in the plot, and now, years later, out of weakness again, out of a sort of fatalism, she had consented to have an affair with the poor little lawyer who had been their dupe. No… No… He would never admit it. She had merely trumped up this story to get rid of him, because she didn't love him… (location 2163)

Flavières continually makes choices which implicate him further in Gévigne's narrative. With Gévigne's death and the confession from Madeleine's double, that narrative loses any claim to legitimacy and, likewise, the significations it produces by

are delegitimized. Ultimately, Flavières is no more than a tragic, desperate figure whose obsessive lust for a ghostly "Eurydice" (Eurydice is Flavières' nickname for Madeleine) drives him to strangle the woman who destroys the fantasy of that Eurydice character.

In *D'entre les morts*, to invest one's hermeneutic efforts in the significations of the supernatural narrative is to share in Flavières' delusion. In *Vertigo*, however, the spiral of significations associated with effaced feminine subjectivity and the deadly fall indicate issues of representation, authenticity, and embodiment that are never more pressing than in the film's final scene. When Flavières' considers the inauthenticity with which himself and others around him behave, his perception of reality is framed as a choice between fantasy and nihilism, as either giving into self-recognized delusions inspired by his own fears and desires, or suffering the certainty that his life is devoid of significance. When the narrator writes that Flavières is "trembling on the edge of a slope at the bottom of which was the abyss," it is implied that the abyss is the debilitating acceptance of non-meaning; thus, Flavières' obstinate belief in Gévigne's narrative is his last means of avoiding that figurative fall. In contrast, the abyss confronting Scottie in the last shot of the film does not portend a lack of meaning but the resurfacing of significations which he had thought to have been resolved. In *Vertigo*, Hitchcock frames the superficially "delegitimized" narrative of Carlotta's specter as indicating effaced, unrepresentable experiences of the past that repeatedly problematize overly simplistic narrative efforts. Whereas Flavières' "abyss" indicates a void of signification, the spiral in *Vertigo* always indicates the incomplete mapping of networks of signification and, similarly, that current frames of reference are incomplete rather than only false.

This pattern, in which frames of reference are continually established and destabilized, re-contextualized and reiterated, also serves as a means of understanding

Hitchcock's practices as an adaptor of various texts. In cinematizing Boileau and Narcejac's novel, Hitchcock reconfigures its narrative structure in such a manner that threads of signification which are resolved in *D'entre les morts* are left unresolved in *Vertigo* and, thus, continue to signify. Diegetically, these unresolved threads continually resurface in numerous reiterations of narratives throughout the film; extradiegetically, this productive indeterminacy allows for viewers to form new frames of reference and reconfigured investigations with each viewing.

Belton's conception of a hermeneutic spiral, then, is analogous to Scottie's efforts to apprehend that which always eludes representation or understanding. These efforts lead Scottie in a helix-like trajectory, reiterating narratives which always culminate in loss and, thus, encounters with subjectivities rendered inaccessible by death. The reiterative losses throughout the film mark instances wherein signification is least determinable, and Scottie's downward gaze at Judy's senseless death is like a confrontation with the signifying limits of the narrative he wishes to explicate. In Scottie's attempts to understand the Madeleine/Carlotta narrative, he embodies a form of the interpretive strategy outlined in Belton's hermeneutic spiral. This analogy is also similar Creed's, in which she compares the processes of creation, destruction, and re-creation portrayed in the film to Hitchcock's own practices of adaptation.

Understanding Scottie's experiences as being analogous to the struggles of the creator or the interpreter is valuable in understanding Judy's perplexing, not-quite-supernatural death which marks the end of the film. Abramson interprets this scene as indicating that "The deeply ingrained narratives, the preconstituted spectacles of which the director-figure becomes so desirous that he appropriates them as his own, exhibit the unobtainability of free agency so emphatically that his direction and his art prove empty" (82). Yet, in *Vertigo*, encounters with effaced feminine subjectivity coincide not

with the absence of meaning, but rather a paralyzing excess of signifying potential. Even the revelation of Judy's flashback and her monologue, insights which privilege the audience to a feminine subjective experience that purports to dispel the mystery surrounding Carlotta/Madeleine, in fact raise more questions concerning the authenticity of Judy's identity and the extent of her identification with and embodiment of Madeleine.

The final configuration at the bell tower, with the dark figure ascending through the trap door and Judy in held in Scotties arms, so perfectly mirrors the spatial configuration of Judy's flashback that, upon repeat viewings, the memory becomes a premonition of Judy's demise. If Judy's embodied repetition of her double's death indicates "the unobtainability of free agency," it also hints at interior experiences which remain undisclosed and which impel her to act as though she were confronted with the ghost of her double, as though she were confronted with the doubling of her own prior embodiment. In *Vertigo*, the danger in reiterating prior narratives is not the impossibility of producing originary signifying structures, but rather the inevitable reification of those narratives and the embodiment of roles which allow for the past to bear undue influence on the present. The reiteration (and re-adaptation) of narratives leads to an impenetrable barrier of indeterminate significations, but the allure of these reiterations, and Scottie's attraction to Madeleine, is not simply a desire to claim ownership; rather, it is also a desire to explicate the originary space of that which eludes representation.

# CONCLUSION

The two chapters of this dissertation, "Avatars, Embodiment, and Knowledge in Hitchcock's Adaptation of *The Lodger*," and "Revivifications of Narrative in *Vertigo*," map out a method of investigating Hitchcock films as adaptations that centers tropes, motifs, and issues of embodiment in order to trace threads of signification between adapted text and film. In particular, these investigations have focused on the ways that embodied roles and geographic movements portend the reification of tragic narratives, and the ways that bodies, objects, and environments form interconnecting signifying threads. For example, in Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, the Lodger and Daisy embody roles which threaten the reiteration of the Avenger murders, and in *Vertigo* Scottie and Judy embody roles which facilitate a reiteration of Madeleine's false suicide. In *The Lodger*, the tropes of the Avenger's triangle and the GOLDEN CURLS marker are associated with such issues as the Avenger's geographic movements and the mapping of his activities, exploitative and inauthentic portrayals of sexualized blonde women, and the relationship between the camera, the actors on screen, and the audience. In *Vertigo*, the trope of the spiral links to issues of inauthentic embodiments and inauthentic narratives, reiterative, geographic movements, and the framing of visual representations.

Although this investigative method may be productively applied to other works of adaptation, it is particularly well-suited to Hitchcock films due to the ways that objects, environments, and bodies on screen are used to form intertextual networks of signification. Signifying networks in Hitchcock films expand upon and recontextualize signifying threads in both source texts and other Hitchcock films in ways that form overt links within Hitchcock's filmography. Such visual tropes as the Avenger's triangular calling card in Hitchcock's *The Lodger* and Madeleine's spiral bun in *Vertigo* originate in source texts, yet in Hitchcock's adaptations these visual tropes serve to

connect central threads of signification in their respective films. As shown in this dissertation's first chapter, Hitchcock develops the Avenger's triangle into a visual trope which links the cinematized, sexualized violence of the Avenger murders to the love triangle between the Lodger, Joe, and Daisy, and manifests in objects on the screen to raise questions concerning the Lodger's culpability. Additionally, this dissertation's second chapter demonstrates the ways that, in *Vertigo*, Madeleine's spiral bun links Scottie's downward gaze to reiterative geographic movements, inauthentic embodiments, and reiterations of narrative.

Of course, in addition to the Avenger's triangle and Madeleine's spiral bun, many other sites of continuity and discontinuity between source text and film have been explored throughout this dissertation. By tracing plot points, characterizations, and visual and material markers (such as the Avenger triangle and Madeleine's bun) from source text to Hitchcock adaptation, elements of those source materials are shown to have been incorporated and recontextualized within the signifying structures of *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*. If, as Robin Wood writes in regard to Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, "in passing from book to film we find total transformation" (Wood 72), such adaptive transformations are more attributable to differing signifying structures than to divergences of plot and characterization. In this dissertation's second chapter, for example, it is demonstrated that Gavin in *Vertigo* signifies very differently from Gévigne in *D'entre les morts*, despite that both characters marry into the ship-building business, have extramarital affairs, and fabricate nearly identical narratives and identical schemes in order to murder their wives. Without first identifying such commonalities, the full extent of the changes in signifying structures from text to film and, thus, the signifying structures in Hitchcock adaptations, may not be fully explored.

While this dissertation has analyzed Lowndes' *The Lodger* and Boileau-Narcejac's *D'entre les morts* in order to better explicate signifying structures in *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*, this method of analysis also reveals continuities between Hitchcock films which might otherwise go unnoticed. Tracing the signifying threads which mark one Hitchcock film as continuing and expanding upon signifying structures in other, or many other, Hitchcock films is beyond the scope of this dissertation, so the links between *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* have been only briefly alluded to in this dissertation's first chapter. However, the explication of signifying threads between Hitchcock films is yet another productive application of this method of analysis. To demonstrate the specific ways that this hermeneutic method may be used to reveal largely undiscussed and unnoticed connections between Hitchcock films, this conclusion will include a brief investigation of signifying threads linking *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*.

In many ways, comparing *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* is rather unintuitive, as they are very different works that exhibit two very different means of adapting novels to film. Most obviously, *The Lodger* is a silent film and one of Hitchcock's first films as a director. To compare *The Lodger* to *Vertigo*—the latter being a film that, as discussed in the second chapter, is considered by many critics one of the greatest films ever made—is to compare one of the earliest films in Hitchcock's career to one of his most mature works, and that is to say nothing of the social and technological contexts in which these films were produced. Yet, Hitchcock himself referred to *The Lodger* as "the first true 'Hitchcock movie'" (Truffaut 43), and, in support of this claim, many of the tropes and motifs in *The Lodger* would recur in films Hitchcock would direct throughout his career. The most obvious of these tropes is that of the blonde victim, a trope which is expanded upon and called back to throughout the film by the use of an

advertisement flashing the text, “TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS,” but other significant tropes include the use of handcuffs to restrain the Lodger towards the end of the film, the depiction of crowds quickly developing into a mob, and the use of portraits and paintings throughout the film. Moreover, depictions of inauthentic embodiments, the reification of past narratives, and emphases on geographic movements and verticality all link *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* in crucial and unexpected ways. Before exploring these links in detail, however, it is helpful to review the analyses of these films, and their relationships to their source texts, found in this dissertation’s first and second chapters.

The first chapter began by analyzing treatments of embodiment, knowledge, and culpability in Marie Belloc Lowndes’ 1913 novel, *The Lodger*. Of particular note, Lowndes’ depicts the novel’s protagonist, Mrs. Bunting, as relying on her embodied experiences as she investigates her lodger, Mr. Sleuth, and contrasts this embodied knowledge to the rationalizations of her inner monologue. Further, Mr. Sleuth, who is in fact the serial murderer known as the Avenger, is framed as using the bodies of his female victims to spread his fundamentalist, Christian convictions concerning the dangers of “strange women” (Lowndes 20). In Lowndes’ novel, the female body is depicted as a site of ethical conflict, and though Mrs. Bunting is repulsed by reports of the Avenger’s violence, she demonstrates little concern for the victims of those murders and, even after she is certain of his guilt, she continues to praise his character and does her best to protect him from being discovered by authorities.

If Lowndes frames Mr. Sleuth’s murders as a means of inscribing his Christian dogma onto the bodies of his victims, Hitchcock associates the Avenger with the camera, and depicts the murders of young, blonde women from the Avenger’s perspective. This perspective implicates the audience in the violence on screen, but also positions the Avenger in a space like that of the director, a liminal domain between the

world of the film and that of the audience. In Hitchcock's adaptation, the Avenger never appears on screen, leaving the film's villain fundamentally inscrutable, but also ensuring that the Avenger has a haunting effect over the characters who do appear on screen. For the majority of the film, the audience is encouraged to scrutinize the Lodger's behavior for indications that he may reveal himself to be the Avenger, and to scrutinize Daisy's embodied movements for indications that she may be his next victim. While the film explicitly absolves the Lodger from guilt, indications of a morally dubious Lodger remain, and the film's romantic ending fails to resolve earlier associations between the sexualized, inauthentic depictions of blonde women and the impulses of a violent, unseen entity who never materializes on screen.

The second chapter, "Revivifications of Narrative in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*," began by tracing similarities, rather than differences, between Boileau-Narcejac's novel and Hitchcock's film adaptation. In contrast to the case with Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, the narrative structures of *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo* are quite similar, as are several of the characters. Both works depict a detective who, after witnessing the death of a colleague, suffers from a fear of heights. The detective character is asked by a friend from college to surveil his wife, who he says is acting strangely; he even goes so far as to suggest that she may be possessed by her long-deceased ancestor. In both works the wife appears to jump to her death but is later rediscovered by the detective and revealed to have been an imposter who helped the friend from college to murder his "real" wife.

While the narrative structures and characters of *D'entre les morts* and *Vertigo* appear similar, the differences which do appear dramatically alter the tone and significations of the film. First, Gavin Elster (the college friend in Hitchcock's film) is a far more inscrutable character than his counterpart in Boileau-Narcejac's novel. In convincing Judy Barton to play the haunted Madeleine Elster, Gavin becomes a

director-like figure, directing Judy's speech, movements, and mannerisms. This directorial influence renders it impossible to decide which of actor Kim Novak's utterances are attributable to which characters (Madeleine Elster, the specter of Madeleine's ancestor, or Judy Barton), but it also frames Scottie's experiences in the first half of the film as being diegetically artificial. In *D'entre les morts,* the protagonist's refusal to accept the truth of his deception is framed as a psychological failing, an inability to part with the fantasy of the beautiful, possessed Madeleine. In *Vertigo,* however, such distinctions between authenticity and fantasy are blurred. Although Judy Barton confesses to playing the role of Madeleine in order to help Gavin kill his wife, she later acts as though she had re-embodied that inauthentic identity, unthinkingly wearing the necklace that belonged to Madeleine's dead ancestor and which allows Scottie to understand the full extent of his deception. As mentioned earlier, even Scottie's own efforts to confront Judy result in his re-enactment of Gavin's actions, and this only further complicates the relationship between embodied identifications, embodied movements, and the reification of inauthentic narratives.

In *Vertigo,* the significations associated with the Carlotta narrative, and with Scottie's experiences of Madeleine's and Judy's deaths, are suspended. Further, this suspension of signification is achieved (in part) by obscuring the distinctions between authentic and inauthentic embodied roles, and leaving the narrative structures surrounding those embodied roles obscured as well. This is particularly evident in the film's final scene, which reiterates the narrative and visual sequences of Madeleine's death in a manner that reinforces a logic of narrative repetition first established by the supernatural tale of Madeleine's possession. Judy Barton admits to her role in Gavin's scheme, yet at times she acts as though she *were* a Madeleine possessed by an ancestor, wearing Carlotta's incriminating necklace and plunging from the top of the tower as

though she were chased by a specter from the past. Even when Scottie fully understands his deception, he continues to refer to "Madeleine" as though she had been a real person, as though she were more than a mode of Judy Barton's embodiment. Although the narrative of Madeleine's ghostly possession is delegitimized, the significations produced by that narrative, and its influence over the characters of Scottie and Judy, are sustained through to the end of the film.

**Overlapping Networks of Signification in *The Lodger* and *Vertigo***

Clearly, differences between *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* extend far beyond the historical, social, and technological facets of their production. In tracing the signifying structures of *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*, however, the investigations in the two chapters of this dissertation reveal overlapping configurations of embodiment, material markers, and geographic and vertical movements between these films. Both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* depict characters whose embodied identity is destabilized, and in both films the embodiment of certain roles is linked to the reification of past narratives. Both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* utilize certain objects, such as the cuckoo clock which sounds as the Lodger arrives at the Buntings' home, the painting which falls in chorus with Daisy's scream, Carlotta's necklace, and Madeleine's dress, to mobilize significations concerning authenticity, violence, and knowledge. Finally, both films emphasize geographic movements, such as those of the Avenger in *The Lodger* and those of Scottie and Madeleine in *Vertigo*.

Because Daisy's embodiment of the Lodger's sister and Judy's embodiment of Madeleine mark a direct and unexpected link between *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*, this comparison will begin by examining the trope of revivification in both films. Additionally, in each film the trope of revivification frames configurations of

embodiment, authenticity, and narrative in ways that allow these signifying threads to be easily traced from one film to another. However, while the trope of revivification is made explicit in *Vertigo* (through Carlotta's supposed possession of Madeleine and Judy's re-embodiment of Madeleine), in *The Lodger* the trope of revivification manifests in a subtle, almost subtextual manner, which can be revealed by reviewing the narrative details surrounding the link between Daisy and the Lodger's deceased sister.

In *The Lodger*, the trope of revivification is most overtly elicited by the visual likeness between Daisy and the depiction of the Lodger's sister in the flashback of her murder. When the titular protagonist explains that his sister was killed by the Avenger at her "coming-out ball" (1:17:25), we are shown a flashback in which the Lodger dances with his sister when a mysterious hand flips off all the lights. Next, the Lodger's sister's face fills the screen—her face is turned upwards and her mouth is agape—ensuring that her murder follows the same visual and gestural pattern established by the depiction of the two Avenger murders which appear earlier in the film. Of particular note is that the Lodger, despite having been dancing in his sister's arms immediately before her murder, disappears after the lights have been turned off. On close inspection, then, the sequence which would definitively absolve the Lodger of guilt instead shows that he has omitted his exact location and actions during and after his sister's murder—arguably the most important details of the story—from his testimony.

The Lodger's deceptively ambiguous flashback not only casts doubt on the Lodger's moral character, but it also recalls an earlier romantic scene in which the Lodger visits the salon where Daisy works as a clothing model. When Daisy emerges from the arched doorway, the Lodger looks as though he were in a trance, and when Daisy exits the showroom floor the Lodger buys Daisy the dress she had just modeled.

It isn't until the Lodger's flashback that the audience can see the dress Daisy had worn, and, indeed, her necklace, bracelet, and hair are nearly identical to that of the Lodger's sister at her coming-out ball. The Lodger's apparently romantic gesture of buying Daisy a dress is thus framed as a means of revivifying his sister. It is suggested, however implicitly, that the Lodger desires Daisy not only because she is protective and loving, not only because of her "Beautiful golden hair" (27:56), but also because she allows the Lodger to once again embrace the visual embodiment of his lost sibling.

In an interview with François Truffaut, Hitchcock said of *Vertigo*'s Scottie, "To put it plainly, the man wants to go to bed with a woman who's dead; he is indulging in a form of necrophilia" (Truffaut 244), and a similar argument might be made regarding the Lodger. Clearly, the Lodger's gaze towards Daisy is never more desirous or intense than when he sees Daisy dressed as his dead sister. However, the Lodger's attraction to Daisy when she most resembles his deceased sister also suggests that his interest in her is at least partly incestuous. Conveniently, this is also an expression of an incestuous desire that transgresses no social boundaries. As his sister's surrogate, Daisy allows the Lodger to maintain his fixation on the loss of his sister while also allowing him to establish his household. With the Lodger's mother and sister both deceased, only the audience might notice the unsettling link between the Lodger's interest in Daisy and her resemblance to his last memories of his sister.

The visual link between the Lodger's sister and Daisy, and the ways that link complicates the Lodger's desire for Daisy, serves as an analog for Scottie's discovery of and romantic involvement with Judy Barton. Just as Scottie always relates to Judy as a potential embodiment of Madeleine, the Lodger always treats Daisy as a potential embodiment of an Avenger victim. This is evident when the Lodger tells Daisy, "I have been tracking [the Avenger] down. Every week he moved nearer to your street"

(1:20:00). From the moment of the Lodger's arrival to the Bunting's home, then, the Lodger views Daisy as a means of preventing the reiteration of his sister's murder, as a means of redeeming his past. That the Lodger views Daisy as a potential Avenger victim is further suggested by his reaction upon hearing Daisy's laugh when he enters the Bunting's home, and his obsessive gaze towards her upon seeing her for the first time. Perhaps, as William Rothman suggests, "when the lodger first hears Daisy's laugh, I take it, he recognizes that she was born to play the role of the Avenger's victim" (*Hitchcock's Murderous Gaze* 47). In a similar manner, when Judy fully re-embodies the role of Madeleine and wears Carlotta's necklace, Scottie realizes the opportunity which Judy's embodiment of Madeleine affords him. At the bell tower, Scottie tells Judy, "I need you to be Madeleine for a while" (2:01:05), explaining, "One doesn't often get a second chance. You're my second chance. I want to stop being haunted" (2:02:29).

By expressing certain modes of embodiment, Daisy and Judy offer the Lodger and Scottie a "second chance," an opportunity to prevent the reiteration of a tragic loss. Further, Daisy's embodiment of the Avenger victim and Judy's embodiment of Madeleine are both depicted in ways that obscure the distinctions between authentic and inauthentic embodiments. Issues of authenticity are first raised in *The Lodger* when, following the news of the latest Avenger attack, one model proclaims, "No more peroxide for yours truly" (10:29), a comment which associates the Avenger's attacks with her inauthentic embodiment of the sexualized blonde advertised by the GOLDEN CURLS intertitle. In an unexpected manner, this sequence also emphasizes the sustained significance of even artificial, inauthentic embodiments: as the Avenger does not discriminate between natural and dyed hair, even inauthentic embodiments portend the next Avenger murder.

Later in the film, the authenticity of Daisy's own embodiments is drawn into question. In one scene, Daisy is framed in a manner identical to that of the film's previous depictions of Avenger murders, with her face upturned and her mouth open in a scream. Daisy's embodiment of the Avenger victim results in detective Joe and Daisy's mother rushing upstairs, but Daisy explains that she had only been scared by a mouse. However, like the Lodger's flashback, the cause of Daisy's panic is conspicuously omitted from view. We are left unsure as to whether Daisy was truly frightened by a mouse, if Daisy was frightened by something else which she decided to hide from her mother and Joe, or if she had only pretended to be frightened and had only disingenuously embodied the role of the Avenger victim in order to coax the Lodger into playing the role of a protector and to elicit Joe's jealousy. As outlined in the first chapter, when Joe enters the Lodger's room and finds Daisy and the Lodger embracing, Daisy and the Lodger maintain their embrace until Joe roughly pushes Daisy away. Despite her overt, physical display of affection towards the Lodger, Daisy allows Joe to apologize to her for losing his temper and even accepts Joe's kiss. Even if Daisy had been frightened by a mouse, she leverages her embodiment the role of the Avenger victim to manipulate the behavior of those around her, and this in itself suggests that her embodiments of the role of the blonde victim are, at least in part, calculated rather than incidental.

In *Vertigo*, of course, issues of authenticity in embodiment are even further complicated. As discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, Judy's prior embodiment of Madeleine compels her to assert her authentic identity as Judy Barton in ways that make it difficult to determine how much of Judy's manner and behavior is genuine and how much is exaggerated in order to prevent Scottie from discovering the truth. While Daisy may embody the Avenger victim as a means of manipulating those

around her and comes to embody the role of the Lodger's deceased sister, Judy's embodied identity is destabilized in a manner that is never resolved. In wearing Carlotta's necklace, Judy's identification as Madeleine is depicted as a subconscious slip into that prior mode of embodiment. Later, when Judy is interrogated by Scottie at the bell tower, her mannerisms and speech seem to alternate between disparate identities, blurring the boundaries between authentic and inauthentic identifications. As Wood describes the scene, "we have a terrifying sense of watching a personality disintegrate before our eyes: [Judy] talks sometimes as Madeleine, sometimes as Judy" (Wood 96). Ultimately, despite the inauthenticity of Judy's identification with Madeleine, and despite the artifice of Madeleine's apparent suicide, Judy's re-embodiment of Madeleine leads to her very genuine death and the reification of the Carlotta narrative.

Unlike Judy, whose embodiment of Madeleine leads her to reiterate Madeleine's false suicide, Daisy's embodiment of the Lodger's sister does not result in her death at the hands of the Avenger. Nevertheless, Daisy's embodiment of the Lodger's sister, and the Lodger's obsession with blonde hair, contribute to a number of sequences which suggest that the Lodger and Daisy may, at any moment, fully embody the roles of villain and victim. Further, the visual connection between the Lodger's sister and Daisy frames Daisy's romance with the Lodger as always being related to the death of his mother and sister. With the depiction of murder which opens the film and the immediate association between the Avenger and blonde women, Daisy is prefigured as an Avenger victim and her relationship with the Lodger is always already framed as a means of the potential proliferation or interruption of the series of murders that began with the Lodger's sister.

In both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*, the trope of revivification manifests in relation to partially obscured, originary narratives. As Scottie tells Judy, these revivifications offer the protagonists a "second chance," but in both films, the embodiment of deceased characters fails to adequately recontextualize past narratives. Rather, both Daisy's and Judy's revivifications of deceased characters only further obscure the protagonists' relationship to the past. In *The Lodger*, Daisy's revivification manifests in relation to the Lodger's flashback of his sister's murder, and this flashback serves as a kind of originary narrative in that it contextualizes the Lodger's behaviors. However, as discussed earlier, this flashback also depicts the Lodger as disappearing during and after his sister's murder, precisely at the moment which marks the Avenger's first diegetic murder. Not only does the flashback fail to prove the Lodger's innocence, but it also further obscures the boundaries between the Lodger and the Avenger. Thus, when the flashback links the Lodger's sister to Daisy's appearance on the showroom floor, the Lodger's gaze towards Daisy signifies simultaneously as that of a bereft brother and that of the Avenger, and both modes of agency are characterized by an obsession with violent retribution, past iniquities, and manifestations of the Avenger victim. Although Daisy, as a potential embodiment of the blonde victim, would promise the Lodger an opportunity to redeem his failure to prevent his sister's murder, her visual revivification of the Lodger's sister also highlights the inherent deviancy and indeterminacy of the Lodger's desire.

In *Vertigo*, of course, the story of Carlotta serves as the originary narrative framing the diegetically contemporaneous events on screen, but it is Judy's flashback that most directly links to the story of the Lodger's sister. As in the case of the Lodger's flashback, Judy's flashback serves as a kind of confession and, like the Lodger's flashback, the surface-level narrative of Judy's flashback is undermined by subtextual

ambiguity. Although Judy's flashback superficially delegitimizes the supernatural elements associated with Carlotta and Madeleine, it also sustains the logic of possession and dispossession of embodied identity introduced by Gavin's suggestions of the supernatural. In her flashback, Judy, as Madeleine, is shown ascending through the trap door of the bell tower, whereupon Gavin throws his wife's lifeless body over the edge of the tower. In this sequence, Judy's embodiment of Madeleine is depicted as a kind of mundane possession, in that it reifies the story of Madeleine's mysterious suicide and utterly dispossesses Gavin's wife of embodied identification. When Judy's re-embodiment of Madeleine ends with her reiterating that sequence, throwing herself over the tower as Gavin had once thrown his dead wife, the apparent resolution provided by her flashback and her confession to Scottie is significantly compromised. As in Daisy's revivification of the Lodger's sister, Judy's revivification of Madeleine promises Scottie a chance to recontextualize the past, but ultimately highlights the past as maintaining a subversive, undue influence on the present.

Depictions of the revivification of deceased characters serve as the foremost link between *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* and, as this comparison has shown, elucidate overlapping configurations of embodiment, authenticity, and narrative in each film. There are, however, several other motifs which link one film to another, most notably a shared emphasis on verticality and geographic movements, and the intriguing likeness of the GOLDEN CURLS marker in *The Lodger* and the spiral in *Vertigo.* While these tropes manifest and signify differently in each film, in both films they are implemented in ways that allude to visual regimes and signifying designs that exceed the domain of the subjective characters on screen.

Although *Vertigo* opens with a chase scene depicting the near-death experience which leads to Scottie's retirement from the police, the opening credits sequence which

precedes it is critical to tracing the motif of the spiral, and its relation to feminine subjectivity, throughout the film. In *Vertigo*'s opening credits, a woman's face appears on screen, but is never shown in its entirety. The unidentifiable woman's eyes nervously scan from one side to the other, as though in anticipation of some threat beyond the frame of the screen that remains hidden to the audience. Finally, the camera zooms in on one of the woman's eyes and a small spiral emerges from her iris, then the spiral grows large enough to fill the screen. As argued in this dissertation's second chapter, this sequence frames the spiral motif as relating to the limitations of visual representation and feminine subjectivity. Already the camera, capturing the woman's face in such proximity, bars the audience from identifying her, and though her eye fills the space of the screen, her subjective experience remains impenetrable. When the image of the woman fades and the scene of Scottie's near-death opens, it is as though the cinematization of Scottie's near-death experience were contingent on the complicity of this anonymous woman. The spiral re-emerges when Scottie's colleague falls to his death and his body turns as it grows smaller and smaller, reversing the visual sequence of the spiral that had emerged from the woman's eye.

In *Vertigo*, then, the spiral is immediately linked to verticality and issues of visual representation. When Scottie gazes down, helpless and transfixed by the potential of his own fatal fall, that fixation is associated with the camera's interaction with the unidentifiable woman in the opening credits, from whose eye the film's title, and Hitchcock's own credit, emerges. The spiral's next overt manifestation takes the form of the spiral bun of Madeleine's hair, which mimics the hair style worn by Carlotta Valdes in her portrait. Here, the spiral alludes to the opportunity which Madeleine presents to Scottie, the opportunity to penetrate the otherwise impenetrable interiority

depicted in Carlotta's portrait, to transgress the boundary between the past and the present.

Finally, the spiral is also linked to geographic movements. In *Vertigo*, Scottie's investigation of Madeleine begins as a circuit around the city of San Francisco and several surrounding landmarks. As Scottie's investigation progresses, and, later, his obsession grows, this geographic circuit develops into a pattern of reiterative movements. First, Scottie is led in these circuits by Madeleine who, supposedly being possessed by Carlotta, visits landmarks that reinforce her identification with Carlotta. Following Madeleine's death, however, Scottie reiterates these circuits on his own, retracing the series of landmarks in the hopes that it will reveal another potential embodiment of Madeleine. Troublingly, Scottie's spiral-like reiterations of geographic movement *do* result in another potential embodiment of Madeleine when he discovers Judy Barton and, of course, this ultimately leads to the reiteration of Madeleine's false suicide.

The spiral in *Vertigo* associates Scottie's fixation on the downward gaze with a desire to transgress the boundaries between the past and the present, and frames circuitous geographic movements and the reiteration of embodied roles as having the potential to reify past narratives. Although configurations of geographic movement, the GOLDEN CURLS marker, and issues of visual representation all signify quite differently in *The Lodger*, there are remarkable similarities.

First, as in *Vertigo*, *The Lodger* begins with a close-up shot of a woman's face. While the sequence of the anonymous woman in the opening credits of *Vertigo* is almost certainly non-diegetic, as the woman appears to deliberately and nervously acknowledge the camera's gaze, the opening image in *The Lodger* implicitly depicts one of the Avenger's murders. We are shown a young, blonde woman who screams in

terror and whose attention is fixed towards the top of the screen, and her curled, blonde hair glows with suffused light. Immediately, this shot establishes the Avenger murders as also denoting a particular relationship between the camera, the audience, and the actors on screen. The camera captures the woman's face so closely that the Avenger can only occupy the directorial space just behind the camera, and the audience is made to share in the Avenger's perspective. This configuration suggests that the Avenger maintains a privileged relationship to the camera, and this is further supported by the fact that the Avenger is never captured on screen and is never shown as an embodied figure. Rather, the Avenger is that which always remains beyond the frame, an entity that is only ever apprehended by the Avenger victims. As in *Vertigo*'s opening credits, this opening shot highlights the limitations of visual representation: the Avenger murders coincide with detailed, close-up shots of women in a manner that emphasizes their subjective experiences yet marks those subjectivities as being crucially inaccessible.

The opening murder in *The Lodger* is immediately followed by an intertitle advertising "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS." This juxtaposition links the Avenger's murders to the sexualization and commercialization of young, blonde women, but it also establishes a dichotomy between the Avenger's triangular calling card and the blond victim, and this dichotomy links issues of geographic movements, visual representation, and past narratives. Aside from the Avenger's calling cards, the triangle also manifests in the map which the Lodger uses to chart the Avenger murders and to estimate the geographic location of the next murder. The Avenger murders correspond to a roughly linear, southern movement towards the river Thames, indicating that they follow a decipherable logic. The GOLDEN CURLS marker, in contrast, is associated with the circular path of the show room floor where Daisy models clothing, in the

circular waltz performed by the Lodger and his sister, and in the static, impenetrable portraits of blonde women that the Lodger banishes from his room. The Avenger triangle and the GOLDEN CURLS marker indicate two opposed modes of movement, embodiment, and relationships to visual representation. If the GOLDEN CURLS marker indicates that which is the subject of the camera's gaze, that which surrenders to exhibition and which moves in interminable, indecipherable, yet tantalizing circuits, the Avenger is that which directs the camera's gaze and which inscribes a triangular topography of blonde victims over the city of London in a manner that subverts traditional means of visual representation such as paintings and photographs.

Ultimately, the GOLDEN CURLS marker is coopted, rather than strictly opposed, by the Avenger in the production of the series of images constituting the Avenger murders. As discussed earlier, the Avenger victim's upturned head and open mouth develop into a visual trope (see figs. 25, 26, and 27) indicating the presence of something lurking above the frame of the screen. In contrast to Scottie's downward gaze in *Vertigo*, which is associated with the spiral, the danger in *The Lodger* is always indicated as precipitating from somewhere above. This is evident not only in the Avenger murders themselves, which always depict the victim staring upwards in horror, but in the chandelier which hangs in the room directly below the Lodger's, the chains of which form an upright triangle and which are repeatedly used to suggest the Lodger's guilt.

Fig. 25. The second depiction of an Avenger murder in Hitchcock's *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (36:02).

Fig. 26. Daisy reproduces the gesture and pose of the Avenger murders (42:00).

Figure 27. The murder of the Lodger's sister, depicted in the Lodger's flashback (1:18:18).

Further associating the threat of the Avenger with verticality, throughout *The Lodger* the threat of the Avenger is also associated with a series of falls. As outlined in this dissertation's first chapter, the first fall is that of Mr. Bunting who, while trying to reach a bottle of liquor, slips from his stepstool, an accident which elicits Daisy's laughter and which, in turn, arouses the Lodger's attention. Other falls include several dropped chess pieces, a tray which Daisy drops upon seeing the mouse in the Lodger's room, and most notably, the portrait of a blonde woman which falls in conjunction with Daisy's embodiment of the role of the Avenger victim. As in *Vertigo*, the visual gesture of the fall denotes the potential for an unseen presence to emerge from beyond the frame and impel the deaths of the characters on screen.

**Methodology and Future Applications**

In both *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*, revivifications of deceased characters promise a chance to recontextualize past narratives, but in both films these revivifications serve

only to emphasize the indeterminacy of the significations produced by those past narratives. By exploring the most direct link between these films—the revivification of deceased women—the framing of such issues as culpability and authenticity is shown to have been expanded upon and reiterated in later films. In *The Lodger*, for example, the implicit suggestion that Daisy offers the Lodger a chance to revivify his sister raises concerns over authenticity in embodied identity in ways that anticipate issues of embodiment in *Vertigo*. In *Vertigo*, the same signifying threads concerning authenticity and embodiment emerge in new contexts, in the wake of various reiterations of similar motifs in other Hitchcock films, not to mention *Vertigo*'s adapted text. If the ambiguity concerning the Lodger's and Daisy's embodied identifications alludes to their potential roles as villain and victim, it is perhaps unsurprising that this ambiguity in embodied identification is pushed to its logical end in *Vertigo*. Nevertheless, these signifying threads are not merely repeated, they are reiterated in ways which ensure their diversification and expansion.

More abstract signifying markers, such as the GOLDEN CURLS trope in *The Lodger* and the spiral in *Vertigo*, similarly indicate figurations of verticality, visual representation, and geographic movements that link one film to the other. The spiral and its association with a desire to transgress the boundaries of visual representation expands upon a similar relationship between GOLDEN CURLS and the Avenger murders in *The Lodger*—both the spiral and the GOLDEN CURLS marker alert viewers to a danger lurking beyond the frame of the screen, and in both films that danger is expressed as a potential fall.

Although this comparison between *The Lodger* and *Vertigo* explicates only a few of the many links between these films, it demonstrates that analyzing Hitchcock films as adaptations helps to elucidate the signifying networks of Hitchcock films as a whole.

For example, by tracing the Avenger's triangle from Lowndes' novel to its figuration in Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, the investigation in this dissertation's first chapter outlines concerns over geographic movement and relationships to the camera that resurface in the second chapter's investigation of *Vertigo*. In a similar manner, tracing the differences in signification between Madeleine's bun in *D'entre les morts* and in *Vertigo* leads to a consideration of visual representation in Hitchcock's adaptation that invites reconsiderations of the GOLDEN CURLS marker in *The Lodger*.

Understanding the ways that Hitchcock films incorporate and recontextualize various signifying threads in source texts helps to expose important but largely unaddressed aspects of the networks of signification running throughout all Hitchcock films. In recent years, interest in analyzing Hitchcock films as adaptations has risen, as evidenced by collections of essays like the 2011 text, *Hitchcock at the Source: Auteur as Adaptor*, edited by R. Barton Palmer and David Boyd, and the 2014 text *Hitchcock & Adaptation: On the Page and Screen*, edited by Mark Osteen. Although the analytical method outlined in this dissertation began taking shape in a 2012 master's thesis titled "The Sabotage of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*: Hitchcock Reads Conrad," such works as *Hitchcock at the Source* and *Hitchcock & Adaptation* have provided a wealth of contemporary analyses which treat Hitchcock films as intertextual adaptations. Additionally, the works of such adaptation scholars as Thomas Leitch, Robert Stam, and Linda Hutcheon have greatly informed the theoretical background for the methodology outlined in this dissertation, particularly Stam's conceptualization of "intertextual dialogism" (Stam 64). Although the research in this dissertation privileges the signifying networks of Hitchcock films over those of source texts, this research is predicated on an understanding of Hitchcock films as sites of infinite intertextual influences. By understanding adaptation as a practice of reciprocal creative production,

one may begin to investigate the signifying networks in Hitchcock adaptations as expanding and recontextualizing signifying threads in source texts, rather than only as "total transformation[s]" (Wood 72).

Despite increased interest in reading Hitchcock films as adaptations, the investigative method outlined in this dissertation reveals that there is much to be explored. By focusing on the ways that signifying markers in source texts relate to greater networks of signification in Hitchcock films, certain motifs and tropes like the Avenger's triangle and the spiral in *Vertigo* are understood in new contexts and are shown to link source texts to Hitchcock films, and Hitchcock films to other Hitchcock films, in significant yet unexpected ways. Further, there are many possibilities for the continuation and expansion of this research, especially as the elucidation of a particular trope or motif in one film leads to its expansion and recontextualization in another. The revivification of deceased characters emerges in a very different, yet eminently relevant way in Hitchcock's 1960 film, *Psycho* (an adaptation of Robert Bloch's novel of the same title), in which Norman Bates' identification with his dead mother seems to grant her embodied agency. In *Vertigo*, the framing of embodiment as a kind of possession of embodied identity might be productively traced to Hitchcock's 1951 film, *Strangers on a Train*, which is an adaptation of a novel by Patricia Highsmith. In *Strangers on a Train*, Bruno Antony's suggestion that he and Guy Haines perform murders for one another leads to Bruno acting as Guy's deranged, ulterior double. In Hitchcock's adaptation of John Buchan's novel, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, protagonist Richard Hannay's encounter with a secret agent impels him on a journey that, in stretching from London to the Scottish Highlands and back, implicates his entanglement with dangerous knowledge to geographic movements and the traversal of landscapes in ways that link to configurations of geography and landscapes in *The Lodger* and *Vertigo*. Yet another

possibility for further research is Hitchcock's 1972 film *Frenzy*, which is an adaptation of a novel by Arthur La Bern that reiterates the wrong man motif and the cinematization of sexualized murder in *The Lodger* in ways that provide nearly direct links to that early Hitchcock film.

While the investigative method outlined in this dissertation may be productively applied to many Hitchcock adaptations, one of the most intriguing possibilities would be the little-known 1929 film *Blackmail*, based on a play of the same title by Charles Bennett. In *Blackmail*, a young woman named Alice is involved in a love triangle with Frank, a Scotland Yard detective, and Mr. Crewe, an artist. Almost immediately, then, the love triangle links back to the relationship between the Lodger, Daisy, and detective Joe, or even that of former detective Scottie, Gavin, and Madeleine. When Alice murders Mr. Crewe in self-defense, it is almost as though the continually suggested danger of the Lodger's embodiment of the Avenger, and Daisy's embodiment of the blonde victim, had manifested on screen. Further, Alice's murder of Mr. Crewe is preceded by her attempts to draw her self-portrait, thus framing her crime as a conflict between two opposed visual regimes—that of the sexualizing gaze of Mr. Crewe and the incompetent yet brash self-identification evidenced by Alice's efforts. It is Mr. Crewe's efforts to compel Alice to switch to a different mode of embodiment, changing her dress for a more revealing costume, that precipitates his aggressive sexual advances towards her. This framing of visual representation and embodiment links to and expands upon configurations of violence, inauthentic embodiments, and visual representations invoked by the tropes of the Avenger triangle and the GOLDEN CURLS in *The Lodger* and by the spiral and Carlotta's portrait in *Vertigo*.

There is a plethora of Hitchcock adaptations that, once analyzed in relation to their source texts and other Hitchcock films, would undoubtedly inform an expansive

re-examination of the varied and intertextual signifying threads explicated throughout this dissertation. Although this dissertation focuses on only two Hitchcock films and their source texts, it has outlined the signifying networks of those films in comparatively extensive detail and, moreover, established an appropriate methodology for outlining the signifying networks of other Hitchcock adaptations in the future. The research undertaken in this dissertation explicates only certain aspects of the vast web of signification spanning so many Hitchcock films, but it has done so with the aims of applying this investigative method to other Hitchcock adaptations, and elucidating new areas of the Hitchcockian web of significations, in the future.

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