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Film No Longer Telling a Story; Film Itself as the Story: Reflexive Constructions in Alfred Hitchcock and Jean-Luc Godard

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Film no Longer Telling a Story; Film itself *as* the Story:
Reflexive Constructions in Alfred Hitchcock and Jean-Luc Godard

Senior Project Submitted to

The Division of Arts

of Bard College

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter One — Reflexivity in Cinema.....	10
Innovation in Hitchcock: Overt Montage, Self-Referential Camera.....	12
Godard and the Breaking of the Fourth Wall.....	23
Chapter Two — Cinema as a Language.....	40
Hitchcock’s <i>Psycho</i> : Montage to Create Emotion.....	41
Godard’s <i>Contempt</i> : Montage to Develop an Idea.....	59
Chapter Three — Redefining Narrative Structures.....	69
Manipulation through Subjective Treatment.....	71
Digression from Narrative Constructions.....	89
Conclusion	100
Bibliography	106

INTRODUCTION

Federico Fellini's *8 1/2* (1963) is a film with itself as its subject: it represents the director's eighth 'and a half' film. Here is cinema being both innovative and autobiographical—the film Fellini makes is the film his character Guido creates in the narrative. The opening sequence of *8 1/2* presents all the themes of a film entirely about voyeurism, self-reference, and the unconscious through the effects of montage.

The opening scene inhabits a dream-like world. The camera pans over rows of cars and presents Guido, the film's protagonist, stuck in this traffic jam. He stares at the people surrounding him as they stare right back at him, immersed in their gaze. A crowd of passengers



Figure 1. *8 1/2* Federico Fellini, 1963.

in a bus are all oriented towards the character, only their faces are concealed (Fig. 1). This seems directly suggestive of the nature of cinema's

spectators: they can see the protagonist clearly but he in turn cannot look back onto them. The viewer is in a power position as subject looking onto objects. Suddenly smoke appears in the car and Guido begins to suffocate, trapped inside of it. Furthering this distance between film viewer and film character, the onlookers seem entirely unfazed by the circumstance: they do not react to the character's clear disarray and continue to stare with detachment from the object of their gaze. This says something about the spectator, invested in his voyeurism yet also detached from the

world he watches, separated by a film screen or in this case, a car window. The film viewer is hence made aware of the position he occupies as the film here turns its gaze back onto him.

As the subjective camera largely follows Guido, the film viewer feels just as trapped as he does; as the camera tracks frequently revealing cuts which display the many onlookers, the viewer watches just as detachedly as do the voyeurs in the scene. This dreamlike world is thus one into which the viewer is pulled just as it is one from which he can escape his own world and gain self-consciousness by being looked back upon. This refers to a clear duality within cinema: the manipulation through the camera's orientation of gaze and expression of reality through the opening up of this gaze to a dreamlike world.

This escape towards a reality, albeit not essentially 'real' but rather dreamlike, is revealed at the end of the opening sequence. Guido succeeds in crawling out of the car and suddenly soars



Figure 2. 8 1/2

through the air and into the sky (Fig. 2). The camera presents a point of view shot of the clouds as he soars upwards into them, as if the camera is seemingly

soaring through the air too. This surrealist image seems to be speaking of the essence of cinema itself—of cinema's nature as taking part in the dreamworld, as a direct translation of a director's subconscious mind. It perhaps also invokes the idea that film enables one to transcend this feeling of entrapment Guido experiences in the car; it allows one to soar and travel beyond

physical reality, moving instead towards a surreal world entirely composed of one's thoughts and ideas. This subconscious world is however extremely real in a different sense: it represents the reality of the mind, of the unconscious, and of the dream space. What becomes *unreal* is everything else; the elements from the fabricated narrative, in their attempt at seeming realistic. Cinema is inherently already illusion—what it attempts to present as real is hence already unreal; where it can get closer to reality is through the expression of emotion or thought from the unveiling of one subconscious mind to another.

Guido then ends up on a beach, tied by foot to a rope, a man pulling him down toward the sea. Here again the camera remains in Guido's point of view as the character's leg and the sea below him are seen from above. The film viewer begins to fall down with the protagonist, falling down into a seeming 'reality' but in fact essentially into direct illusion, for he falls back down into the film narrative. *8 1/2* is the mingling of this real and illusionistic world, the two appearing contradictory in appearance: the illusionistic dream world manifesting itself as real for its opening up to the mind; the realistic storyline exposing artifice through its linear construction. Fellini's film is largely about the concept of "*Anima*," the Latin word that comes up several times in the film, meaning soul or spirit. This is psychologist Carl Jung's term for the inner feminine part of a man's psyche—the expression of his subconscious. The film's construction awakens this subconscious as it evokes the meanderings of life itself through its narrative, supplemented by the expression of reflexivity and the use of a revealing montage largely fragmenting its linearity.

Fellini seems to be interested in "stories where nothing happens" as the protagonist Guido says in the film. He lets his desires control his mind and control the way the film moves.

As nothing happens, the narrative is not critical to the film. The sequence instead integrates the dream space and the imagination, clearly proving the artist's innovation within the film. He enters the world of his own subconscious through his filmmaking and allows for his audience to see the inner workings of his mind through the workings of the camera. The film is hence evidently personal, but it is not private. The filmmaker's self-consciousness in turn allows for the spectator to open himself up to his own mind, rendering him self-aware of his own voyeurism and psychology.

A film reflexive of itself using montage as a means of directly transmitting an idea is significant in orienting the film's message a particular way. The spectator is able to become somewhat complicit with the filmmaker, opened up to the workings of the film process by being reminded of its medium. It alters the mainstream concept of film as a telling of a narrative, by instead redefining this precise artificial linear construction to deliver cinema as a medium closer to the spontaneity of life. This opening sequence of *8 1/2* very eloquently exhibits a self-conscious manipulation of reality as an instrument in overcoming the limits of the real world. With this suggestive scene in mind and in questioning how a self-conscious filmic construction works together with a narrative to develop a particular film language, I am interested in analyzing and comparing the works of Alfred Hitchcock and Jean-Luc Godard, whose works largely reflect the themes of *8 1/2*'s opening sequence.

Godard and Hitchcock represent two directors especially compelling in their contrasting narrative styles, yet who often times remain comparable in their reflexivity on cinema, the viewer, and themselves—the later director evidently influenced by the first, drawing from and extending his techniques. Hitchcock's sense of perfection is achieved through control and

constitutes his cinematic aesthetic. The English filmmaker was highly regarded for his *mise en scène* and formal elements by the film critics of the early fifties who became the filmmakers of the French New Wave. These critics were writing in the *Cahiers du Cinéma*, founded by André Bazin. Hitchcock's films appeared several times in the annual best film list by the magazine, establishing an apparent dialogue between Hitchcock's cinema and that of the New Wave. The first of them to write about Alfred Hitchcock was the young Jean-Luc Godard in 1952 on *Strangers on a Train* (1951). In 1957, Godard writes again about Hitchcock, this time about *The Wrong Man* (1956), calling it "a lesson in *mise en scene* every foot of the way."¹ These articles, extremely detailed and conscious of Hitchcock's camera work, show already an apparent admiration for the director and his later influence on Godard.

In studying this filmic modernism, it is evident Hitchcock and Godard are not the only filmmakers to have thought about the medium of film as being expressive in and of itself, to have been self-consciousness of their filmmaking, and to have constructed a visible montage as a means of expressing a thought. In exploring these self-conscious themes of art and in recognizing montage as an instrument for meaning within film (perhaps serving almost as an alternative to conventional narrative), I have however found in them an interesting association in relating their two filmic styles and ultimately arriving at an understanding in how their processes differ.

These two filmmakers produce meaning within the constraints of the film apparatus itself—in other words, the workings of the camera and their use of montage carries significance in themselves. Through their films, the nature of cinema reveals itself to be both in accordance with

¹ Jean-Luc Godard, "Le Cinéma et Son Double" [The Cinema and its Double], *Cahiers du Cinéma*, June 1, 1957, 35.

and in juxtaposition to life: the character as a mirror of the film viewer just as the two are inherently separated from one another; the manipulation of reality unfolding in front of the camera, ultimately an illusion; the ending or final silence of film as a potential opening up to the world. Hitchcock and Godard however appear to differ in how these means enable them to achieve cinematic transcendence: the former in order to bring the viewer deeply into the minds of its characters, at the same time as directly into his own; the latter in order to come closer to life and to the workings of the mind, in nature discontinuous in time and space.

I will analyze four films chosen for their distinct reflections on these themes: *Rear Window* (1954) is particularly notable for its contemplation on voyeuristic morals as an allusion to the film viewer's own gaze; *Psycho* (1960) for its use of an extremely active camera and revealing montage; *Contempt* (1963) for its autobiographical quality, extremely self-conscious of its own filmmaking process; *Pierrot le Fou* (1965) for its blatant composition breaking from conventional linear narrative as a means to encompass the movements of poetry, of the mind, and of life.

A film's self-consciousness asserts a reflection of its own medium. It in turn forces the film viewer to be just as self-conscious as it is—self-conscious of its creator, of the medium, and of his position as voyeur. Both Hitchcock and Godard express this reflexivity through a clear expression and reminder of the presence of the camera on the film screen. Hitchcock makes aware the medium through incessant frames-within-frames (a recurring theme on the ethics of voyeurism), blatant cuts and camera movements bringing to light the camera, its window onto the filmic world, and the conscious mind that lives behind the cinematic construction. Just as Hitchcock is self-conscious in *Rear Window* and *Psycho*, he at the same time remains somewhat

manipulative as he clearly orients his viewer's gaze and makes him complicit in the characters' voyeurism. Godard similarly provokes a direct exhibition of the filmmaking process in *Contempt* and *Pierrot le Fou*, demonstrating a certain *mise en abyme* and in so doing, makes self-aware the viewer of the technical but equally intellectual process of film. Coming after Hitchcock, Godard seems to surpass his self-consciousness as he often employs the breaking of the fourth wall, directly calling attention to the viewer and simultaneously making character self-aware too, and furthermore explicitly shows the film camera itself on screen—something Hitchcock merely alludes to. Chapter one will review the importance of self-consciousness in cinema, notably for its digression from mimetic art, turning instead to an assertion of art as artifice, and of cinema as construction.

Godard and Hitchcock use the functions of the camera not merely as a way to depict moving characters in time and space in the unfolding of a narrative, but as a means of evoking a particular emotion or idea. Through their films, *Contempt* and *Psycho* as notable examples, they come to show how camera movements, montage, and sound editing all work together in order to convey a thought more expressive than that which transpires through the plot line. Hitchcock is extremely detailed with his shots, using an all-powerful montage to manipulate the film's tone and to create a specific emotion out of its viewer. These shots have the effect of moving the film viewer, and thus perhaps carry on this manipulation, causing the film apparatus to be concealed just as it is manifested. Godard seems rather to produce a montage which conveys arguments and initiates thought in the film viewer. His montage at times has the effect of moving the narrative further, strengthening characters' emotions on the film screen by emphasizing their physical dispositions, while it other times serves as a critique, eliciting the superficiality of commercial

culture or a parody of commercial-driven cinema. In the latter case, it emphasizes this society's artificiality by expressing an overtly apparent distortion of reality through montage. Hence Godard appears perhaps less manipulative than Hitchcock at times, as his use of montage is less an attempt to affect the viewer emotionally than it is to express to him an underlying meaning—a thought. Chapter two indicates the significances that may emerge through a mere juxtaposition of shots, one which these self-reflexive artists employ as a means to tell the story.

By adding an underlying element to their films, these filmmakers attempt at understanding how this particular filmic construction can further express something of its narrative and perhaps articulate an innovative way of thinking. Hitchcock uses this self-awareness in montage in order to manipulate the spectator into entering his films a particular way. His plot is designed, the entire storyline being the unfolding of an idea which was preemptively known from the beginning until the very end. He forces the viewer to enter the minds of his characters in *Psycho* and *Rear Window* by bringing him into their subjective points of view, ultimately leading him to enter Hitchcock's own mind and desired gaze. In Godard, the storyline seems more so to develop during the filmmaking itself, so that the viewer is as if entering and experiencing the film alongside the director. He seems more interested as a filmmaker in creating a world in dialogue with life, allowing it at times to take over the filmic world itself. Godard becomes more meditative, his film as an expression of a thought process—less structured around a narrative, more closely resembling the fragmented nature of the workings of the mind, and revealing the artificiality of linear construction in film.

More interested in chance and spontaneity, it is compelling therefore to see Godard as a 'free' filmmaker in contrast to Hitchcock as a meticulous and manipulative filmmaker. Film

represents for the former a quest or a voyage, as if he himself represents Odysseus's character in *Contempt*. Perhaps his filmmaking is best understood through the words of his character Ferdinand in *Pierrot le Fou* who in creating a new novel seeks “not to write about peoples' lives anymore, but only about life—life itself. What lies in between people: space, sound, and color.” Godard indeed seems to stray away from a classical narrative, placing at the same time close attention to the sound editing, the camera frame, the *mise en scène*, and specific color choices within the film screen. Chapter three shows Hitchcock as concealing manipulation through a subjective treatment of camera while it exhibits Godard's poetic and autobiographical filmmaking, allowing for life itself to interrupt the flow of the film.

Through the examination of this dialogue between Hitchcock and Godard, we come to an understanding of the significance of reflexivity in cinema—its power in making filmmaker and film viewer recognize their own subjectivity by submerging themselves into a world in which contemplation reigns, rendering them at the same time objects in the world by being confronted with a reciprocated gaze.

CHAPTER 1: REFLEXIVITY IN CINEMA

In the 1950s, Western European filmmakers sought for a cinematic modernity: to make films personal—that is, to create films while remaining self-conscious of their medium. This implies at one the construction of an illusionistic narrative and at the same time a call to attention of this artifice within the construction itself. As argues Robert Stam, this constitutes for the artist “a struggle [...] between the will to create an illusion and the conscious decision to destroy that illusion.”² It seems hence that cinematic reflexivity inherently provokes a duality: the filmmaker manipulates with artifice while simultaneously defacing and disrupting this artifice so that “[the viewer is] torn away from the events and the characters and made aware of the pen, or brush, or camera that has created them.”³ Cinema by nature manipulates reality into illusion, but if a filmmaker makes this manipulation self-aware and furthermore apparent to film viewer, the artifice becomes somewhat interrupted. This cinematic reflexivity largely brought about in the fifties was hence not only modern, but also innovative for its digression from narrative filmic conventions and its deprivation of a completely illusionistic nature in film.

William Rothman claims “if there is a modernist cinema, it begins with Hitchcock, in whose work film attains a modern self-consciousness.”⁴ This modernism is indeed reflective of the British director’s films as if close to the end of his career, Alfred Hitchcock becomes more psychological and self-conscious of his own identity, looking back directly onto his filmmaking. This new film style is more present in his later works, the first expressing this modernity perhaps

² Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992), 138.

³ *Ibid.*, 130.

⁴ William Rothman, *Hitchcock — The Murderous Gaze* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 6.

being *Spellbound* (1945) for its dream sequence and exploration of psychoanalysis. Hitchcock then makes *Rear Window* (1954), innovative for its reflexivity about film viewer and filmmaker by making constant parallels between film screen and the protagonist's apartment window. Later, he makes *Psycho* (1960), considered now the most famous by Hitchcock: a modernist self-conscious film with its use of an extremely expressive montage explicitly calling out voyeurism. Through these films, Hitchcock questions his filmmaking just as much as he questions cinema and the spectator.

If Hitchcock was self-aware, French-Swiss filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard was extremely so, surpassing his filmic modernity by allowing his characters to look directly into the camera. Ingmar Bergman's film *Summer with Monika* (1953) was among the first to be so daring as to allow an actress to do so. Monika's long direct look into the camera is a great moment in modernist filmmaking, explicitly uncovering its medium. Film historian Stig Björkman calls this instant "a kind of cinematic trick which hasn't been tried before"⁵ and which largely struck the New Wave generation, developing the use of film "as a confessional, as a self-aware medium, just as modern artists had made paintings self-aware."⁶ This leads Godard to employ this cinematic trick too in his films, the first being *Breathless* (1960) in which the main actress similarly looks straight into the lens and speaks directly to the audience. Godard remains extremely reflexive in his consequent films, notably in *Contempt* (1963) and *Pierrot le Fou* (1965).

⁵ *The Story of Film: an Odyssey*, directed by Mark Cousins, 2012, Episode 7: "European New Wave."

⁶ *Ibid.*

These two innovative filmmakers, among many, use this device as a means of showing the construction in cinema, of reminding their viewers that the camera is not a free agent—a mind lies behind it and orients the viewer’s gaze the way it chooses to. In short, self-aware film “distances [the viewer] from the spectacle” and “calls attention to the medium,” as indicates Stam.⁷ This filmic style brought cinema towards a new expression that had until now not been established—that of making both cinema aware of its medium and film viewer aware of his gaze. Hitchcock’s modernity opens up a new way of making films: he develops his own style and meditates on himself as creator which in turn influences the French New Wave and notably Godard as a new filmmaker to do the same. It leads him to create his own filmic style and language as a means of experimenting with the cinematic medium—albeit in a new direction, but through a similar self-conscious reflexion of his own style. Hitchcock expressively hints at the presence of the camera; Godard literally manifests it to the viewer.

Innovation in Hitchcock: Overt Montage, Self-Referential Camera

Hitchcock was innovative with his particular use of the camera through reflexive camera movements, blatant cuts, and a suggestive montage. Hitchcock has a “constant concern with the nature of the camera, the act of viewing a film, and filmmaking as a calling” says Robert Stam: he often engages his viewers with a certain voyeurism which renders the film self-conscious of its own medium and the viewer self-conscious as well of his position as viewer.⁸ He makes the presence of the camera known throughout each of his films, establishing it as a sort of character

⁷ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 41.

⁸ Ibid.

and heightening its presence throughout. William Rothman again maintains that Hitchcock's films are "asserting, *declaring*, something about themselves, something about their medium."⁹ That he was so often present in his films (a personal trademark), is a small reminder of his interest in rendering the construction of his films self-conscious—to remind the viewer that without Hitchcock there is no film, because without ideas there is no camera movement. The filmmaker's camera is therefore incredibly noticeable; never does he make it easy for the viewer to forget its presence. Rothman indicates that "[Hitchcock's] achievement, in part, was to create the first films that, fully embracing the medium, reflected seriously on their nature as films."¹⁰ In acknowledging the importance of self-consciousness through cinema, Hitchcock proves to be especially notable for his modern and clear self-references.

Rear Window, a film entirely about vision and voyeurism, makes inevitable a self-conscious film viewer. The film medium is from the start made apparent as its protagonist is a direct mirror of the film viewer; the window through which he observes, a direct mirror of the film screen. For Robin Wood, the film indeed offers "clear parallels with the spectator watching the screen" as L.B. Jefferies' voyeuristic position distinctly reminds the spectator of his own identity as viewer of the film.¹¹ The film in fact points to his vision all throughout the film. *Rear Window* "roughly equates Jefferies with the spectator in the cinema, the flats across the court

⁹ William Rothman, *The 'I' of the Camera: Essays in Film Criticism, History, and Aesthetics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 256.

¹⁰ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 6.

¹¹ Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: A. Zwemmer, 1969), 65.

with the screen.” it relates window to film screen, reflects the position of the main character to the film viewer himself, and exaggerates the voyeurism implicit in the film.¹²

The opening scene immediately implies the act of seeing. The first shot is that of a window: a clear hint at the film viewer’s window—the screen. Lawrence Howe claims that Hitchcock thus announces from the very beginning “the reflexive allegory that connects Jeff’s rear window to the cinematic screen.”¹³ What is more, the window shades are first closed and are only slowly drawn up, just as they would during the opening of a film in a movie theater. The three curtains slowly come up one after the other, drawing the viewer into the scene. What was once shaded becomes suddenly apparent to the viewer who can begin to view the entirety of what lies behind the curtains: it becomes his reality. He is therefore immediately drawn into the idea of a spectacle and that of a film feature—one that lies behind the curtains and through the



Figure 3. *Rear Window* Alfred Hitchcock, 1954.

windows featuring the apartment buildings and the courtyard (Fig. 3). The idea of the spectacle is further enhanced by the musical score: it is extremely dramatic and expressive, presenting

the film as a clear spectacle.

¹² Wood, *Hitchcock's Films*, 62.

¹³ Lawrence Howe, "Through the Looking Glass: Reflexivity, Reciprocity, and Defenestration in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*," *College Literature* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 19, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

The camera at first does not move, heightening the spectator's voyeurism for it allows his eyes to move within the window. This gives rise to an awareness of the fact that the film viewer is indeed a voyeur—that he is looking in on this scene, and that he is able to do so almost freely. The windows represent an opening up onto the world with the spectator able to witness everything occurring in front of it, moving his eyes freely within the film frame. The camera moves only after about two minutes into the film, literally moving through the windows and directly into the scene. It glides through most of the apartment buildings, as if introducing the viewer to each of the characters that will be apparent throughout the film. It presents the viewer with a sense of space within this apartment complex, allowing him to focus his eyes in a more detailed manner on everything that lies within it. This shot directly instills onto the viewer the sense of an introduction of the film: a clear and direct one, presenting first the location in which the entire film will be shot and next the characters that will take part in the story. Hitchcock's camera here is as if overtly aware of the viewer's gaze as it guides his attention through this cinematic world.

The camera glides incessantly from one apartment to the next until it comes back into the protagonist's apartment and presents a close-up of James Stewart's character. As the camera sweeps into this apartment, it seems to take on the same personality as in the previous scene: it jumps from item to item as one's gaze would while curiously looking into a person's apartment. The camera does not stop gliding over from one part of the room to the next; not once has the film revealed a cut. This seems to correspond to Stam's indication that "cinema is founded upon the pleasure of looking."¹⁴ Hitchcock shows everything there is to see in one continuous shot, the

¹⁴ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 41.

entire film being founded upon this voyeuristic act and the desire entailed within it. Hence the “thematics of watching” Howe refers to becomes the film’s central theme and here lies its self-consciousness, clearly inciting curiosity within the spectator’s gaze at the same time as making him aware of it.¹⁵ Hitchcock clearly frames the viewer’s gaze as he guides the camera with this sweeping motion, reminding him of the pleasure in watching and the foundations of being a film spectator.

The film-like world Jefferies watches through his apartment window becomes a mirror of the film viewer watching through the film screen. *Rear Window* thus “suggests a congruency between the situation of the protagonist, who experiences his reality within the fiction as though he were watching a film, and [the viewer’s] own situation as spectator watching the protagonist watch his film,” asserts Stam.¹⁶ The protagonist is thereby equated to the spectator as they both watch a film and take part in a similar voyeurism. Jefferies is moreover equated to the director himself as Hitchcock’s use of a subjective camera makes it appear as if the character is orienting the spectator’s gaze throughout the film. The film viewer hence becomes aware of his position as voyeur and of the film as artifice, making *Rear Window* an especially self-referential film, while it at the same time incites this voyeurism and artificial complicity with the character. Hitchcock indeed condemns the spectator to a scopophilia, making this voyeuristic involvement an essential part of its narrative. He makes the viewer aware of his position but does not allow him to escape from it, thereby retaining a clear manipulation in the cinematic construction and distancing his filmmaking from Godard’s later self-consciousness.

¹⁵ Howe, “Through the Looking Glass,” 16.

¹⁶ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 46.

Hitchcock uses the camera as a mechanical device, at times becoming almost like its own character, to frame or angle the character in a particular way so that the viewer might directly compare himself to him. This calls attention to the camera just as it does to the film viewer's own gaze. In Hitchcock's *Psycho* as well, though less through its plot than through its form, a reflexivity of cinema and of its spectator comes about. This is largely instituted by a subjective camera use within the film, calling out the attention both of cinema as a constructed medium and of spectator as voyeur.

As Marion drives away from her apartment in one of *Psycho*'s first scenes, her boss witnesses her from her car windshield (Fig. 4). The two characters first look at each other very amicably, as if by reflex. They seem indeed to have both forgotten for an instant what catching each other in this precise moment in time and space means: he forgets that she was meant to be sick at home while she forgets she has lied to her boss and stolen money. The characters then remember at the same time: he looks back at her a second time, this time confused; her smile



Figure 4. *Psycho* Alfred Hitchcock, 1960.

immediately fades away into an expression of worry and fear.

Dramatic non-diegetic music suddenly appears at this precise time to emphasize the scene's

tension. Through this gaze, a recollection of the situation and the grasp of its reality finally sets in for the protagonist, as it at the same time sets in for the film viewer. The meaning of this

momentary gaze is in fact substantial: Marion has realized and internalized the act she is committing and by not turning around here, has officially accepted the circumstance as well as the consequences that might arise from it. The intensity in her gaze similarly intensifies the spectator's own gaze, which thereby renders self-conscious his sudden complicity with the protagonist. This voyeuristic gaze is made apparent to the viewer through the direct looking into Marion's eyes as if they in some sense represent his own. His gaze onto the film is moreover made self-conscious as they both watch through the same film frame—that of her car windshield. Similarly to *Rear Window*, this constitutes a film-within-film, correlating protagonist and spectator.

Another significant gaze sets in while on Marion's drive after she gets pulled over by a police officer. While she drives away, she intently looks through her rear view mirror to make sure he does not keep following her. As she keeps her focus on the police car, it seems as though she is watching her own film through the mirror (Fig. 5). Hitchcock cuts back and forth from a



Figure 5. *Psycho*

close-up of Marion's face to a point of view shot of her gaze through the rear view mirror.

Here the viewer enters a subjective camera: he sees what she sees, feels

what she feels, fears what she fears. Much like the protagonist, the viewer cannot keep his eyes off the police car. The film here seems to turn towards a discourse on voyeurism. It serves as a

self-conscious reminder to the viewer of his precise position as such—as Marion looks through the rear view mirror, the spectator at the same time looks through the film screen. The clear prominence of her gaze through this mirror is an explicit reference to the film screen through which the audience observes. Hence, the spectator appears to be watching a film within a film. The scene brings the viewer closer to the protagonist in that he sees what she sees, while it at the same time distances him from Marion in reminding him of the object that ultimately separates them: the screen—an object that both links them together in a binding manner and detaches them from one another. That the viewer experiences both parallelism and detachment towards the protagonist is what constitutes a vital element of the dual reflexive nature of *Psycho*: that is, he watches and enters a film just as the character does, while at the same time remains aware of Marion as character, film as construction, and himself as viewer. Hitchcock's filmmaking is thus just as manipulative as it is self-conscious.

The entrance of Norman and Marion into the Bates motel office reveals a significant



Figure 6. *Psycho*

concept about the nature of film. A mirror is placed in the office in an empty frame; Marion carrying her handbag is reflected through it (Fig. 6). The shot directly

invokes the film frame and hence alludes to the camera itself. In evoking the film screen, the mirror may be a metaphor for cinema: perhaps looking through a mirror produces a similar

illusory reality and possibility in attaining self-consciousness as does looking through a film screen. It is as though Hitchcock is here calling out to the viewer that he could very well be looked back upon through this mirror, and hence gain self-awareness, for having the gaze returned “makes [the viewer] aware of [his] own voyeurism,” says Howe.¹⁷ It is in this precise looking back upon oneself that enables reflexivity. Rothman hence argues that “Psycho’s frame-within-a-frame is characteristic of its self-consciousness” for it makes the viewer self-aware of his own voyeuristic gaze just as it does the film of its construction.¹⁸

When Marion returns to her room at the Bates Motel, Norman Bates peers at her through a small hidden peephole behind a painting in his office (Fig. 7). This clearly explains the reason for placing her in this specific room: in order to watch her from it. The painting itself is extremely notable and significant—it is that of “Susanna and the Elders.” The biblical story tells

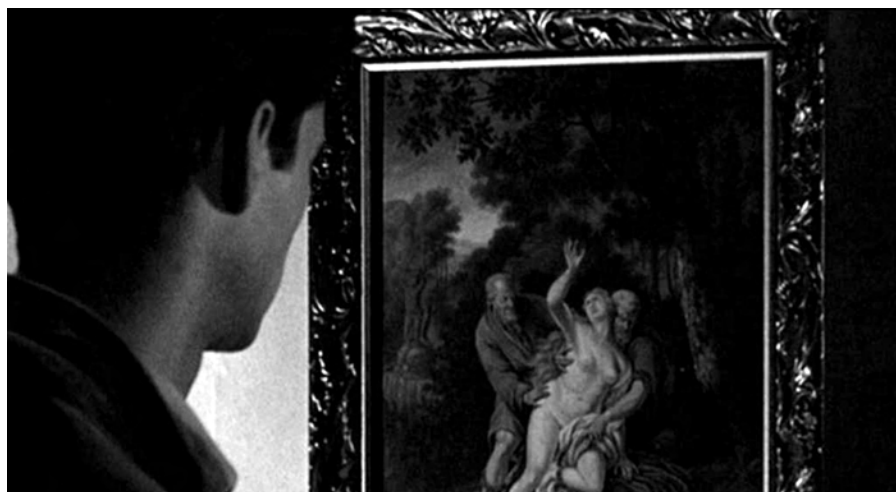


Figure 7. *Psycho*

of two voyeuristic men who observe Susanna as she bathes in the nude in a garden. They blackmail her by threatening to claim they caught the married

woman lying there with a young man unless she agrees to have sex with them. The painting depicts two devilish-looking old men raping Susanna. Refusing the blackmail and sentenced to

¹⁷ Howe, “Through the Looking Glass,” 34.

¹⁸ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 267.

death, she is eventually saved by divine intervention. The story proves faith as a possibility for salvation, but the presence of the painting in the film is used to stress the dark voyeuristic nature of man. Norman, mirroring the Elders, watches Marion as she undresses. He is first observed peering through the hole in profile. A cut then reveals an image of Marion through an iris shot, forcing the viewer to watch her undress and therefore rendering him as much of a voyeur as Norman is as he in fact explicitly takes on his vision through a point of view shot.

A consequent profile shot shows a close-up of Norman's eye as he peers through the hole (Fig. 8). That both his eye and the light emanating from the hole are visible evidently provokes



Figure 8. *Psycho*

the spectator's self-consciousness of the voyeuristic act, but it also alludes to what Norman is able to see that the film viewer is not: a nude Marion.

Here Hitchcock seems to

play with the spectator, inciting his curiosity while making him complicit with an immoral character who will soon become the film's new protagonist. The viewer is therefore at the same time made to judge Norman's erotic voyeurism while he is made self-aware of his similar position in watching alongside him. He becomes just as much a peeping tom as the character is. This scene is reminiscent of Marion's earlier driving sequence, the constant shot-counter-shot of her face (her eyes) and the rear view mirror (what she sees). The film here again enters a

subjective point of view at one bringing viewer and character together in their dual act of looking, while also distancing them by two distinct facets—Norman observes through a peephole while the spectator observes through the film screen. Bates then places the painting back on the wall, acting as a sort of veil to his voyeurism as well as to that of the film viewer. Hitchcock's camera seems once again to be playing with the viewer's voyeuristic desire by remaining distanced, as if reinforcing it by compelling him to look and then immediately covering it up.

Towards the end of *Psycho*, the camera slowly tracks behind Norman as he walks up the stairs of the mansion, and then remains aback and motionless as he moves into a room. A discussion is heard between Norman and his imagined mother without it being visible. The camera then begins to move upwards, inching closer and closer to the room, without ever entering it. Hitchcock is as if similarly playing with the film viewer here again, slowly leaning the camera in yet keeping it distant from the scene's obvious main attraction. This enhances the viewer's desire to see as he cannot comprehend the entirety of the situation. The camera watches



Figure 9. *Psycho*

from behind the stair rails, as if they represent some sort of curtain behind which the viewer is unable to see and behind which certain things are concealed. It

then passes over the rails, and suddenly does something strange: it neither stands still nor enters the room. Rather, it pans up alongside the length of the door almost grazing the roof before

reaching a bird's-eye view, enabling the viewer to see the top of the stairs and the room on the right through a slight crack in the door (Fig. 9). As the shot's framing allows for a mere glimpse into the room, the viewer is made self-aware of his position as voyeur for his curiosity and desire to see is again heightened. Hitchcock's camera is also here reflexive of cinema's nature: a medium largely based on voyeurism, it has the power to manipulate by showing whatever it wishes to its viewer.

Hitchcock blends reflexivity and manipulation in his filmmaking style, at one making the film viewer aware of his position and the workings of the camera self-conscious of their meaning, while at the same time leading and orienting the viewer's gaze through a constructed illusion that is the narrative. Godard equally blends two styles of filmmaking together: one that seems close to documentary and one that is overtly illusionistic, making aware the artifice of film while deconstructing the fictional narrative.

Godard and the Breaking of the Fourth Wall

Godard stresses the self-consciousness Hitchcock hints at through his use of blatant camera movements, angles, and montage. The French-Swiss filmmaker intensifies it by explicitly showing the camera to the film viewer. He seems not as strongly reflexive of voyeurism as Hitchcock is, instead heightening a self-consciousness of filmmaking itself. Godard more effectively destroys the artifice of cinema, these anti-illusionistic elements becoming in fact the key to his aesthetic. By not hiding the camera's presence in the film, Stam asserts he is hence "consciously destroying the illusion created by his story," incessantly

deconstructing it all throughout the film.¹⁹ Godard in opposition to Hitchcock's very detailed, precise, and pre-determined montage, seems to somewhat create the story right as he films it. This ongoing creation occurring during the filmmaking itself is manifesting of the medium, apparent in both *Contempt* and *Pierrot le Fou*.

An overtly explicit montage serves as a disruption of the linearly constructed narrative to show the artificial illusion of cinema. In these two films, Godard seems to almost mix the reality of the filmic world with reality itself. He furthers Hitchcock's cinematic reflexivity by not only alluding to it and remaining manipulative, but by rather forcing it upon the film viewer and making it part of the film construction. This style of filmmaking appears more free, blending together reality and artistic creation, so that as Stam asserts, "like gods at play, reflexive artists see themselves as unbound by life as it is perceived (Reality)."²⁰ Gods in fact emerge in *Contempt*, as if the filmmaker perhaps compares them to the freedom and creativity of his cinema. Godard thus integrates life within the film construction, rendering the camera on screen or allowing for protagonists to step out of character to address the spectator.

The opening sequence of *Contempt* right from the start implicates itself as a film about film. It incorporates "the Brechtian principle that art should reveal the principles of its own construction."²¹ That its opening credits are narrated by Godard himself overtopping a scene from the movie being filmed, indeed right away incites the film in the realm of explicit self-awareness. This brings the viewer into the movie in a very strange way: he feels detached from the film as he watches it from a distanced position just as he feels completely part of it as he

¹⁹ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 129.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 102.

witnesses the making of it. Godard indicates that the film is based on a novel by Alberto Moravia, then proceeds to tell the actors' names: the viewer is right away made aware of the film's illusion, presenting the characters as actors and the story as fiction. At the same time as non-diegetic music is playing, Godard says the name of the composer and of the sound recorder, reminding the viewer of the constructed nature of sound as he hears it. He is then told about the montage and similarly becomes aware of it—this in itself constitutes montage. The filmmaker gives information about the color processing similarly making apparent the vibrant colors of the scene to the viewer. Jean-Luc Godard then finally states it is a film by Jean-Luc Godard: he speaks of himself in the third person, making him extremely self-conscious of his position as director and furthermore surfacing the filmmaker's presence over the entirety of *Contempt*. This scene points to the mechanism of film: it shows how the camera glides and follows a character so steadily behind which are present director, cameraman, and light technician—a process that appears so natural when seen on screen, yet so abstracted and fabricated when seen from behind the camera.

The actress in the scene walks closer and closer towards the camera until she disappears and only the camera and cameraman remain in the frame. Godard makes this opening credit scene an actual part of the movie, expressing a self-consciousness that rarely comes to light in film. The shot of the camera is filmed at a low angle, making it appear grand as it completely takes over the frame. Slowly, the cameraman pans his camera towards the film's camera so that both look directly at each other (Fig. 10). This is film looking directly at film itself and constitutes exactly the self-conscious essence of *Contempt*. It at the same time represents film looking at the viewer himself, "as if the apparatus itself were nodding at [the viewer], in a



Figure 10. *Contempt* Jean-Luc Godard, 1963.

cinematographic
equivalent of
Brechtian direct
address to the
audience,”
asserts Stam.²²

Godard’s camera hence makes the viewer aware of his own voyeurism, and in turn makes him aware of the camera’s gaze back onto him: the voyeur has been seen. Whereas the camera’s gaze is usually equated with the spectator’s gaze, it is here aimed at and focused on the viewer himself.

This shot corresponds with Godard’s simultaneous quote “The cinema, André Bazin said, substitutes for our gaze a world that corresponds to our desires.” The filmmaker’s desires are unfolded on screen, but the viewer’s own desires are similarly unfolded onto the screen too—the camera looks directly at the viewer just as it looks directly into the other camera, hinting at a certain duality that lies within film itself. As the film is indeed composed of reality, consisting of real people acting in real time and space, it nonetheless represents merely a dreamlike world that belongs completely in the realm of the director’s mind and desires, and just as equally might represent the viewer’s own dreamlike world. A cut then reveals Godard’s filmic world as if the camera is somewhat looking onto the following sequence.

Later in *Contempt*, Godard again reminds the viewer of his position as voyeur. While Hitchcock does this through the use of a subjective camera, Godard does this by physically

²² Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 59.

implicating the film viewer in his relationship with the film. In the projection room (in itself a significant location) with Lang, Jerry, and Paul, the camera looks intently onto the viewer right before they begin watching the projected film. Lang discusses the meaning of the scene before pointing directly at the screen, as if saying “Roll camera.. action.” Lang’s film about Ulysses takes up the frame so that the spectator becomes viewer alongside Lang, Jerry, and Paul. Jerry suddenly begins smiling and laughing almost hysterically as he sees a shot of a naked woman swimming in a pool portraying a mermaid in Lang’s film. This calls out the pleasure and desire he physically receives from his voyeurism. He then says “that is wonderful for you and me, but do you really think the public is going to understand that?” Here the spectator is directly implicated as he indeed represents the public who watches. This renders a somewhat strange feeling to the film viewer who is at one called upon and therefore forced to be made self-aware as the ‘public’ while he is also a sort of hidden voyeur, watching the actor who in turn cannot see him, making him as much of a perverted voyeur as Jerry in watching the sequence. *Contempt* makes the spectator feel as much viewed as he is viewer, rendering a self-awareness of the nature of voyeurism and that of film. The movie they are watching becomes the film the viewer is watching as well.

In this scene, the viewer watches a film within a film: Godard mixes both Lang’s film and his own together. In one instant Paul is seen in the projection room and in the next, Hercules is seen in Lang’s film. It becomes as if the two films somewhat overlap one another. *Contempt* comprises several movies at once—it is a film about cinema. In one instant Lang’s film takes part of the narrative: a shot of Paul yelling for Jerry’s address is immediately followed by a shot of Ulysses’ sculpture in mid-air, interspersed with the film’s recurring music. This blends the two

films together even more so and seems to call to the attention that these two are in fact not so far off from each other—that Godard’s Paul and Camille likely correspond to Homer’s Ulysses and Penelope. *Contempt*’s self-consciousness is therefore equally explicit in its choice of subject matter.

Godard often interposes brief memories and flashbacks into the film shaking up its conventional chronological narrative structure while also rendering it psychological and therefore self-aware. In the producer’s backyard, Camille stands still as Francesca, Jerry’s translator, bikes past her soon after Paul’s arrival. This appears to make her jealous. The camera stands still behind her until it begins to zoom in as she slowly turns her head around. Sudden cuts reveal brief shots of past memories: her standing next to Paul; shaking her hair; looking into a mirror; Paul making her get into Jerry’s car. This seems to represent a pivotal moment in the film for Camille’s character who is portrayed as being extremely self-aware. In the same instant, the film becomes self-conscious as well. It reflects upon itself as it looks back onto past moments and onto the character’s psychological feelings and memories, producing meaning out of these brief shots. It is through the expression of film itself that Camille’s jealousy comes across, rather than through a linear unfolding of the narrative. This happens once again when Paul leaves Camille to go wash his hands: a shot taking place outside of the linear narrative shows her walking alone and a second shows Paul walking towards Francesca. It feels as if suddenly the film has been overtaken by a separate one—that of the character’s mind, the viewer enabled to enter it and feel the loneliness alongside her. Godard is here able to depict feelings of jealousy, of loneliness, and of alienation through the use of insert shots. This greatly resembles Hitchcock’s use of a subjective camera to place the viewer in close complicity with the character, but

overrides this complicity by not only placing him in the character's viewpoint but by placing him directly in his psychological mind.

In an apartment sequence, a shot of Camille wearing a short black wig takes up the frame. The screenplay Paul is helping to write becomes the story of him and Camille and perhaps becomes Godard's film about his own life too. Her wig is indeed suggestive of Godard's wife Anna Karina, who resembles Brigitte Bardot in the shot. A parallel is thus made between Godard and his wife in relation to Paul and Camille, as if the making of this film renders self-conscious the filmmaker of his own life. Perhaps then speaking of *Contempt* as a single narrative becomes almost impossible as it comprises such wide diffusion of elements: Lang's film, Alberto Moravia's novel, and Godard's life. It is instead evocative of a film entirely about itself in every sense. *Contempt* is self-aware just as it is autobiographical, surpassing the self-consciousness visible in Hitchcock's films.

Just after a slow panning shot of dead Jerry and Camille, *Contempt* ends with the final scene of Lang's film. This last shot is extremely mechanical just as the first shot of the film was. Alongside the director and the production team, the film viewer goes through all the processes that have to occur before a shot can be filmed. Production words are uttered in Italian such as "*silencio*," "*avante*," and "*actione*." The shot is of Ulysses as he finally returns home and sees Ithaca. It is a tracking shot (just as the opening shot was) rendering self-aware the synchronic panning of the camera with which Godard films his final scene. It seems inevitable that the film begins and ends with the notion of filmmaking for it represents precisely what the film is largely about. "You must always finish what you start" Lang says to Paul: this makes sense of the beginning and end of *Contempt* as being similar in structure and subject matter—that the final



Figure 11. *Contempt*

as he finally returns to his homeland. The camera then tracks towards the left so that the actor and Lang's camera are no longer seen. What Odysseus is looking out at becomes visible: a blue sea and a blue sky, the two almost blending together (Fig. 11).

The sea is therefore the ending to Godard's film as well—the two films ending together as one, and finally coming to terms with the significance of this constant duality of films. A final word is spoken in this last shot: "*silence*" in French and then "*silencio*" in Italian, as if both Godard and Lang speak these words for their respective final shots. This last word is notable in that it comes as a clear ending to the film's content, which before this has been entirely about translation, conversation, argumentation: everything that is not 'silence.' The film perhaps finally comes to terms with the fact that it has said everything it needs to: it has arrived at its end; the film is now silenced; the viewer is now made to self-consciously reflect about everything it has said. The sea furthermore represents the freedom and the openness of Godard's filmmaking—that perhaps the possibility of creation and the quest of cinema continues even beyond the limits of the film.

Godard is seemingly much less structural than Hitchcock is—it seems that throughout the process of filmmaking, Godard himself arrives at a self-consciousness expressed through his

scene must
somewhat come
back towards the
beginning in
order to end, just
as Ulysses closes

film: the film representing itself this search. It is only towards the end that he seems to arrive at a conclusion, as if the entire film is an Odyssean quest which at the same time incites the viewer to come to a subsequent understanding of the film. This filmic quest is furthermore expressed in *Pierrot le Fou* as Godard produces disruptions within the film, at one making self-conscious the process of filmmaking, while also realizing decisions directly on screen explicitly shown to the viewer. Jump cuts, creating disruptions in the film narrative, seem indeed to take a large part in Godard's films as he uses them "to show the same thing but with the sunlight from a different direction or a slightly different background," according to Mark Cousins.²³ These cuts remain in the film precisely because they emphasize that this is cinema. Instead of bringing the narrative further, these shots represent a moment in the filmmaker's thought process—the director expressing "I think this moment is beautiful, this moment is true, in other words 'I think.'" ²⁴ The jump cuts in *Pierrot le Fou* are therefore reflexive as they bring to light this precise directorial thought revealing the artifice of film in it being created by a non-linear mind.

Pierrot Le Fou often times breaks its linearity by repeating an exact same scene twice, as a way to blatantly show its montage structure. This effect is produced several times throughout the film, making the process of filmmaking extremely self-conscious as it is overtly showed to its viewer. In a scene where Ferdinand and Marianne are fleeing to the beach, the camera is positioned in front of the car so that the characters' faces are seen head on. They look directly in the direction of the camera and the film viewer. Non-diegetic music plays as Ferdinand says "we'll just stop anywhere." The music then abruptly stops and a cut follows. After the cut, the

²³ *The Story of Film: an Odyssey*, directed by Mark Cousins, 2012, Episode 7: "European New Wave."

²⁴ *Ibid.*

camera is this time positioned from behind the car. This allows for the viewer to see from their point of view. The music then returns seconds after the cut and Ferdinand repeats this exact same line. It seems almost as if Ferdinand was here speaking explicitly about the music and the camera—that they too can stop anywhere, even in the middle of a shot. The fact that he repeats this same line twice makes it appear as if the same shot is being repeated again too, only from a different viewpoint. This disruption provokes a sense of evident montage within the film itself. It shows how easily a cut can occur and how rapidly the music can be paused: these are part of a process. It is self-conscious of its being a film in that it overtly shows the film viewer its construction, locating it far from reality and rendering explicit its illusion. Time and space can be altered in the matter of seconds, this ability in fact constituting the power of filmic illusion.

A similar disruption in sound montage occurs once again just a few moments later in this same driving sequence. The camera is positioned behind the two characters as Ferdinand says



“don’t say that”
to Marianne after
she calls falling
in love a
disgusting habit
(Fig. 12). The

Figure 12. *Pierrot le Fou* Jean-Luc Godard, 1965.

The music suddenly stops, sound disappearing entirely from the shot. A cut does not occur right away this time: they are seen from behind driving in silence for a few seconds until they arrive at a beach, Ferdinand remaining visible through the rear view mirror. The music returns right as the camera repositions itself in front of them and Ferdinand repeats the same sentence again. Here,

Godard again makes obvious the editing of both sound and image, rendering the use of montage and sound in the construction of film especially evident. The idea of film as an artistic mechanism therefore becomes reflexive both to the film itself and to its viewer who is thereby forced to become aware of it.

This musical piece appears incessantly throughout *Pierrot le Fou*, leaving and reentering at random occurrences, rarely conjoined with the length of the shot. This reminds the viewer of the artificiality and manipulation inherent within the combining of film and non-diegetic sound. Later in the film, music plays as the two characters are in an apartment. Marianne hits a man's head with a bottle and a second later the music suddenly stops. The shot is silenced and then overtopped with narration as they run around the apartment, the camera constantly in motion. The music then returns, representing an odd fragmentation not only in the narration but in the sound editing itself, Godard remaining self-conscious of this artificial combination of image and sound. The film as if heightens the sense of time in music by inexplicably pausing and playing it throughout the film. Stam claims this is "Godard's way of mocking [the viewer's] naive assumption that the screen image somehow "generates" the sounds associated with it."²⁵ The manipulative power of music in film is in fact that it will makes its spectator forget the passage of time: time is however a complete fabrication in film, and Godard explicitly renders this visible to the viewer. He strays far away from Hitchcock's use of music here, as he sets manipulation aside in order to make the viewer conscious of the constructed nature of music in film. Hence, "his music treatment of music is modernist and Brechtian in its discontinuity" by the mere fact

²⁵ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 32.

that it works against the image as opposed to in accordance with it.²⁶ Godard thus exposes non-diegetic sound as taking part of filmic construction, completely uncoordinated with reality.

Reflexivity becomes equally apparent in *Pierrot le Fou* through the breaking of the fourth wall, making the characters no longer part of the fiction, but reflective of real people: the characters' self-awareness of the camera and film viewer is expressed. The evidence of the viewer's gaze suddenly makes the character self-conscious too. As the camera is positioned behind the two in the same driving sequence, Ferdinand turns around while driving to speak directly to it, telling the viewer "all she thinks about is fun" (Fig. 13). Before uttering this



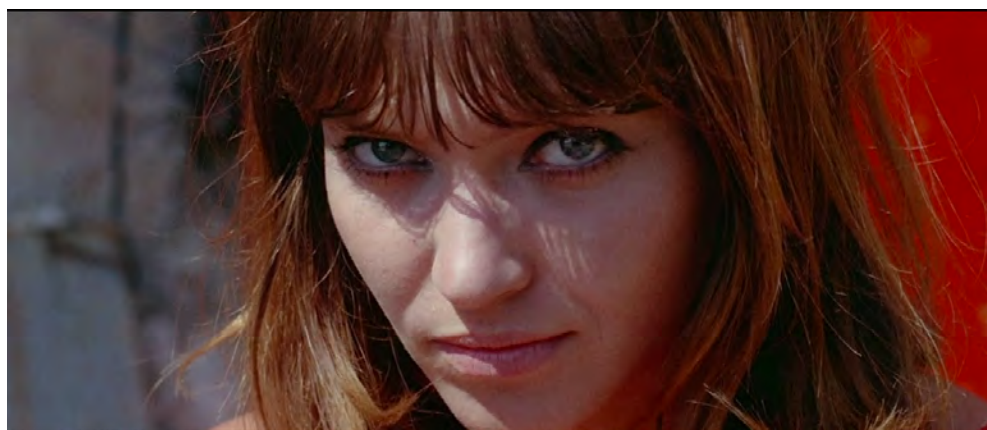
Figure 13. *Pierrot le Fou*

statement he explicitly calls out the spectator by saying “*Vous voyez*” or “you see”—the viewer is directly called upon by a pronoun, becoming himself a character in the film. Marianne asks him who he is speaking to and he responds with “the audience.” She then looks back towards the camera herself, acknowledging the viewer as well. Here the characters are directly calling out the viewer, expressing a clear self-consciousness of his presence and of his voyeurism. It appears as if the two are constantly acting and non-acting at the same time: they seem to be aware that they are part of a film and that an audience is watching, just as they at the same time remain part of the constructed fiction. Godard makes the male protagonist interrupt the flow of the narrative in

²⁶ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 265.

order to directly show he is conscious of the construction of the film, therefore making the film viewer implicit in the awareness of its construction alongside him.

Later in the film, when the two are living on the French Riviera, Ferdinand asks Marianne “You’ll never leave me?” She answers “Of course I won’t” at which point the camera is not placed on either of their faces, but rather on that of an animal. A cut then displays a close-up of Marianne’s face as he asks her again “Of course?” She says “Yes, of course” while looking in his direction. After saying this line however, she looks down for a moment before suddenly turning her attention and gaze towards the camera itself—towards the director and film viewer (Fig. 14). She looks back towards Ferdinand and articulates the line again, this time with a



slightly different tone. The editing of the scene happens here on the screen, right in front of the

Figure 14. *Pierrot le Fou*

audience. “Style in reflexive fiction is often self-correcting,” claims Stam.²⁷ Here, Godard edits in front of the camera itself. Instead of cutting out her first utterance and replacing it with the second, he keeps both in, deciding to keep the camera rolling. He self-corrects by editing while filming and explicitly showing this correction on the film screen. This shows the figurative hand and mind behind the camera—everything that lies in front of it is thought out and manipulated. These are actors and behind them lies a camera and a director who makes choices and edits. By

²⁷ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 152.

being self-aware of the illusion of film and rendering it at the same time evident to its viewer, Godard perhaps evades filmic manipulation.

Marianne slowly looks back in the direction of the camera once more after the second line deliverance, as if checking the director's satisfaction of it. The closeness of Marianne's face to the camera and the vulnerability in her gaze towards it brings about an intense intimacy to the scene. It renders a strong connection between actor, camera (filmmaker), and film viewer. As Marianne explicitly leaves her character for a moment by breaking the fourth wall, she at the same time shows her self-awareness to the film viewer just as she makes self-conscious the entire filmic construction. *Pierrot le Fou* here opens itself up intimately to the viewer through its extreme honesty.

During the characters' journey, the film comes to another break in its narrative construction with the introduction of a documentary-like sequence, effecting a similar breaking of the fourth wall. Ferdinand says "People eye them warily"; Marianne says "The people are:"



Figure 15. *Pierrot le Fou*

and suddenly a set of three characters are introduced to the film. First a man speaks of his condition as a political refugee. He speaks directly to the camera itself, at the same time speaking directly to the film viewer (Fig. 15). Immediately following him, two other introductions take place in which the characters (or rather real people) do a very similar thing: look straight into the

and suddenly a set of three characters are introduced to the film. First a man speaks of his

camera and tell their name, date and place of birth, and occupation. *Pierrot le Fou* seems here to be introducing real people to the film having no seeming relation to the plot. They do not introduce themselves to the characters of the story but rather do so directly to the spectator himself. This produces a dialogue between filmmaker, actor, and viewer. Real life comes into play here as if Godard is blending together both reality and fiction within the narrative, making its distinction difficult to fathom. This perhaps therefore brings to life the story of the film, making it honest, real, and furthermore self-conscious. Because of the insertion of this documentary-like scene, the fiction of the narrative and the nature of film as illusion indeed becomes more apparent.

Just as in *Contempt*, Godard's own narrative voice presides over *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* (1967). His whispered voice-over reminds the viewer of his directorial presence all throughout the film. This opening sequence is likely paralleled to *Pierrot le Fou*'s documentary-like sequence as well for Godard narrates an introduction of the film actress to the viewer. He



describes Marina Vlady as she looks directly towards the camera (Fig. 16).

The scene is extremely intimate because of the whispers, but also because of the dialogue that seems to be ongoing between filmmaker, camera, and film viewer. The actress then seems to nod to the director's physical descriptions of her as she says "Yes, speak as though quoting the truth. Old

man Brecht said it: that actors should quote.” This makes Godard’s Brechtian approach of the address of the character to the spectator especially self-conscious. Hence the woman on screen becomes actress just as she does character, for she is again introduced as “Juliette Janson” a few moments later. Reality and fiction become similarly mixed up as in *Pierrot le Fou*. Godard’s off-screen commentaries likewise become self-correcting as well when they ask “Am I speaking too loud?” or “Am I looking from too far or from too closely?” The film hence becomes open-ended, as if the viewer has somewhat of a say in the construction of the film too. What is real and what is constructed becomes unclear as the filmmaker confuses the two together. He allows for life to take part of the film itself, and in the same manner allows for changes to occur within the filmic world too.

In Godard, manipulation and honesty become somewhat unclear. He may be honest about the re-shooting of a scene on-screen as a means of being self-corrective but he may just as well be manipulative in doing so if it is part of the script. In saying “I” to his spectator however, his films seem to get closer to the essay film, making the idea of a self-correction more feasible than that of a control over the viewer. Godard confuses reality and artifice, blending the two together in a sort of fusion of documentary and fiction, as if reflecting upon the fact that documentary cannot contain the entirety of its subject (only “2 or 3 things”) whereas fiction appears more self-contained and restricted. Hitchcock rather appears to confuse manipulation and self-consciousness of camera, viewer, and filmmaker in these two films, as if playing with the two: inciting the viewer in his voyeurism while simultaneously exposing the act.

A self-consciousness of the medium brings about an understanding of the power of cinema that one must remain aware of in order to comprehend its meanings. Watching these

films merely through their narratives does not hold much significance; the viewer must also be aware of his own position in conjunction with the film's in order to understand what the filmmaker is attempting to make evident through his montage. A self-consciousness of the medium is an opening up to the film viewer, to the world, and enables the unveiling of one mind to another. It is the means through which a filmmaker can make aware significances and bring about his ideas through his use of the camera and the workings of montage. These reflexive artists hence deal with a digression from mimetic art and assert narrative through the workings of the camera as an instrument to overcome this fictional realm and perhaps attain transcendence.

CHAPTER 2: CINEMA AS A LANGUAGE

Self-reflexive artists overtly manifest their use of montage, not merely as a means of remaining conscious of the medium, but also a means of using the full potential of montage—of telling a story through the workings of the camera itself. A use of montage to evoke ideas, no longer merely just to carry the narrative further, came about most successfully with Sergei Eisenstein. He created a “montage by attraction” defined by André Bazin as “the reenforcing of the meaning of one image by association with another image not necessarily part of the same episode.”²⁸ Eisenstein sought for a montage as creating a symbolic meaning between two shots, not simply as serving a linear connection between the two: a montage intended for the transmission of an idea. Bazin explains it as “the creation of a sense or meaning not proper to the images themselves but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition [...] to suggest an idea by means of metaphor or by an association of ideas,” so that the relationship between cuts in a film creates just as much meaning as the shots themselves.²⁹ The nineteen fifties marks a decade in which cinematic language was developed through the film process itself: it produces a suggestive use of montage, but also that of *mise en scène*, depth of field, framing, and angles. The particular montage or framing of a sequence may be more evocative than its narrative content in that it provides an ulterior meaning and reenforces the ideas of that sequence. This “montage by attraction” is therefore still one which carries a narrative further, but it does so not by literally saying more but by bringing about an emotion or an idea concealed within the film technique itself.

²⁸ André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments*, ed. Marc Furstenau (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 96.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

This use of a film language from within the medium itself is a manifestation of a director's thought directly onto the image. Montage hence constitutes on its own an evocation of an idea or a thought. Here comes the possibility of manipulation by the filmmaker onto the viewer. Filmic language is a means through which to point the viewer towards something not necessarily present directly in the narrative but rather present in the telling of it—altering the way he views so as to automatically alter the way he perceives too. The director is a writer in film, depicting a world based entirely on his own subconscious mind. A shot is a thought—a director's thought, and the camera is there in order to express its idea. Hitchcock and Godard became part of a growing cinematic innovation with their suggestive use of montage pulling the viewer directly into their minds. Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Godard's *Contempt* both accurately depict this type of montage through the association of ideas to express something out of their respective narratives.

Hitchcock's *Psycho*: Montage to Create Emotion

It is perhaps difficult to watch a Hitchcock film without immediately becoming aware of the camera. It functions so expressively that its presence seems directly related to the film's narrative. Every shot appears to carry meaning in Hitchcock, effectively making him part of the cinematic modernity of the 50s and 60s. As William Rothman claims, “a measure and expression of the modernity of the Hitchcock 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” because precisely every cut, angle, and frame holds significance.³⁰ The narrative is hence not the most important element in his

³⁰ William Rothman, *Hitchcock — The Murderous Gaze* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1982), 7.

films, but rather the manner in which it is put on view by the camera. Montage is so important to Hitchcock that for him, “every piece of film that you put in the picture should have a purpose. They must make their point.”³¹ It becomes apparent that everything is clearly constructed from the very beginning in Hitchcock—every frame is a composition with a direct intent, and it is this precise bringing together of shots that institutes ideas into the narrative. The camera is therefore part of the narrative without which the creation of a fictional realm would be impossible.

All throughout *Psycho* (1960), Hitchcock uses a suggestive montage as a means to express something of its narrative. Jean-Luc Godard’s article on Hitchcock’s *Strangers on a Train* (1951) states that “these clever and violent effects are so only to transmit the drama to the spectator at its highest level,” and this seems just as indisputably said about *Psycho*.³² First, montage is used to instill a sense of foreshadowing right from the film’s opening credits, evoking a particular apprehension to the film viewer before the narrative even begins. Hitchcock also makes use of a concealed montage in order to provoke a seemingly natural unfolding of the narrative, and rendering complicit the viewer with the characters of the film. Most apparent in the film is the use of a very expressive montage as a way to suggest underlying meaning to its narrative. The viewer sees not with his eyes in *Psycho* but rather with his mind. “I put first and foremost cinematic style before content” says Hitchcock: it is not what is being shot that shows what is happening, but rather *how* it is shot.³³

³¹ Alfred Hitchcock, and Sidney Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 290.

³² Jean-Luc Godard, "Supr matie du Sujet" [The Supremacy of the Subject], *Cahiers du Cin ma*, March 1952.

³³ Hitchcock and Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 292.

In *Psycho*, Hitchcock hints at the tone of the film and implants a sense of tension before showing the source of this anxiety and suspense. The camera orients right from the start the way the viewer is meant to watch or what he is meant to be made aware of. Hitchcock's montage therefore carries meaning within itself, using it to tell the story at times rather than the narrative. Godard claims about a *A Wrong Man* "Hitchcock, moreover, playing the game and playing it fair, has warned the spectator even before the credits."³⁴ Here too, *Psycho*'s opening credits comment directly on Hitchcock's poignant tone in the film, hinting at its genre before the movie even begins. Its opening credit sequence is composed of grey intersecting horizontal and vertical lines on a black background. They blur out until ultimately making up the names of the opening credits.

These opening credits were made by Saul Bass, an important title sequence designer. The effect of the sequence seems to speak directly to one of Bass' quotes in which he explains that the main goal for his title sequences is to "try to reach for a simple, visual phrase that tells you what the picture is all about and evokes the essence of the story."³⁵ This seems to speak directly to what Hitchcock does as well—that is, tell the viewer what the picture is all about through the visuals of montage itself. This title sequence begins with what is most predominant in the film: a sense of blurred lines, of a somewhat blurred vision as Hitchcock rarely shows the totality of any one scene. It also comments on the fact that the viewer is largely left in the dark throughout the film, left with extreme difficulty in constructing the reality in any shot. It emphasizes the notion of tension, distortion and mystery the film constructs all throughout. Bernard Herrmann's score

³⁴ Jean-Luc Godard, "Le Cinéma et Son Double" [The Cinema and its Double], *Cahiers du Cinéma*, June 1, 1957.

³⁵ Pauline Kael, "One, Two, Three," *Film Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Spring 1962): 62.

here begins and furthers Hitchcock's foreshadowing. The music is full of tension and is extremely dramatic. It opens the viewer up to a movie he knows yet nothing of but which right from the start is clear in its drama. Hitchcock here hints at the tone of the film before it even begins through the use of a significant montage—as if right away pointing at the viewer to look at it a certain way before he can even see anything. The director tells the story through film itself, allowing it to speak for itself and make meaning for itself before the narrative begins.

Hitchcock at times uses a hidden or unnoticeable montage to conceal the fictitiousness implicit in a narrative. This produces a story that feels very real and can therefore instill physical emotions into the film viewer. Hence a hard-to-see montage is instilled in *Psycho* while it at the same time carries underlying meaning if noticed. The intersecting lines blur out, the opening credits fade out, and the camera pans over a city. The score continues on into the opening scene, continuing the same sense of tension it introduced in the credits. The camera's point of view here is from overhead, almost as if sitting on one of the skyscrapers. The aerial shot provides a rather unrecognizable and abstract view of the city, but then a title indicates its location: Phoenix, Arizona. The image dissolves into another panning shot of this same city. It is almost the exact same shot, only from slightly closer up. The film tells the date: Friday, December the eleventh, before again fading into a third shot which is almost identical in its nature to the previous two, elongating the view of the city.

The camera appears to be inching closer and closer towards a particular location, moving from a very general perspective to a more and more detailed one. That the camera slowly pans over the city, slowly fades into the next shot, and slowly zooms into the apartment building, makes the film's montage seem rather natural and unnoticeable. That is, the camera seems

naturally to move towards a particular location, as if the narrative of the story comes about almost randomly. As it suddenly gains interest in a particular building and zooms closer towards it, the film indicates the present time: two forty-three P.M. This shot then fades into another one, which now overlooks the apartment's window from above. The title indicating the time remains over the fade-in of this new shot, again adding a natural-seeming quality to the scene. Indeed, it almost obliterates the fact that the camera has switched positions, that montage has occurred here. This masks a sense of falsehood in the film's recording of time and space. It tells a precise location and time but then immediately reverts to a different shot. There is therefore no real sense of reality in what the film tells the viewer.

One could very easily be pulled into this opening sequence without realizing any of the occurring montage, believing the camera to be moving naturally on its own towards this apartment's window. Hitchcock seems here to hide his presence behind the camera. If one notices the editing however, it provokes a sense of doubt in the very real quality it presents one with: the exact location, date, and time of the scene. This builds up unforeseen tension and gives the viewer right from the start a sense of doubt in what he is seeing—a confusion between the veracity in what he is physically seeing (several zooms and cuts: a broken up sequence) and in what the film is telling him he is seeing (a continuous moving shot in a precise time and location). Hitchcock's interest in manipulating his viewer becomes extremely apparent. The viewer is pulled into the narrative without realizing it through this use of concealed montage. It introduces the film in a very interesting way: the viewer and camera seem almost linked together as the camera seems so naturally to move towards this apartment building. The viewer indeed becomes just as interested in moving closer to this window as the camera does. The sequence's

montage heightens his curiosity right from the start and pulls him into the narrative very naturally.

The camera zooms towards a particular apartment's window and through a mere crack, looks into the apartment. It pans over the room and a couple becomes visible. The character's voice is heard before his face is visible and suddenly a quick jump cut shows a shot of a table inside the apartment. The camera is clearly no longer merely looking through this crack but is now suddenly placed inside the room. The cut is so rapid, making it easy to forget the camera was not already present inside the room in the first place—easy to forget that it actively changed locations; that it did not naturally find itself there. This feeling is heightened by the fact that the man's voice is heard before the camera has even entered the room completely. It provides the somewhat strange and false feeling that when it does, it is as if it was already part of the scene, and therefore that the camera somewhat so naturally ended up there. The viewer enters a very intimate moment between a couple *in medias res*, adding to the seemingly natural unfolding of the film's narrative. Nick Browne, in analyzing Hitchcock's *Stagecoach*, claims that "inscribing the spectator's place on the level of the depicted action has the effect of making the story seem to tell itself by reference not to an outside author but to a continuously visible, internal narrative authority."³⁶ It seems as if the camera acts on its own here, claiming its own authority. The filmmaker makes believe that the camera's zooming into this apartment is not his choice but rather constitutes a spontaneous act—perhaps that the viewer himself through his curiosity and desire to see provokes the camera to enter the room.

³⁶ Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: the Rhetoric of *Stagecoach*," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 160.

The scene's montage refutes the idea of artificiality in the coming about of the story. Hitchcock's camera use is so careful in making its viewer unaware of it entering the room so deliberately, that the viewer at the same time becomes somewhat unaware of his sudden position as voyeur of the intimacy unfolding between the couple he knows nothing of yet. Because the camera shows an intimate moment between the characters before they are even introduced to the viewer, it renders the sense that the viewer already knows them. He indeed immediately knows who they are behind close doors and behind drawn curtains: the first thing he sees of them is already so intimate. Robert Stam claims "It is this transfer of perspective, by which we come to share the feelings and impulses of imaginary characters, that simultaneously "moves" us and renders the movement of montage invisible."³⁷ Hitchcock makes possible the use of a concealed montage in order to introduce the unfolding of the narrative not as a fictitious construction brought about by the filmmaker but almost as a naturally occurring one, as if brought about by the viewer's own curiosity. By somewhat masking his own input in the film's construction from the beginning, Hitchcock enables a specific way of watching and experiencing *Psycho*. He forces the film viewer and the film's characters to come to be very closely linked by provoking a natural seeming introduction between the two and a consequent intimacy in their emotions.

Just as *Psycho*'s montage is made to be concealed by its director in order to produce a particular feeling to the narrative's unfolding, it equally often times prevails by remaining extremely apparent as another way to add meaning to the film. Hitchcock's montage is in fact violent at some points during the opening scene. As the couple is lying down, the camera is placed horizontally on the bed, behind Marion's back. She then suddenly begins to get up saying

³⁷ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature from Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992), 258.

“I have to go, Sam” when the scene instantly reveals a cut and the camera is repositioned behind both of their heads, moving upwards with the character. The camera seems to jump just as fast as she does, the editing here being extremely violent so as to suggest something violent and off-putting in the narrative as well. It becomes apparent that the two characters are not in sync, that something about their relationship is off—there is a drift in their relationship just as there is in Marion’s movements and in those of the camera. She no longer wants to continue with their current situation, while he remains passive about it, mocking her by saying “what do we do instead, write each other lurid love letters?” This emphasizes the strangeness going on that Sam



Figure 17. *Psycho* Alfred Hitchcock, 1960.

is completely oblivious to but that the film viewer becomes aware of through the movements of the camera. Marion’s clear anxiety shows up again

as she dresses in front of the mirror, Sam sitting behind her unable to see her face (Fig. 17).

When he finally agrees to have dinner with her family, the look in her face suddenly becomes that of worry and fear, and the music score returns at the same time, emphasizing that tension.

Sam here is unable to see this in her face, yet the placement of the camera shows this to the viewer, placing him in close complicity with Marion. The filmmaker here points to a tension arising—clear not in the narrative but in the actions and movements of the camera and in its

distinct proximity with Marion. The mere placement of the camera guides the viewer's awareness of the scene's tension and anxiety.

Later in *Psycho*, Marion and Norman are seen having a conversation in Bates' office with shot-reverse angle shots. The two are filmed from head on at eye-level. When Marion expresses her negative feelings towards his mother and says "if anyone talked to me the way I heard, the way she spoke to you..." the camera suddenly shifts to a different angle while looking at Bates.



Figure 18. *Psycho*

Norman is now shot from a side perspective and at a low-angle as he hears her say this (Fig. 18). A stuffed eagle is visible in the corner right above his

head. This gives an extremely strange effect to the viewing of Bates, and alters the way the viewer sees him both physically and mentally. It suddenly heightens his importance by strengthening his demeanor and furthermore, by increasing his height, it gives the impression that he may in fact be a threatening character. The fact that the angle of the shot shifts in the middle of a conversation is strange in itself, as if something within that scene has changed—the camera suddenly sees differently and so the viewer too is meant to see differently. Here the camera again changes the way the viewer is meant to see and understand a specific scene. A simple conversation is altered by the change in angle of the camera, thereby altering the way the spectator sees the character.

Marion's murder in the shower sequence became the *Psycho*'s most notorious scene: one of the most horrific incidents depicted in film experienced through expressionist flashes. It runs for around two minutes (the murder itself lasting only about forty-five seconds) yet features over seventy different cuts and camera angles. Hitchcock says "I shot her in slow motion [...] so that when it's projected at normal speed this slow motion is speeded up," creating a particular manipulation of time and space.³⁸ This also allowed him to time every action right so that everything that needed to could be covered up, for Janet Leigh is naked in the scene. He states "I made her work very slowly because I wanted the breast, the bare breast to be covered with the struggling arm at the right moment."³⁹ Here is Hitchcock using a classic Eisensteinian montage—that of rapid and shock cuts filled with underlying meanings.

The camera focuses first only on Marion's feet as she undresses in the bathroom. She pulls the shower curtain and only then does the camera pan up—as if responding to her physical nudity and explicitly alluding to the voyeurism of the spectator. The film then reveals a cut and the camera physically enters the shower. The framing is shoulders up, the water running down from the shower-head remaining visible. Although the scene is composed solely of this activity, the viewer is continuously experiencing the scene from various angles and at different speeds. The entire sequence is a mere illusion brought about by the juxtaposition of shots lasting only fractions of a second. Hitchcock cuts from underneath the shower rod to an eye-level perspective of her face, to a profile shot, juxtaposed one after the other extremely rapidly. The montage here speaks to something disturbing about the scene before the murder even occurs. It hints at the fact

³⁸ Alfred Hitchcock and Sidney Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 288.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 288.

that something is about to occur because its cuts are too violent and odd for a mere shower scene. The camera hence anticipates, simultaneously making aware this suspense to the film viewer. In opposition to the film's montage, what lies behind the camera is rather normal: a woman taking a shower. The fact that the two are in opposition to one another is what creates a tension that builds up, so that the viewer begins to predict something must happen to break the eerie normality of the scene held in great juxtaposition to this very artificial montage.

A silhouette suddenly appears behind the shower curtains and pulls them open, so that both figures come face to face with each other. Hitchcock's montage here cuts incessantly and even more rapidly, "expressing violence by the juxtapositions of the angles, and the pieces of



film assembled."⁴⁰ The camera is placed on Marion right after the killer pulls open the curtains and Hitchcock separates the shot with three rhythmic cuts: a shot of Marion's face shoulders up, a jump cut to a closer view of her face, then a second jump cut to an extreme closeup of her wide-open mouth as she yells in fear (Fig. 19, 20, 21). These jump cuts provoke the

⁴⁰ Hitchcock and Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 288.



Figures 19, 20, 21. *Psycho*

impression that her face is literally moving with fear and “make palpable Marion’s scream, nearly drowned out by the shrieking violins that muffle it,” indicates Rothman.⁴¹

Eisenstein’s idea of montage appears resonant here: the stark juxtaposition of these shots expresses the scene’s violence and Marion’s fear. The rest of the sequence is structured similarly. Shots shift incessantly from high angles of her body in shallow focus to close-ups of her face, then cut to shots of the murderer whose face remains indiscernible.

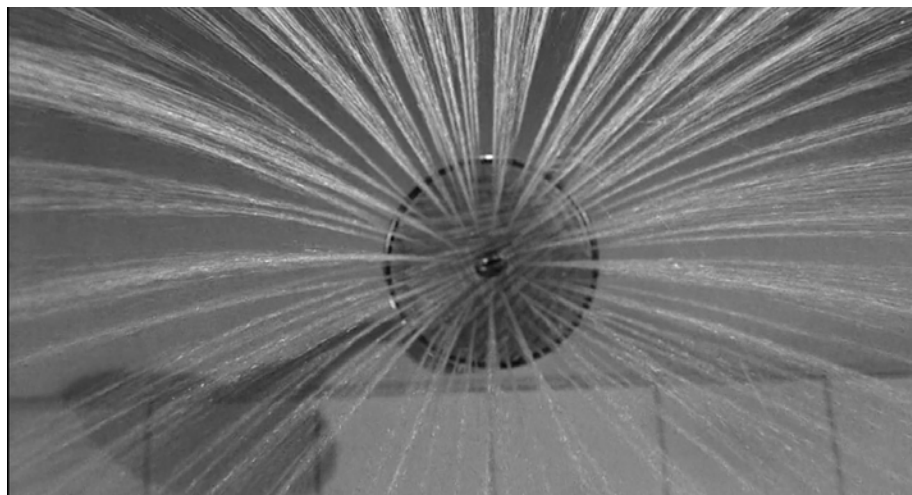
The filmmaker then cuts back and forth from the stabbing of the knife to Marion’s face and body—these two elements never appearing in the same shot together, suggesting the illusion that she is really being stabbed although it is never actually shown explicitly. Rather than the scene being violent, it is rather the montage itself that is violent. Indeed, Rothman says of the sequence’s climax that “Marion’s body remains unmarked, immaculate. Yet it is this shot’s juxtaposition of blade and flesh that announces the fatal wound.”⁴² This shot shows knife and body touching for the first time, however the blade does not cut: her murder is merely suggested and alluded to. Its extremely rapid cutting from all different angles makes the scene more difficult to watch than the actual violence of the murder. The incessant cutting seems to allude to

⁴¹ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 300.

⁴² *Ibid.*

this same illusion (of the murder) inherent in cinema as well—that is, to the artificiality of its construction. Perhaps the sequence’s intent is in fact to demonstrate this pure artificiality of film, the makings of which are entirely built with montage and different camera placements.

Then comes the slow fall and death of the character, juxtaposing the brevity of the murderer’s act and depart to the exaggerated, long, and painful death of the protagonist. A shot shows her hand against the shower tiles slowly fall down. The camera does not move as the hand leaves the frame, illuminating the slowness of the character’s fall. The camera then zooms out and Marion’s face appears alongside her hand, equally falling down the tiles too. It seems as if she too, just like the blood and the water, is washing down the drain. A jump cut shows a shot of the shower head (Fig. 22) which “remains indifferent to the human tragedy of Marion’s death:



oblivious to that death and yet sovereign over it.”⁴³ The shot is reminiscent of the initial shower scene which was taken over by the murderous act in which

Figure 22. *Psycho*

a similar shot of the shower head was present. Water keeps running serving as a sort of juxtaposed irony to her death. It evokes the eye, the water running down resembling eyelashes. The scene therefore acts as a complete analogy to voyeurism as if violence serves merely as the medium through which the camera lens and the viewer’s gaze becomes apparent. “This is the

⁴³ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 307.

lens of Hitchcock's camera and the projector that casts its beam of light onto the screen," claims Rothman.⁴⁴ The shower head is a metaphor for the gaze—evidently that of Norman, but also that of Hitchcock's camera and that of the film viewer. They cross the shower curtains and literally peep at a nude Marion while she takes a shower.

The camera slowly pans towards the water and the blood which are now interlaced running down the drain. It zooms into the drain, getting so close to it so as to abstract it, and then slowly fades into a close-up of an eye—Marion's eye, emphasizing the shape of the eye in relation to the shape of the drain (Fig. 23). The shower head and drain both seem to point out the eye here, illuminating that voyeurism is the underlying subject of the scene. This eye seems to be

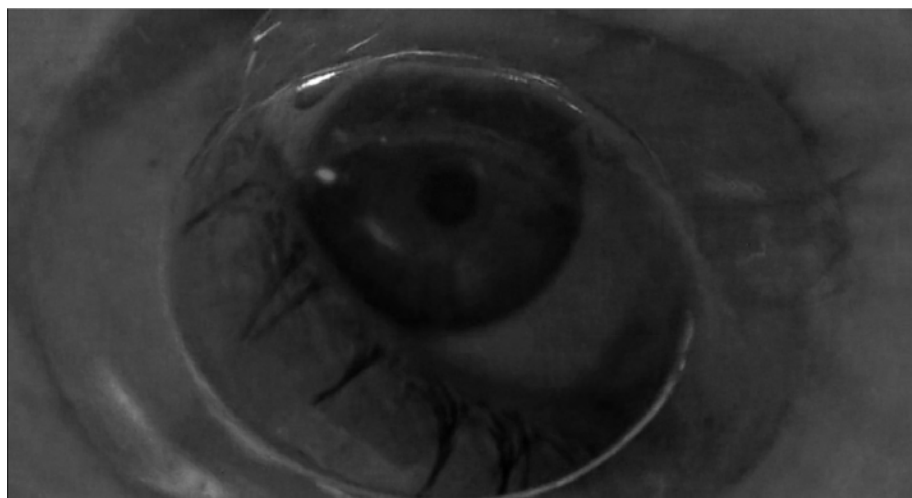


Figure 23. *Psycho*

a reference to the viewer's own eye in his desire to observe with the camera. Through the image of this eye, Hitchcock perhaps argues that

cinema is to appease the spectator's voyeuristic desires—only in film is he enabled and allowed to become a peeping tom like Norman is when he secretly looks at an undressed Marion through the peephole. Only here can he succumb to his desires, as if the camera “lived only to satisfy [the viewer's] desire.”⁴⁵ The scene is an homage to voyeurism: the fact that no stabbing is visible on

⁴⁴ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 307.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

the film screen is again a hint at this—it is in fact not about murder at all. It serves more so as a scene entirely about the intrusion of an eye through a shower curtain: the film viewer’s own gaze through that of the camera’s, taking the film image as his own perspective.

When looking closely at the montage in *Psycho*’s shower sequence, one begins no longer to view the scene as a murder so much as a scene in fact entirely about voyeurism, constantly alluding to the gaze with its incessant cuts, change of angles, and camera movements. Here however Hitchcock does something so brutal to his spectator: he kills off the film’s main character, star actress Janet Leigh, so early on in the film. The viewer is therefore lead to attach himself to another character: Norman Bates—a very ironic identification in that the new central character is in fact the murderer. Hitchcock’s camera here moves so abruptly as a potential reference to this brutality within the film’s own plot: the killing of a character and the consequent identification with the protagonist’s killer.

When Arbogast arrives at the Bates Motel, a suggestive montage occurs as sudden shifts in the angles of the camera evoke a sudden shift in comfort. As Norman leans over to look at the signatures in the registry book with Arbogast, tension emanates through the mere placement of

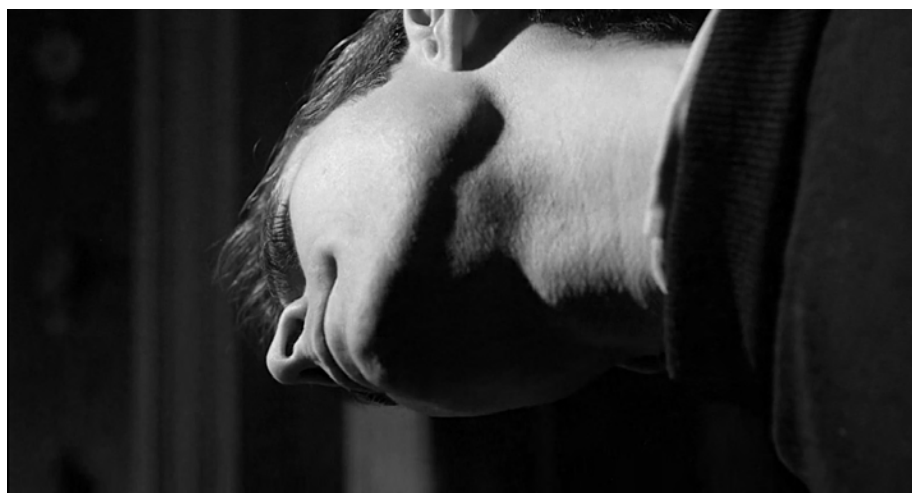


Figure 24. *Psycho*

the camera. It shoots Norman from close-up and from a low angle as he leans his head over (Fig. 24). The camera is suddenly placed under his neck

at a three-quarter turn. This emphasizes the character's odd position as his head seems to be emanating out of nowhere, making his face look completely distorted because of it.

This angle then becomes even more exaggerated: the camera is still placed below his neck, but suddenly moves towards the left, matching the movement of the character. His face turns over sideways as he leans over even more so that the viewer can now no longer see his eyes. A dark shadow on his neck illuminates his face only from above so that his head almost appears detached from the rest of his body. The play with light and shadow here is extremely illuminating: the neck is dark, and the face is over-lit, heightening the attention and focus on his



jaw (Fig. 25). Norman is at the same time chewing gum adding an evident dimension of paranoia and tension as it emphasizes the tightness in his jaw.

Figure 25. *Psycho*

His jaw indeed becomes the full focus of attention as it becomes almost abstracted beyond recognition. His whole face in fact appears abstracted, distorted, and unrecognizable, responding to the present tension and discomfort in the scene.

The character becomes physically distorted here—responding to his psychological distortion from the situation, from his guilt, and from his fear. Arbogast's voice is heard as Norman looks into the registry with him, but because the camera solely focuses on Norman's tense jaw, it becomes all the viewer can focus on as well. The camera then glides back up as the

character does too, and returns to an eye-level close-up of his face. For a brief moment, the camera seems to have been distorted, lost in thought and in fear just as the character is. The tension is brought about entirely through the scene's montage. The camera responds directly to the identification of the viewer with the character: tension is revealed through the camera's position, making the viewer just as afraid and tense as Norman is. The scene's montage exposes a moment in which the camera gets lost in Norman's mind, and in which the viewer too gets lost in his mind.

In Arbogast's murder sequence, the camera is placed behind the investigator at the bottom of the stairs showing a close-up of his feet. Following a cut, the camera is then placed in front of the character, following his upward motion from the top of the stairs at a high angle. The focus becomes shallow, as if commenting on his blindness towards the situation. The camera then shifts to a bird's-eye view as the character finishes walking up the stairs, an act which takes an exaggerated amount of time. Hitchcock explains the intent of this camera placement as an act to depict Arbogast as "a small figure."⁴⁶ The killer appears from the room and walks rapidly left at the same time as Arbogast gets to the last step, remaining completely oblivious to his fate until the very last moment. Herrmann's anxious music score returns and the murder happens almost instantly, the act lasting merely three seconds. Just as in the shower murder, the stabbing is never physically visible. The filmmaker cuts right before the knife cuts. The next shot shows a close-up of blood on his face, with the angle reverting back to eye-level. Arbogast then falls back down the stairs (or rather falls diagonally as if following the inclination of the stairs), his face remaining at a constant distance from the camera (Fig. 26). Hitchcock claims "the reason for

⁴⁶ Hitchcock and Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 289.



Figure 26. *Psycho*

going high—and here we’re talking about the juxtaposition, of size of image. So the big head came as a shock to the audiences, and to the man himself.”⁴⁷ The

film’s entire montage is hence a manipulation from start to finish—not only does a particular camera angle or framing hold meaning within that shot’s context, but the juxtaposition of shots and the way the camera shifts through the narrative produces meaning as well.

For Hitchcock, this particular use of montage and juxtaposition of camera set-ups “creates emotion” out of the film viewer.⁴⁸ Jean-Luc Godard speaks of these thought-out camera movements and montage elements as constituting the essence of a manipulative framework. In an article on *The Wrong Man*, Godard claims “with each shot, each transition, each composition, Hitchcock does the only thing possible for the rather paradoxical but compelling reason that he could do anything he liked.”⁴⁹ This statement seems just as relevant for Hitchcock’s *Psycho*. This use of montage imposes a clear control over the film structure and construction, instilling a particular emotion onto the viewer.

⁴⁷ Hitchcock and Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 289.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Jean-Luc Godard, "Le Cinéma et Son Double" [The Cinema and its Double], *Cahiers du Cinéma*, June 1, 1957.

Godard's *Contempt*: Montage to Develop an Idea

Hitchcock speaks of two different styles of montage filmmaking: “We can have the pieces of film that are put together to create an idea, or the pieces of film that are put together to create an idea, or the pieces of film that are put together to create an emotion.”⁵⁰ Godard exposes the spectator’s voyeurism within the film screen just as Hitchcock does. The French-Swiss filmmaker however, uses it as a way of mocking the society of voyeurs for which his films are largely produced, somewhat criticizing its desire in erotic viewing and of cinema as a market for consumption. He therefore interprets montage more so as a means of evoking a particular thought or argument rather than as exposing a certain emotion onto the film viewer as Hitchcock does, particularly in *Psycho*’s shower sequence. Godard uses a suggestive montage as a way to express a character’s emotions, and allows the viewer to enter that character’s psychological mind through memories and flashbacks brought about by a disruption of the narrative’s time and space.

In the first sequence of *Contempt* (1963) after the opening credits dissolve, Godard imposes the use of three colored filters, developing a red-white-blue composition. This of course immediately exerts a sense of an artificially-created world in which reality is somewhat distorted right from the start. The use of filters is indeed used primarily by reflexive filmmakers “to either flatten the image or to call attention to the artificiality of filmic color,” indicates Robert Stam.⁵¹ The scene is that of a naked Camille played by Brigitte Bardot as she lies in bed with her husband Paul in their apartment. The use of colored filters in this scene immediately invites

⁵⁰ Hitchcock and Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 288.

⁵¹ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 256.

Contempt into the realm of a critique of Hollywood-style cinema. Stam asserts that the film “reflects on this internationalization of European cinema [that of American investment in European films], painting a world in which [...] Hollywood-style studio collaboration has given way to the ephemeral, artificial, and polyglot reality of multinational cinema.”⁵² This shot was in fact later added by Godard because his producers were upset that Bardot was never shown nude.

That this scene is filmed through colored filters constitutes in itself a mockery of his being forced to do so; as if giving his producers their desired naked Bardot, but essentially impacting and controlling the way they see her. “Whereas in nature color nuances are endless and inexhaustible, Godard closes off this inexhaustibility by rigorous selection”—he is also taunting the film viewer in his desire to see her naked, yet altering the way she looks, proving his control and presence in the film, without whom it could not exist.⁵³ The sequence switches from a red filter to a white filter before switching again to a blue filter. The colored filters here not only evidently alter reality, reminding the viewer of the artificiality of the film process, but also have the effect of producing a flattened image. This adds to the criticism of the society ruled by Hollywood: it depicts a nude Brigitte Bardot through a colored filter making it difficult through which to see depth, and making the image more obviously two-dimensional. The opening sequence presents *Contempt* as “an auteurist cry of resentment against producers” through its particular use of montage with colored filters as a means of mocking Hollywood cinema and making it self-aware of its voyeuristic desire.⁵⁴ Where Hitchcock makes the viewer self-aware of his voyeurism, Godard blatantly exposes and criticizes it.

⁵² Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 98.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

Godard imposes colored filters again in the party sequence of *Pierrot le Fou*, presenting each shot through a different colored filter. The sequence renders a break in the story-telling to elicit a parody of advertisements and commerciality through its remarkable use of language and arbitrary color-switching. The viewer observes as Ferdinand passes through each of these shots—each of these artificially colored worlds. The first shot is red and shows a group of people having an entirely meaningless conversation: a man directly quotes a car commercial, while a woman responds with an ad for a perfume and deodorant brand, and another man replies with a commercial for a different car company. Everyone seems to be speaking direct quotes from commercials, making the scene into a sort of commercial itself and underlining the artificiality and nonsense inherent in their language.

That each shot is depicted through a different colored filter furthers the scene's artificial quality. As Ferdinand moves into the next shot, Godard applies a green filter. Here, the protagonist speaks to an American film director, Samuel Fuller, with the help of a translator. The scene moves towards a parody of Hollywood commercialism: it seems almost absurd that an American film director who does not speak any French comes to Paris to make a film about Baudelaire's *Flowers of Evil*. Samuel Fuller tells him what he thinks cinema is: "film is like a battleground, there's love, hate, action, violence, and death. In one word: emotions," the protagonist responds with a mere "oh." Fuller's description seems to respond to what Hollywood cinema is an emblem of—namely, violence and death. Godard alludes to these themes throughout the film but ultimately strays away from the usual entertainment they provoke. Perhaps here Godard differentiates his filmmaking from one which strives to produce emotion out of the spectator, namely Hitchcock's.

All of the shots at the party seem identical—the only difference being the chosen colored filter through which they are filmed. This perhaps is a means of emphasizing the precise lack of color within the society's superficial culture. The sequence develops a parody of commercial culture through the use of colored filters in order to convey a specific idea—that of the superficiality of the language the people use and the distinctions they consequently erase from each other. It also serves as an emphasis of the artificial nature of cinema too. Godard here points directly at it, allowing for it to enter the narrative and become part of it. He juxtaposes nature with film and shows their inherent separation through a modularity of formal elements of the film. The colored filters indeed prove film's artificiality: it detaches the filmic world and reality quite blatantly, imposing directly upon it the director's artistry.

In *Contempt*, when Paul finally arrives at Jerry Prokosch's house, the camera fixates on Camille and juxtaposes her with the other two characters. She is first seen only from a three-quarter turn until the camera pans to the front of her face looking down as if disappointed. The camera's seclusion of her heightens the apparent seclusion she feels from her husband. It again pans towards her back as she looks over from her shoulder at them. A cut then displays a shot of the two men, perhaps as a way to emphasize her loneliness and her seclusion from them. Separated by the placements of the camera, the two seem to be part of different worlds. The distance Godard creates with the use of the camera is suggestive: it defines her seclusion and loneliness by literally creating a border between Camille and Paul. They are not part of the same world as they are rarely framed together. Camille's alienation is hence exposed before being explicit in the narrative. A shot at the American producer's house shows her sitting on a chair in



Figure 27. *Contempt* Jean-Luc Godard, 1963.

the middle of the
frame,
surrounded by
nature (Fig. 27).
The camera is
somewhat distant

from her—as if depicting the distance from which the other two characters are from her as well.

This shot depicts very clearly the position the character holds during this entire sequence. She is often framed in this manner: at one clearly distanced and separated, and at the same time immersed with nature and as if constantly looking back at the camera and viewer. The camera seems to always be fixating on Camille alone in clear separation from the other characters. It perhaps acts here as an agent of emphasis to her seclusion and alienation, thereby further adding to it. Largely then the camera functions within the narrative itself, alternating and influencing it by creating and making aware certain configurations. The character's isolated depiction brought about by the film's montage and camera set-ups considers her a very self-conscious character, however alienated by what surrounds her.

This self-consciousness is explicitly revealed when Francesca suddenly appears and bikes past Camille. The camera zooms in and Brigitte turns around to follow her gaze—at this exact moment a cut reveals a shot exterior to this one. As if Camille is in fact looking back at her past, six shots lasting merely a second each follow the cut. Each of the shots portray her, and hence represent the character's self-reflection upon seeing herself as an object. This self-consciousness of course provides the film with a similar self-awareness as it shows past sequences and seems to

reflect on their overall content within a new context. Here Godard seems to explicitly express within the film narrative that it is not the shot itself which carries meaning but the shot placed within a certain context which produces meaning—that is, montage itself as carrying an idea. He uses the workings of the camera as a means to tell the story. These insert shots provide the film viewer with a direct window into the character's psychological mind.

Camille then looks directly towards the camera, as if looking back at both film and spectator, making them self-conscious too. Godard disrupts the space-time continuity of the film to make the viewer understand and feel what the character is feeling in the moment, allowing him to physically enter her mind and memory: the camera here opens up the inner workings of the characters' mind. This same occurrence happens again a few minutes later. Paul attempts to speak to Camille but she turns her back towards him; when he leaves, she turns her gaze back towards him. Suddenly, Godard produces a cut and shows again five different shots lasting only a second each. Here the shots depict a lonely Camille walking through space in three shots and Paul walking alone in another two. They seem to allude to the growing distance between the two characters, as if again demonstrating and emphasizing that they do not inhabit the same space. Godard's camera hence blatantly manipulates time and space within the film narrative as a means of evoking a direct thought to its viewer. The film departs the initial temporality of the narrative to depict flashbacks inhabiting a different temporal space. This challenges the linearity of the film structure, instead demanding a causal or associational relationship between shots.

An apartment sequence in *Contempt* lasting around thirty minutes shows the two main characters moving through space in a particularly emotive way, effecting another suggestive configuration brought about by the camera. The sequence is shot with a wide angle lens allowing

for the appearance of several frames within one shot, while at the same time distorting the linear dimensions of the image. The effect of cinemascope accommodates the film's *mise en scène* technique: the camera's anamorphic lens enables the viewer to watch the couple interact within two different spaces in one single frame. The camera therefore acts as an odd character here as it seems to be eerily observing them interact and move within the space—at one distanced from them and the space they are contained in, and at the same time allowing for a sort of voyeuristic gaze as several frames are visible within one shot.

The viewer's gaze here is similar to that of a peeping tom as he observes everything from a peculiar distance, not fully engaged with the content of his gaze. This voyeurism is emphasized with the use of shots depicting a frame-within-a-frame or even several frames-within-frames.

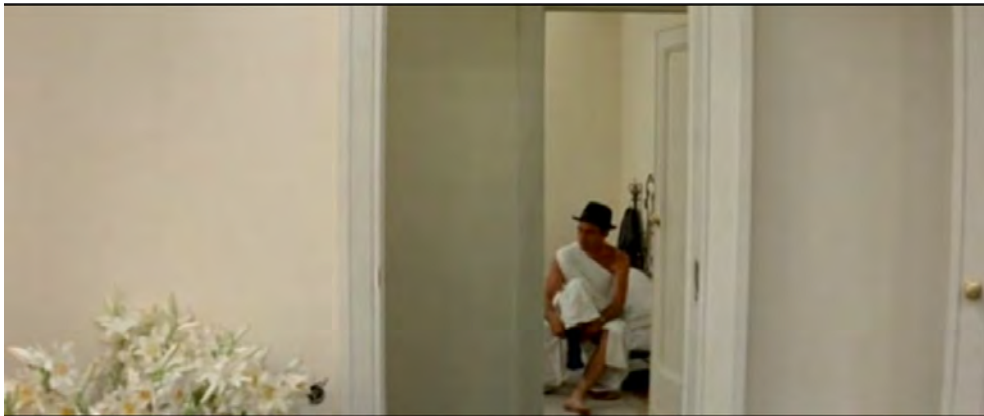


Figure 28. *Contempt*

secretly watching them from afar. A particular shot enables the spectator to see only a small portion of the bedroom, the majority of the shot being white walls and doors—Paul's size is here distorted as he appears drastically small (Fig. 28). Hence the viewer here holds somewhat of a power position over the characters he watches, comparable to Jefferies' superior position in *Rear Window*: he sees everything without being engaged as he remains distanced from the two.

This creates a distance between the viewer's position and that of the characters, as if he is

Contempt's camera framing in this shot also similarly incites the viewer's curiosity, able to see the character in the room merely through a small crack in the door.

The apartment sequence is extremely realistic in its filming style. It films the two interact within the apartment in real time, doing everyday mundane acts. This has an effect of heightening the viewer's voyeuristic gaze as well for he physically enters the space and watches the characters almost not as characters but as real people as they walk around, sit on the toilet, take a bath, lay on the couch: private activities which are usually not shown to a film audience. The viewer watches the two occupy different spaces within the apartment, separated by prominent walls present throughout which define the confines of the rooms. In one specific shot, the two are separated by an immense block of wall as they each inhabit two separate rooms and speak to one another from these separate spaces (Fig. 29). The characters' position as well as that



Figure 29. *Contempt*

of the camera is meaningful here: both emphasize the distance growing between the two. The statue of the woman on the left parallels exactly Camille's position. This is in fact the posture she holds for most of the film: her head looking down as if somewhat alienated, shamed, and lonely. It is as if this wall represents a mirror here, the statue illustrating Camille's exact reflection. The conflict is expressed physically in this shot for a physical object divides the two, as if Godard

here is using a split-screen technique. The use of color in the shot equally aids in the expression of this conflict: white interiors explicitly strongly oppose the red objects, notably the couch.

In an analysis of Godard's film, José Guarner argues that the contempt arising from the two characters "comes not only from the consciousness of an increasing lack of communication [...], but from the increasing inscrutability of Camille's face."⁵⁵ Camille's face in the scene and throughout the film is often enigmatic: she frequently looks down, hides her face with her hand, is shot from behind or profile, or masks her face with a wig. Paul and Camille are rarely seen occupying the same space together; they are somehow always separated by a wall or a door. Often as one enters the room, the other leaves it. They talk to each other without being able to see each other, as if they are somewhat talking directly into space rather than to each other. At one point she in fact asks him "are you listening to me?" because she has no way of telling—it feels as if she might be speaking into space. The camera incessantly emphasizes this growing contempt through its spatial tension. The widescreen lens indeed offers an odd apprehension of the apartment's dimensionality: it confuses the space and makes it appear much larger than it is, creating a larger divide between the two. Although the sequence is extremely realistic in terms of its content, it remains largely stylized with Godard's use of color, montage, and framing.

The tension of this sequence "culminates in an interrogation, shown in an anxious shot that pans backwards and forwards [tracking laterally] between Paul and Camille," states Guarner.⁵⁶ In this final moment, the two characters sit down together in the same space, however still divided by an object (the lamp) sitting between them so that they cannot directly see each

⁵⁵ José Luis Guarner, "Le Mépris," in *The Films of Jean-Luc Godard*, ed. Ian Cameron (London, UK: Studio Vista, 1967), 57.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

other. A cut reveals a close-up of the lamp which switches on and off as Paul says each word. The camera then tracks first towards him as he speaks before tracking back to Camille to show her reaction and response. The camera continues to track constantly back and forth as they speak to each other and as the light incessantly switches on and off. That the camera has to travel so far from one side to the other and constantly move past the lamp reinforces their divide and the strangeness they feel towards each other. Even as they occupy the same space and are physically close to one another, the distance between them remains present as they continue to inhabit two separate worlds. The camera emphasizes this tension by filming each character from close-up so as to conceal the other from the frame. Godard's montage and camera set-ups hence serve as signifiers of an idea within the film's own context.

As the use of the film's formal elements for Godard serve more so as a means through which to express an idea or thought onto the film narrative rather than an emotion onto the viewer, it seems perhaps that Godard is far less manipulative than Hitchcock in his guiding of the spectator. He rather allows for a freeform thought to pass through the montage, allowing for the viewer to think for himself within the film.

CHAPTER 3: REDEFINING NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

In both *Psycho* and *Rear Window*, the plot is actively designed—the entire story line as the unfolding of an idea which was known from the beginning to the very end. Hitchcock employs a concept already fully imagined and worked out in the planning stages in order to transmit emotion out of the spectator. His viewer is pulled into the narrative through a largely subjective camera, making the narrative extremely visual. William Rothman insists that “the late [Hitchcock] films have a sensuality and visual power perhaps unmatched in all of cinema.”⁵⁷ This is indeed what his cinema consists of: the visuals say everything, manipulating the viewer by orienting his gaze to see exactly what Hitchcock wishes him to see, most often concealing this manipulation from the viewer.

Hitchcock is a filmmaker with an extreme sense of detail, so that his power lies in this precise orchestration of detail. He developed his own filmic style so that one may always recognize a ‘Hitchcock film’ merely by seeing one shot from it. This development of a personal filmic style is perhaps what influenced Godard most in his films, for he too developed his own genre of film so that we recognize a Godard film just as immediately as we do a Hitchcock. The French-Swiss filmmaker seems to get closer to the concept of visual metaphors and ideas in his films, allowing for the subconscious mind to unveil within the film narrative itself. It is less the application of preconceived ideas than an open-ended continuation of the thinking process. Some shots remain just as constructed as Hitchcock’s, but at times changes occur within the development of the scene.

⁵⁷ William Rothman, *Hitchcock — The Murderous Gaze* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 7.

The film itself becomes the search for Godard, comparable to Paul's Odyssean quest in *Contempt*. He opens up the film beyond the limits of its own narrative and visual constraint, as if his films never completely end but rather continue on, just as Ulysses' search does past his returning home. Godard's filmmaking therefore perhaps appears more free in its construction than Hitchcock's, as if it in some way no longer symbolizes the novel's form but instead the poem's. His films get closer to the mind and even to life itself as time and space are no longer linearly constrained. This was indeed the innovative idea of the New Wave films—that cinema was no longer seen as “something that simply captures real life but that's part of it,” claims Mark Cousins.⁵⁸ Scottish director Bill Forsyth seems to believe in this kind of filmmaking as well as he states “there should be no story, I mean, we spend our lives inventing stories but story doesn't actually exist *we* exist and our apprehension of a story is how we explain the kind of meanderings that we take.”⁵⁹

While Hitchcock turns to montage and camera set-ups as means through which to emote the viewer through the narrative, Godard uses these as a way not only for the viewer to think, but to think outside of the realm of the film. He brings the film closer to life not by making his narrative more realistic, but by breaking it down like life itself—fragmenting it. In Godard, it is no longer the narrative that seems to be the invention, but rather the *way* the narrative is constructed, so that the meanderings his mind takes in order to build the filmic construction take over the significance of the film. Hence, he allows for chance and spontaneity to somewhat enter his cinema.

⁵⁸ *The Story of Film: an Odyssey*, directed by Mark Cousins, 2012, Episode 7: “European New Wave.”

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Manipulation Through Subjective Treatment of Narrative

Hitchcock instills a filmic manipulation upon the film viewer by making his vision forcefully subjective. His films compel the viewer to enter a character's mind and see entirely through his viewpoint, which in turn coerces the viewer into somewhat forgetting of his being guided by a director—that montage is the film director's creation, not the character's. What is more, this provokes him to forget that the character is himself constructed and part of the manipulation too. This therefore allows for the filmmaker to entirely guide the viewer's attention all along the narrative without him being easily aware of it. This places Hitchcock in a very interesting place in that he can make the viewer connect with a dangerous character (Norman Bates in *Psycho*) or a morally questionable character (Jefferies in *Rear Window*)—at one creating a relationship between character and film viewer, while at the same time separating viewer from character by manipulating him into forgetting his implication in the filmic construction through his own position as voyeur. For Nick Browne, “fascination by identification with character is a way the integrity of fictional space is validated, and because the spectator occupies a fictional role, is a way too that the film can efface the spectator's consciousness of his position.”⁶⁰ Hitchcock makes vision the central element of these films, without which filmic manipulation would be impossible.

In *Rear Window*, the camera's subjective treatment has the effect of misguiding the spectator into believing he can only see what the protagonist sees, when in reality he sees only what Hitchcock chooses to show him. It provokes also a strange duality in that the spectator is placed in the same position as the protagonist, essentially a film viewer too, while he is at the

⁶⁰ Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: the Rhetoric of Stagecoach," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 162.

same time made extremely critical of his morally questionable voyeurism. In *Psycho*, Hitchcock similarly enables his viewers to enter his characters' psychological minds. He makes use of filmic construction as a means to entirely guide the viewer's gaze in order to further the emotional effect of the film: the bringing into a character's mind reinforces a physical reception of the narrative onto the viewer. For Rothman, "the camera's tense and shifting relationships with its human subjects," makes it so that "the author's and viewer's roles are intimately revealed."⁶¹ The camera indeed subjectively passes from character to character, each time building again a relationship between him and film viewer. This almost human-like camera therefore provokes a strong allusion in the narrative to both film viewer and filmmaker.

Psycho brings about the impression that the viewer directly enters a character's mind with its use of a subjective camera. This occurs for the first time in Marion's driving sequence towards the beginning of the film in which her thoughts are explicitly heard. The viewer has "access to her stream of consciousness" as he hears Sam's voice projected onto the film screen: Marion imagines him saying "What are you doing up here? What is it Marion?"⁶² The camera is positioned directly in front of her as she is driving so that her gaze is oriented towards the viewer's. As the imagination of her arrival at Sam's takes over her, it seems as though she is viewing her own film. The viewer then directly enters her frame of mind as the film incessantly jump cuts from her eyes to the road to explicitly show what she sees. The camera frames exactly Marion's gaze so that her gaze becomes the viewer's. It is as if the spectator here enters the protagonist's mind completely, enters her world, and perhaps even begins to forget his own. He

⁶¹ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 261.

hears the things she hears and watches her eyes as they seem to be deep in thought and fear so that he begins to take her fear as his own, largely heightened “as Hermann’s music takes on a tense urgency.”⁶³ The film makes the spectator just as afraid as she is of the character’s fate and of the consequence of the money’s presence lying next to her. It is through the use of subjective cuts, the focus on the protagonist’s eyes, and the non-diegetic sound that intensifies the tension occurring—in other words, the film’s montage is what creates the reigning anxiety. It is therefore largely through Hitchcock’s filmic construction that the viewer is guided into physically experiencing the same fear as the character.

In these shots, the focus is shallow and Hitchcock makes use of key lighting so that Marion’s face glows with bright light while the rest of the shot remains dark and soft: the viewer is meant to intently focus on her expression and on the worry her eyes communicate, so as to internalize the same expression and anxiety as her. The fact that she is staring straight onto the camera itself at this point equally brings the viewer in close proximity to her. Suddenly, her



Figure 30. *Psycho* Alfred Hitchcock, 1960.

vision becomes darkened and she has difficulty seeing the road in front of her (Fig. 30). The viewer in turn experiences a similar difficulty in seeing as a

shot of the highway and sky slowly dissolves into a shot of her face. The two become blurred

⁶³ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 261.

together; her eyes become as if covered and blinded by this previous shot. Here everything becomes extremely dark, car headlights overtaking the screen and blurring both Marion's and the spectator's vision. Rothman claims "if this blinding light stands in for what is conjured within her imagination, [the viewer is] also subjected to it in her place:" Hitchcock makes it so that the world of the film becomes the world of her imagination and in fact the two become mixed up.⁶⁴ The viewer becomes entranced in Marion's gaze and mind so as to bring him closer to a physical visual experience. Hitchcock here uses montage as a means to manipulate in order to elevate the narrative from a mere horror story to a psychologically suspenseful one.

Through Hitchcock's filmic construction, Marion's psychological mind is brought out to the viewer, however through an underlying nature as it surpasses the possibilities of narrative furthering the power of the film. Morning soon turns into night in this driving sequence and point of view shots of the windshield become completely blurred with heavy rain and bright headlights, so that Marion suddenly cannot see clearly anymore, and neither can the film viewer. This vision of "rain and [...] of blade slashing through water [the windshield wipers]" as indicates Rothman of course serve as a foreshadowing of her fate: her murder in the shower sequence.⁶⁵ Offscreen voices are now silenced and the music slowly comes to a fade as if her private film comes to an end as she becomes literally blinded by light. Hitchcock here makes the viewer see with detail—light, shadow, and rain becoming essential to the film's narrative. He orients the gaze through that of a character's in order to pull the viewer deeply into a visual

⁶⁴ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 262.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

narrative. That the viewpoint is subjective is primal to this manipulation as it brings one into the film in a very direct manner.

After Marion's murder sequence, the camera takes on again a subjective viewpoint, allowing for the viewer to this time attach himself to the character of Norman Bates. Norman as if literally takes Marion's place as he enters the bathroom and takes over the frame, becoming the film's new protagonist. Because of the camera's subjective quality, most of the shots are detailed from close-up, not offering any objective viewing of the room as a whole. The film therefore provokes a feeling of discomfort in not giving the entirety of the picture. The desire to know as well as the fear of knowing is heightened in tension with the viewer's identification with Norman. The viewer forcefully sympathizes with Norman; Rothman emphasizes that "Hitchcock does not condemn [the viewer] for [his] sympathy," yet he already has reason to believe the character has something to do with the murder.⁶⁶

As the viewer is able to suddenly shift his identification with another character in the matter of one shot, almost immediately after the murder of the protagonist, it becomes somewhat apparent as indicates Robin Wood, that "the spectator becomes the chief protagonist, uniting himself in all the characters."⁶⁷ It is as if the spectator's participation in the film is what allows for the story and mystery to unfold. It seems in fact that these characters would have no meaning without the projections the spectator arouses in them through his gaze. "The characters of *Psycho* are *one* character, and that character, thanks to the identifications the film evokes, is [the film viewer]."⁶⁸ It seems indeed that the gaze becomes the main focus of the story: the film forces the

⁶⁶ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 312.

⁶⁷ Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: A. Zwemmer, 1969), 119.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

viewer to see through the characters' eyes as it directly focuses his attention and compels him to see the darkness of these characters; forces him to see what he may be afraid to see. In an article about Hitchcock's use of a subjective camera, Daniel Sallitt claims that "Hitchcock's films are in some way dedicated to a notion of psychological subjectivity, that the films examine reality from an individual's psychological viewpoint which [the viewer is] compelled to share."⁶⁹ The spectator becomes a voyeur into the characters' lives and in the acts they commit, and through his identification with them becomes somewhat just as morally questionable as they are.

A consequent scene presents the film in Arbogast's point of view. The detective enters the motel office this time alone and looks around. The viewer sees exactly what he looks at through one-shots of the elements in the room he focuses his gaze on and counter-shots of his face as he shifts his eyes around. Hitchcock could not be more blatant and insistent upon the bringing of the viewer into a character's viewpoint here. The spectator enters the mind of this character by forcibly paying attention to the objects he focuses his gaze on. Again he does not see the entire room as a whole, he rather sees it through the lens of the character's perspective. The spectator becomes trapped in the character's viewpoint. The filmmaker pulls the viewer in by utilizing a "manipulation of visual point of view creating a sense of subjective involvement" in the film and in its characters.⁷⁰ Through a particular camera framing and montage, Hitchcock evokes the sense of a gaze within the film. It heightens the importance of the gaze within cinema, becoming of central concern to the film. This of course is extremely self-referential in that the film viewer's gaze becomes directly called upon and consequently the medium of cinema does as well.

⁶⁹ Daniel Sallitt, "Point of View and "intrarealism" in Hitchcock," *Wide Angle* 4, no. 1 (1980): 38.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Hitchcock's reflexivity and manipulation of camera functions have the effect of compelling the viewer into the realm of the filmic construction unconsciously through his identification with its characters. In a particular scene, Arbogast enters the Bates mansion and subjective treatment occurs again, only this time it entails an extreme foreshadowing of the film's narrative. Three distinct close-ups of different areas of the main entrance are shown. First, a one-shot of the left of the stairs (which leads to the downstairs, where Norman later places his mother's corpse), the second a shot of the stairs directly facing him (a symbol of his soon-to-be murder) and the third to the right of the stairs in which a statue of an angel is pointing a bow and arrow in his direction (another foreshadowing of his murder). This short sequence is ironic as it points directly to the clues in solving the mystery and to his subsequent murder while Arbogast remains completely oblivious to it: he is largely unaware of them which is humorous in considering him an investigator. Hitchcock plays with his audience here through the use of a subjective camera: he orients the viewer's attention to these very suggestive allusions by opening the gaze directly upon the film's narrative construction before enabling him to understand their meaning, the viewer remaining oblivious to the significance of these shots as well. The designing of the plot is evidently detailed: it is clear Hitchcock knew the exact ending of the film from its beginning. His cinematic style is the telling of this story through this particular subjective treatment as an effort to play a sort of manipulative game with the viewer.

The last scene of *Psycho* draws the viewer deeply into the character of Norman Bates and strengthens his identification with him. After the detective's explanation of the events that occurred and of Bates' apparent mental illness, Norman appears sitting on a chair. The camera slowly tracks in towards his face as he sits alone in the room until the camera reaches a medium

close-up. The viewer enters his mind in a similar manner as in Marion's car sequence: he directly hears Norman's thoughts as he observes his eyes from close-up. These off-screen voices are however this time not imagined as they were for Marion, they are 'real' in that they represent private thoughts—the character's inner speech. Here the spectator witnesses the evident duality of the character as Norman is seen while his mother's voices are heard, as if the character seen throughout the film has perhaps never been Norman at all. Suddenly the voice alludes to the film viewer himself as it says "they're probably watching me" and Norman then slowly looks up directly at the camera—perhaps directly at the viewer—and smiles. Rothman asserts that "this look to the camera inscribes knowledge of the [viewer's] presence: "mother" possesses [his] gaze in her own:" it seems Norman becomes consciously aware of the viewer's gaze and is now speaking directly to him.⁷¹

Perhaps this grin is however more than a mere identification of character to viewer but serves also as a direct allusion of filmmaker to film viewer. As Rothman argues, "this grin registers a joke that cannot be separated from the entire series of views, framed by the camera, that constitute *Psycho*."⁷² It seems possible that Hitchcock is here smiling at the viewer himself—carefully concealed behind the character and the workings of the camera, as he has been throughout the entirety of the film. Perhaps this smile is the evidence of Hitchcock's manipulation and constitutes his filmic control on the viewer. The use of a subjective camera indeed compels the viewer to immediately associate his gaze with that of the character's as opposed to with that of the filmmaker's, representing of course the film's true gaze.

⁷¹ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 338.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 339.



Figure 31. *Psycho*

Norman's face is briefly superimposed with an image of his mother's skull in *Psycho*'s penultimate shot (Fig. 31). This calls to attention again that

his character involves an inherent duality. This shot also calls out the presence of death within the film. It as if finally resolves the film's central theme: vision and death, the two being remarkably superimposed here. For Rothman, "it is death that presides over *Psycho*'s world" but it also "announces to [the viewer] what [he] already knows, that [he is] fated to die."⁷³ This superimposition therefore has a doubled effect—that of recalling the film's premise while also calling out for a self-aware viewer in recognizing his reigning death. Hitchcock's *Psycho* shows the power of cinema in its capability of forcing the viewer into identifying with a character without necessarily being conscious of it happening. This control, entirely in the hands of the filmmaker with his use of the camera, brings the viewer into the narrative in a rather manipulative way. Hitchcock therefore appears clearly interested in pulling the viewer directly into the filmic construction as if it occurs naturally. This orients the film viewer's gaze through that of a character's while concealing the filmmaker's control: the film's real gaze.

Just as Hitchcock forces the viewer to see everything alongside his characters in *Psycho*, he employs the similar use of a subjective camera in *Rear Window*. Hitchcock terms this

⁷³ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 339.

“subjective treatment” and defines it as “the close-up of the person and what they see. You see I use it a lot. A tremendous lot of subjective treatment in film. [...] *Rear Window* is purely subjective treatment—what Jimmy Stewart sees all the time. And how he reacts to it.”⁷⁴ All throughout the film, the viewer is indeed entirely contained by one perspective: that of the main character. He in fact can only see what L.B. Jefferies sees, and is thereby enclosed in the apartment just as the protagonist is. While in the protagonist’s apartment in the film’s opening sequence, Jefferies incessantly looks out of his window. He observes everything that goes on outside and the viewer watches alongside him—in fact he looks through his eyes, this being rendered clearly through subjective camera framing and montage. The camera is placed from a low angle as Jefferies speaks on the phone. His eyes then look up and the filmmaker cuts to a low angle of the top of an apartment building adjacent to his where a helicopter is landing. Here the direction of his eyes, the scene’s montage and the low camera angles all come to evoke that the viewer watches exactly what he looks at.

The camera’s constant placement at a low angle when filming Jefferies is meaningful as well—it emphasizes his position as viewer and gives him the sense of possessing a superior power in that he can see close to everything without his neighbors having any idea they are being watched. His gaze constitutes for Lawrence Howe both “an exercise of power” as well as “an imposition on those whom it captures.”⁷⁵ Because of his position as subject in opposition to those unaware of his gaze, Jefferies is physically superior to the objects he watches and his hence

⁷⁴ Alfred Hitchcock and Sidney Gottlieb, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 291.

⁷⁵ Lawrence Howe, "Through the Looking Glass: Reflexivity, Reciprocity, and Defenestration in Hitchcock's *Rear Window*," *College Literature* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 17, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

portrayed so by the camera. This angle also perhaps alludes to the camera itself in that if the character were shot from an eye-level angle, his view would be blocked, and so would the film viewer's. In any case, this angle implies that power resides in the subject and again recalls the presence of the camera within the narrative. This camera also represents Hitchcock himself: "it is the instrument of his presentation to us, his "narration" and manifests his godlike power over the world of the film, a world over which he presides."⁷⁶ The angle is therefore just as manifesting of Jefferies' (and the viewer's) power in watching as it is of Hitchcock's control in the filmic construction.

A phone conversation is heard over these point of view shots, suggesting that the conversation is somewhat mindless—what takes over the focus both for Jefferies and for the film viewer remains what is seen through the window. Jefferies observes his dancing neighbor through the windows of her apartment facing his. His gaze does not leave her for a while, the camera immobile in rendering her. Here his voyeurism is explicit: it seems to surpass simple curiosity and slips into erotic voyeurism. The frame-within-frame produced by the two windows (of his apartment and of her's) explicitly calls out the spectator's voyeurism as well. The film viewer indeed becomes implicit in his voyeuristic act and in the eroticism it implies. Because he seems to watch through the protagonist's eyes however, he becomes almost unaware of his own voyeurism—he somewhat forgets that he is just as much giving in to his erotic gaze as the character is by placing judgment on the protagonist for his act. While directly alluding to erotic voyeurism, the subjective camera also manipulates the film viewer into forcefully giving in to his curiosity and desire in seeing.

⁷⁶ Rothman, *The Murderous Gaze*, 7.

The scene presents the viewer directly towards Jefferies' gaze while it at the same time provokes a disparity between the character's voyeurism and his own. This brings about a clear duality which resides throughout the entirety of the film: for Wood, it incites a "condemnation of curiosity, prying, voyeurism" while the camera at the same time "shamelessly exploits and encourages curiosity, prying, etc."⁷⁷ This ambiguous nature of the subjective camera here places the filmmaker in an interesting position in that he has pulled the viewer in by equating him to the film's protagonist, while he has also concealed this parallel: the viewer in some way immediately places judgment on the protagonist for his voyeurism (just as he does in *Psycho* when Norman peeps at Marion through the hole in the wall) at the same time as he is implicit in the act. The camera's subjectivity conceals the filmmaker's control in that the viewer is enabled to see only what Jefferies sees when in fact "the spectator sees what Hitchcock chooses to show him."⁷⁸ Hitchcock's filmic manipulation is hence concealed just as it is self-conscious.

Jefferies' gaze shifts several times and the camera responds to the shift every time, angling or cutting the shot to render exactly his perspective. This heightens the subjective camera framing by explicitly rendering what the protagonist sees by physically altering the camera's placement according to the direction of his gaze so that as states Wood, "the discrepancy between what *he* sees and what [*the viewer*] sees is considerably narrowed."⁷⁹ As the protagonist's gaze is directed into an apartment, the camera tracks to the right following a man walking in his apartment through its windows, as if Jefferies' eyes are following the character's movement. In another instant, the filmmaker cuts to a close-up of this apartment in order to explicitly show

⁷⁷ Wood, *Hitchcock's Films*, 61.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

what Jefferies is focusing on, and the characters' conversation is heard, as if not only the gaze is subjective but aural perception is too. The camera physically responds by moving with the protagonist's gaze so that the viewer may see the way Jefferies sees, focusing his attention on particular apartments and characters and following their movements.

In one scene, the camera seems to physically mirror the psychological state of the protagonist. While Jefferies is taking a nap, Lisa enters the apartment and wakes him. In the first moments of his wake, the scene appears almost like a dream sequence to the film viewer—as if the camera physically responds to the character's dreamy state. Lisa is presented with a soft focus and the kiss she wakes him up with is shot in slow motion. This mirrors Jefferies' dreamy state and perhaps the way he physically sees her: slightly out of focus because his eyes are just opening. The subjectivity through which the viewer watches *Rear Window* therefore serves as a sort of understanding for the film's montage. The camera indeed orients his gaze according to that of Jefferies' by orienting its framing, movements, and angles of its shots. It thereby manipulates the way he sees in an extremely subtle way in that the viewer relates himself to Jefferies' point of view, when in fact everything he sees is entirely framed by Hitchcock.

The viewer easily forgets that the character is part of the filmic construction and hence entirely part of this manipulation as well. This has the effect of allowing the spectator to enter the filmic world and its narrative more subliminally, as if the film is not controlled by a filmmaker taking place outside of the film's realm at all. Everything is structured and organized in the film, but the fact that he sees through a character's perspective makes this organization more difficult to see.

Not only does *Rear Window*'s camera show what Jefferies sees, it also shows how the protagonist reacts to what he sees. Hitchcock calls this “the other type of pieces of film *which create ideas*. [...] We register [Mr. Stewart's] observations on his face. We are using the visual image now. We are using the mobility of the face, the expression, as our content of the piece of film.”⁸⁰ The viewer witnesses Jefferies' reactions to the shots he looks at by observing a physical expression on his face, so that he not only sees exactly what he sees but also understands the way he feels about what he sees. This further explains the character to the audience.

In one instant, the viewer watches alongside him as a newly married couple moves into an apartment adjacent to his through the frames of the window, slightly hidden behind branches. Jefferies smiles almost ironically as he first watches them settle in, as if somewhat mocking their naive gaiety. As the couple begins kissing, her husband carrying her in his arms, the filmmaker cuts back to Jefferies. He looks away for a second as if realizing he should no longer be watching (Fig. 32). He shortly after however glances back over as if his desire to look has taken over him



Figure 32. *Rear Window* Alfred Hitchcock, 1954.

(Fig. 33). This says something pivotal about the character: he decided to look and give in to his erotic voyeurism. The husband then lowers the curtains, disengaging the protagonist in his voyeuristic

⁸⁰ Gottlieb and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 289.



Figure 33. *Rear Window*

act. This also inhibits the viewer from at the same time taking part of this erotic voyeurism and moral condemnation.

Hitchcock speaks of this montage technique: “By the

changing of one piece of film only, you change the whole idea. It’s a different idea.”⁸¹ So Jefferies’ reactions actually have an immense impact on how he develops as a character through the narrative, and how the audience consequently sees him. Through this sequence, Jefferies is seen for a moment as “a dirty old man” who indulges in his curiosity.⁸² Stella catches him and calls him a “window shopper.” Hitchcock is able to portray this information through a mere cut.

The camera is as if always emphasizing Jefferies’ perspective and state—furthermore, it stresses his immobile state. Hitchcock calls *Rear Window* “a very cinematic picture. But a static figure—in one position, in one room, for the whole picture.”⁸³ Whenever the camera is placed on Jefferies indeed, it remains largely immobile; only does it move to portray what he sees. As a sort of trapped voyeur he remains confined to this space, and therefore the spectator is confined as well. He cannot move from his apartment, his only escape being through his outward gaze. Wood claims “*Rear Window* is Hitchcock’s most uncompromising attempt to imprison us, not only

⁸¹ Gottlieb and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 289.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

within a limited space, but within a single consciousness.”⁸⁴ The protagonist is forced to sit and stare out of his window because he literally cannot move. The window is his only way out and his sole possibility of movement (through his eyes). This physical immobility of course relates him to the viewer in a very direct way: he similarly does not move as he watches the film; only his eyes move as he watches objects and people move within the confines of the film screen.

Hitchcock hence chooses a character already reflective of the spectator as viewer.

Jefferies diverts the spectator’s consciousness of Hitchcock’s manipulation by taking part in his same voyeuristic act. This brings the film viewer into the narrative in an ambiguous way in that he intensely identifies with the character’s state right from the start—at one through his physical immobility which is strongly related to his own, but also through the workings of the camera which directly emphasize and reflect the character’s state of mind and gaze. The ambiguity however lies in that the viewer at the same time remains somewhat detached from the character, questioning the morality of Jefferies’ voyeurism and his own morality as he peeps with him. The viewer is at one largely attached to the character through his subjective viewpoint while also disjoined from his questionable morality. This is perhaps reflective of the duality inherent in cinema-going itself: the viewer becomes attached to what the camera shows him as he internalizes emotions from the film, yet he remains at the same time completely detached from it, separated quite literally by the film screen.

Towards the end of the film, Jefferies begins to look through the window with binoculars and camera lenses. Here the camera again physically responds to this change in viewpoint. The film’s perspective indeed becomes circular and the corners darkened, giving a masking effect to

⁸⁴ Wood, *Hitchcock’s Films*, 65.

the frame. The camera makes it appear as if the viewer is actually looking through binoculars, completely taking on the protagonist's point of view. It therefore brings about the impression that Jefferies composes the shots by framing, editing, and angling the film the way he sees—as if perhaps he is the director or that there is none. As Stam indeed claims, “like a director, he channels and guides [the spectators’] glance, framing their vision and imposing his interpretation.”⁸⁵ Hence, his view becomes that of the film’s, and so “Jefferies enjoys partial directorial control over his “film”, since binoculars and a telephoto lens facilitate a multiplicity of set-ups and perspective.”⁸⁶ This causes the spectator to forget that the character is merely part of the film and that what he sees is entirely what the director chooses to show him. This subjective camera use fades away the realization of the control of the film viewer’s gaze by concealing the identity of the director behind that of a character—one in whom he confides in and identifies himself with. The character’s eyes become the viewer’s eyes, or so he is meant to believe. Just as Jefferies’ look through the camera lens is reflective of his potential taking upon the identity of the filmmaker himself and concealing his control, it also perhaps has the effect of reminding the viewer of the presence of the camera and the filmmaker within the construction. Hitchcock’s cinematic trick here appears as an ambiguous duality as his filmmaking remains both self-conscious and manipulative.

Hitchcock’s film style seems to be largely one consisting of creative imagery or as he states, “the visual image registering thought, mind...”—the making of a montage in order to

⁸⁵ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature from Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992), 46.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

create emotion and invoke ideas.⁸⁷ This use of subjective camera or “subjective treatment” as Hitchcock terms it, brings the viewer into the film in a rather manipulative way as it evokes something about the character by orienting the viewer’s gaze and mind. Hitchcock however, although largely known for his complex narrative capacity, says something interesting about his film style: “I don’t care what the film is about. [...] So long as the audience goes through that emotion!”⁸⁸ It seems what matters most to him is in fact a physical reaction from the spectator; cinema for him carries the powerful capacity in provoking this. Perhaps then *Psycho*’s narrative is not what interests him, but rather the expression of violence in the montage and camera angles of *Psycho* in order to provoke a sensorial reaction from the viewer. *Rear Window*’s narrative is similarly just a means for the film viewer to question his own position as voyeur of film by identifying with a character very close to him. The narrative is simply the instrument through which the viewer’s mind might be carried—the true meaning underlying Hitchcock’s film being the effect it provokes out of him.

Initially then, Hitchcock appears not too far from Godard’s modern filmmaking, in that the narrative is not of primal importance to his film. What has interest to him is instead the manipulation of cinema as a powerfully evocative medium. Where Godard effectively strays from Hitchcock however, is in the building of the narrative. The English filmmaker designs the story right from the start, organizing the plot line in a very detailed manner—everything is planned out from the start of the film right until the very end. Hitchcock claims “there is nothing accidental” in his films.⁸⁹ For Godard, the accidental is precisely what interests him as he seems

⁸⁷ Gottlieb and Hitchcock, *Hitchcock on Hitchcock*, 296.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 292.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 294.

to stray from the narrative and move towards a filmmaking closer to the mind and to life itself—that is, broken up into pieces, not necessarily linearly structured, and involving psychological dreams and memories.

Digression from Narrative Constructions

Godard's filmmaking strays away from a classical narrative structure, seemingly pulling away from the cinematic manipulation entailed within Hitchcock's filmmaking. Robert Stam indeed argues that Godard "struggles against the passivity bred of decades of manipulation."⁹⁰ Where Hitchcock builds tension and emotion within the film viewer through the various uses of camera and montage, depending on a largely mapped out narrative, Godard rather breaks up the narrative into pieces. His films are instead extremely active, composed at the precise time of composition: "thus the film rehearses itself; [...] it is a "film en train de se faire" rather than a finished product."⁹¹ Hence Godard gets closer to a cinema related to chance, incorporating spontaneity and the aleatory into his art, as if allowing life itself to mingle within film.

Godard however terms this the "definitive by chance," therefore not entirely letting go of Hitchcock's concept of auteurism, but instead blending filmic manipulation and the mind's spontaneity.⁹² Godard is somewhat rethinking his filmmaking right at the moment he is directing so that he expresses not only the thought but the thought process itself, opening up the viewer to the workings of his mind. Thus fragmentation and nonsensical or illogical cuts enter the filmic

⁹⁰ Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature from Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1992), 222.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 220.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 180.

world. This breaking of the conventional effectively surpasses Hitchcock's modernity, bringing the French-Swiss filmmaker closer to the avant-garde and to filmic surrealism through his notable use of particularly jarring cuts, self-conscious rethinking, and fragmentation in *Pierrot le Fou*. Cinema for Godard is an attempt to bring together the artist (the being behind the camera: the essence of the film's existence) and life (the natural reality that unfolds in front of the camera), allowing for them to seemingly blend together, making the film both self-conscious of its artificiality just as it incorporates life itself.

Though *Contempt*'s very apparent self-consciousness discussed in chapter one at the same time inherently provokes discontinuity within the narrative, this is largely more evident in Godard's *Pierrot le Fou* whose structure will therefore be singularly analyzed in this chapter.

Jean-Luc Godard's *Pierrot le Fou* follows the narrative of a couple fleeing their respective social environments to escape together to the Mediterranean Sea. As the film is itself the story of a road trip, its characters are constantly in movement. The story however does not seem to progress as a clear linear narrative. The film moves instead from idea to idea rather than from place to place. Godard is indeed deconstructing the classical narrative structure of cinema throughout the entire film. He strays away from a conventional narrative by complicating and abstracting the story. This constitutes another means through which he remains reflexive; Stam maintains that "in multiplying discontinuities, Godard simply foregrounds the primordial discontinuity of film itself."⁹³

Montage is the means through which a film might appear continuous and linear—paradoxical in that the process entails the juxtaposition of shots broken up in time and space, and

⁹³ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 259.

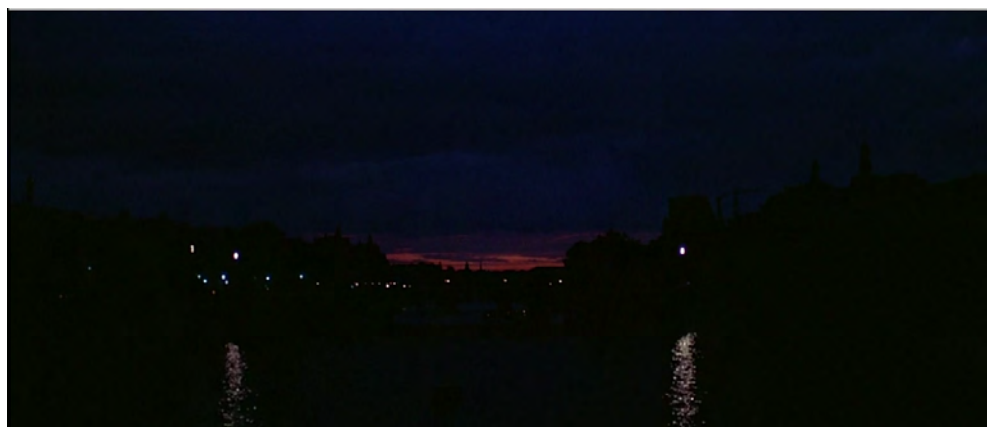
is hence perpetually discontinuous by nature. Godard exerts the inherent discontinuity of film production by allowing these discontinuities to persevere through the film narrative. *Pierrot le Fou* therefore provokes the sense of a constant breaking of its linear construction, as if constantly moving back and forth in time and space. The filmmaker effectively underscores the discontinuity of film by emphasizing the individual frame and bringing about a sense of mechanicalness through the use of a broken up voice-over narrated by the characters themselves, by interjecting insert shots and autonomous chapters within the narrative, and by producing a blatant editing throughout. Instead of the realization of a classical continuous narrative, the film appears rather to convey fragmented thoughts and ideas of the director, instituting a cinema of discontinuities—perhaps a representation of the workings of the mind and of life itself. Here, Godard appears to allow accidents to happen, something Hitchcock was far from agreeable in letting happen by organizing and planning every detail right from the start.

The opening sequence of *Pierrot le Fou* introduces a voice-over narration overlaying a series of moving images. The first is a shot of two women playing tennis, the second a man (the film's protagonist) picking out books in a library, and the third a shot of a river and sky at twilight. The first images of the film appear therefore entirely abstract in terms of their meaning within the narrative as well as in terms of their being sequenced together. No clear correlation seems to exist amongst the first three shots; Godard strays far away from a conventionally structured film by introducing the protagonist and the narrative in this manner. He uses here this 'montage by attraction' which André Bazin considers "as very near to it in principle the more commonly used ellipses, comparison, or metaphor."⁹⁴ The opening sequence serves then perhaps

⁹⁴ André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," in *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments*, ed. Marc Furstenau (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 96.

as a direct reflection of poetry in cinema—the shots, in being placed one after the other, as constituting a metaphor. These opening shots furthermore express Godard’s construction as basing itself on the intent of the moment. As if coming close to avant-garde filmmaking here, Godard develops the manifestation of symbolism through cinema. The voice-over in association with these images allows for the viewer to think freely within the film, and hence right from the beginning, Godard digresses from narrative. He introduces the film by leading the viewer into his own mind and thought process rather than into the story.

Overlaying these shots are off-screen voices spoken by the film’s protagonist, Ferdinand. He quotes from a book about the Spanish painter: “Velázquez, past the age of 50, no longer painted specific objects,” the protagonist reads, “he drifted around things like the air, like the twilight, catching unawares in the shimmering shadows the nuances of color that he transformed into the invisible core of his silent symphony.” This narration hence becomes a clear part of



Godard’s metaphor, for the images overlaying it serve as allusions to these words.

Figure 34. *Pierrot le Fou* Jean-Luc Godard, 1965.

The third shot of the opening sequence indeed appears to be concretized: it depicts the shadows and lights on a river at twilight, almost resembling a landscape painting (Fig. 34). Godard is perhaps metaphorically inscribing the philosophy behind his own filmmaking in relation to Diego Velázquez’s aesthetic. The opening sequence hence alludes to his cinema—one that

surpasses a mere articulation of narrative through images, rather moving towards an expression of metaphors, ideas, and meditations through visuals.

Pierrot le Fou's opening seems therefore not to take place in the film's narrative, for it comes closer to an essay film by invoking visuals accompanied by the reading of an analysis. The film ultimately arrives at a scene in which the protagonist lays in a bathtub reading this book, placing the voice-over in real time and space, and finally introducing the viewer to the characters and storyline. Here thoughts and ideas take over the screen as if telling the viewer right from the beginning that this is not a film with a plot as its main focus, rather it is a film that deals directly with the mind itself. Godard goes on to break up the narrative with sidetracked ideas and metaphors in order to convey thoughts to the viewer. The opening of the film serves as a demonstration of its aesthetic: a storyline incessantly broken up, perhaps digressing from the novel and moving rather towards poetry.

Ferdinand indicates the entering of chapter two: "a surprise party at Mr. and Mrs. Espresso's whose daughter is my wife." The introduction of a chapter here is notable in that chapter one has never been indicated. This provides another disruption to the narrative as it confuses its linearity and chronology. Towards the end of this party sequence, Ferdinand walks through a blue-colored filtered room from right to left, before a cut displays the same shot again, this time through a green filter. The physical sound of the cut is heard as Ferdinand finishes walking through the frame. Here the director makes evident the actual process of film editing in the scene and thereby reminds the viewer of the camera and of montage. The cut is so mechanical perhaps as a means of conveying the feeling of the protagonist: "I've got a mechanism for seeing called eyes, for hearing called ears, for speaking called a mouth. But they

feel disconnected. They don't work together," he says. It seems that images and sound are somewhat misplaced within the film too as a large part of the narration is through voice-over.

Montage is once again made obvious through the use of an extremely non-linear cut: the protagonist impulsively throws a piece of cake at the people attending the party before Godard



suddenly cuts to a shot of fireworks and the film again presents a new chapter (Fig. 35).

Figure 35. *Pierrot le Fou*

The chapter is again narrated through voice-over by the protagonist and constitutes a collection of words. The fact that the chapter title is itself a fragmented sentence seems to allude to the film's own structure. The director's thoughts seem directly placed onto the film here, serving as a break in the narrative structure of the story as if to philosophically express the chaos of the party sequence and its reigning artifice: the fireworks as a visual display of anger and emotion.

After a scene in which Marianne and Ferdinand drive away together, the viewer is thrown



into a space without any explanation as to how they have gotten there. To add to the

Figure 36. *Pierrot le Fou*

confusion, the room is incomprehensibly filled with machine guns. The camera follows the movement of Marianne within this space as she walks from the outside to the inside of the house: it is shot entirely from waist up, making difficult to discern the space (Fig. 36). Suddenly the



Figure 37. *Pierrot le Fou*

camera bends down as she does and a dead man is seen laying on a bed—as if Godard’s camera was explicitly hiding the most blatant thing in the room (Fig. 37). She barely pays any attention to the body as if it carries no importance to her: this seems to call out the insignificance of the narrative. Marianne moves a platter from the dead man’s bed into the next room, placing it on Ferdinand’s bed. The two rooms appear completely disjointed yet they are seemingly both part of the same space. That the camera acts equally as disinterested in the dead man adds another level of confusion to the scene. By doing so, Godard emphasizes that the film places little importance on the narrative understanding of the film. The camera follows Marianne move from room to room almost as if dancing within the space, but reveals a cut every time she begins to enter a different room, complicating the sense of unity and coherence within the apartment. This apartment sequence furthers a sense of breakage in the understanding of space in the narrative.

Suddenly this incoherence in sense of space shifts into an incoherence in sense of time through a particular use of narration and sound. Marianne and Ferdinand utter bits of phrases that are often times interlaced, repeated, and placed on top of one another. They speak together, each

one of them uttering a short phrase, the next finishing the sentence. They are incoherent in that they are not complete thoughts or sentences, but rather bits of phrases or single words. Marianne keeps repeating “I’ll explain everything” to Ferdinand, as if she is in some sense also saying this to the film viewer who does not understand what is happening either—as if reassuring him the film will explain everything to him in the end. The phrases then turn into mere words: a constant back and forth between Marianne and Ferdinand. This narration is reflective of the film itself which similarly seems to be constructed of bits of images and one-shots.

Instead of watching their story unfold entirely linearly, the viewer instead most often times sees fragments of scenes overtopped by short phrases explaining what they are doing. The conversations they are seen having on screen are not heard, but are rather replaced with non-diegetic words that remain outside of the framework of the narrative. It brings about an odd feeling in that the characters’ voices and thoughts are heard yet they remain detached from the images as they speak of themselves in the third person. The film detaches image from sound, almost as if disconnecting the two—perhaps responding again to the feeling Ferdinand expresses earlier on in the film, that his eyes and ears feel disconnected. The characters hence become two people: the ones seen on screen and the ones heard in the narration, fragmenting and disjuncting the film even further.

Godard effectively plays with the imposition of sound on filmic images destroying the linearity of narrative, almost as if mocking the manipulative emotion it can provoke onto film viewer (one which Hitchcock largely uses as means to provoke feelings of tension and fear in *Psycho*). By doing so, he moreover exposes film as a discontinuous medium because of this

precise editing process, occurring well after the filming takes place, thus entirely uncoordinated with real time and space.

The indication of chapters by the characters themselves remains throughout *Pierrot le Fou*, literally breaking up its narrative into nonlinear parts. This has the effect of portraying the illusionistic quality of film construction by rendering its inherent non-linearity. In the long take after Ferdinand and Marianne light their car on fire, the film somehow gets to chapter eight, “A Season in Hell.” It is inexplicable how the film has gotten to number eight; it does not reveal any linearity. The chapter’s name then changes as it is repeated again but this time “we crossed France” follows it. The film at the same time attempts at a sense of structure through the integration of chapters just as it confuses the narrative structure of the film. It emphasizes that there is no clear beginning and end, and that the film does not follow a clear linear construction but rather seems to be constructed of fragments much like the ones the characters utter in their narration.

Chapter seven is later somehow reached: the viewer is clearly brought back and forth in time and space throughout the film. For Stam, this “points up the unreality of such divisions.”⁹⁵ Perhaps the chapter titles are therefore a demonstration of “the arbitrariness of divisions in art generally whether it be the frame in painting, [...] or sequences in films.”⁹⁶ Godard uses them here as a means to designate the extreme artificiality in the linear and continuous appearance of a narrative—it points at the inherent breaking up of chronology within film construction. Ferdinand eventually indicates the “following chapter,” this time no longer giving a specific

⁹⁵ Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, 148.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

chapter number, as if these chapters are simply arbitrarily designated and do not in fact carry any real meaning. The story therefore is not that of a chronological narrative of the adventure of these characters, but rather that of a contemplation of cinema within the film itself—one brought about self-consciously by Godard.

Throughout *Pierrot le Fou*, Godard uses different flashing words that seem once again to break up the film into different fragments. The first reads “RIVIERA”—RI in blue, VIE in white, RA in red, as if the word itself is disjointed. Later, a close-up of this word “VIE” returns again flashing, making discontinuous the narrative. Towards the end of the film, “CINEMA” lights up, separated again in three parts with these same colors. These flashing words in the colors of the French flag break up the linear course of the story in order to self-reflect upon the film and upon the viewer himself. These cuts revealing flashing words directly on the film screen institute a discontinuity in the film narrative to point at language and film itself. Godard here flashes the relationship between life and cinema, as if concretizing the concept of the film. He does not hide the ideas behind his shots but rather explicitly displays (or flashes) them throughout the film. The fact that the words themselves are fragmented alludes again to the constant disruptions of the narrative structure—broken up as a means to allude to the artificiality inherent in film construction.

Language hence plays a part in Godard’s film, creating poetic breaks within the film narrative. By producing words directly on screen, Godard furthermore exhibits and emphasizes cinema as constituting a language in itself. The word “LIFE” comes out, as if overtly expressing that life indeed interrupts the film. With Godard, narrative coherence is disintegrated for a digression from illusionistic representation and a means to come closer to life and the inner

workings of the mind; with Hitchcock, the illusion of linearity in narrative is sustained within the film as further means of manipulation. Life does not come into play in a similar manner in Hitchcock's films: the viewer's gaze is clearly oriented with a subjective treatment of camera, hence guiding what he sees and what he feels. Godard instead allows for the viewer's free-form thoughts to take part of the film as well. This marks a substantial difference in these two filmmaking styles. Godard's construction is one that is based on the intent of the moment, so that what happens in the story is not of utmost importance, but rather its development or unfolding is what brings meaning to it. *Pierrot le Fou* therefore progresses the way the mind does: not through time and space, but through associations and visual metaphors.

CONCLUSION

Where Jean-Luc Godard was profoundly influenced by Alfred Hitchcock's *mise en scène*, montage, and formal elements, he is later seen as demarcating a clear rupture from his cinematic style. In writing about Ingmar Bergman in 1958 in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Godard institutes a sharp distinction between two filmmaking styles. He states:

There are, in general, two kinds of filmmakers: those who walk in the street with their head up, and those who walk with their head down. The former, in order to see what's happening around them, have to raise their head often and suddenly and to turn it left and right, embracing the field of vision with a series of glances. They *see*. The latter see nothing, they *look*, fixing their attention on the precise point that interests them. When they shoot a film, the framings of the former will be airy and fluid (Rossellini); those of the latter, tight to the millimeter (Hitchcock) Bergman is rather in the first group, that of free cinema; Visconti, in the second, that of rigorous cinema.

For my part, I prefer "Summer with Monika" to "Senso," and the *politique des auteurs* to that of *metteurs en scène*.⁹⁷

Godard thus makes a basic distinction between a 'cinema of freedom' and a 'cinema of rigour.' As he becomes more and more interested in life and spontaneity in filmmaking, Godard effectively breaks away from a Hitchcockian influence. In *Contempt* and *Pierrot le Fou*, the filmmaker looks freely with the camera, allowing for chance occurrences and changes to unfold and develop within the film's construction. It seems that Hitchcock could no longer influence Godard's aesthetic. Shortly after completing *Pierrot le Fou*, Godard indeed admitted to an interviewer: "In my other films, when I had a problem, I asked myself what Hitchcock would have done in my place. While making *Pierrot*, I had the impression that he wouldn't have known how to answer, other than 'Work it out for yourself.'⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Jean-Luc Godard, "Bergmanorama," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, July 1958.

⁹⁸ Richard Brody, *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2008), 244.

In making these films, Godard created his own cinematic aesthetic just as Hitchcock had. The power of Hitchcock's method lies in its orchestration of details, profoundly manipulating the viewer's gaze and emotions—cinema becomes an empathy machine. Godard in turn gives more space to the film viewer to interpret for himself as he follows a freeform story—cinema becomes more so the expression of a thought process rather than a narrative realized in images. The film's real story is precisely how to tell the story. He appears rather to leap into a void, perhaps into this very *abyme*. In doing so, it seems Godard inhabits the world of poetry and hence frees the viewer to imagine, think, see, and construct for himself just as the filmmaker does. Godard attempts at a cinematic language, constantly in search for it through his filmmaking process. At the same time, he allows for a similar quest in the film viewer's own viewing of the film.

A scene in Godard's *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* shows how a shot of bubbles becomes the expression of an idea. A character is self-absorbed and looks into a coffee cup while Godard narrates his thoughts through a whispered voice-over (Fig. 38). The viewer listens and watches as the filmmaker's thoughts are spoken out loud on the film screen. Godard claims of *2*



or 3 Things I Know About Her that “it isn't a film, it's an attempt at film and is presented

Figure 38. *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her* Jean-Luc Godard, 1967. as such.”⁹⁹ In other words perhaps, it exemplifies the thought process of the nature of cinematic

⁹⁹ Jean-Luc Godard, Jean Narboni, and Tom Milne, *Godard on Godard: Critical Writings by Jean-Luc Godard* (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1986), 239.

language developing and evolving within a film. Godard's dialectics here aim at the reconciling of the self and the other—at the merging of interior thought and the exterior world. This coffee cup represents a mental space of representation which the character and film viewer plunge into in an attempt at differentiating themselves from their own inherent confusion (the dialogue between subjectivity and objectivity) to consider a new space.

Godard first meditates on the expression of thoughts and words as being both uniting and isolating: uniting in what they express to the viewer; dividing and isolating by what they fail to express, by what they omit, by what they silence. He states “the limits of my language are the limits of my world and when I speak, I limit the world, I finish it.” A thought from one mind to another brings one into that mind, but only so much as is expressed by it. The limit produced by its language represents the limits of the understanding of that language. Thought and perception are active processes for Godard—they are constantly in movement (perhaps this represents the dynamism of his films). Language pins things down and reinforces fixed limits. The film is subject to the constraints of that language. His film aesthetic is the emergence of a world which brings the viewer in and makes him more aware of the dynamism of perception. The “I” is embodied solely in life and in movement; it cannot be rendered in language because language inherently pins it down and makes it someone else, makes it Other.

Godard seems to reflect on the real (objectivity) and the imaginary (subjectivity). The real is the manifestation and expression of the real world as being made of causalities. This is represented by the sudden interruption of the monologue by a ‘real’ scene of the café. A cut from a shot of the character's pensive face where silence and whispered thoughts reign is juxtaposed to diegetic sounds with shots of beer being poured and coffee being made. These are exemplary

of the pauses within the film narrative and are an attempt at demonstrating this 'objectivity.' The filmmaker's thoughts are here broken up by a manifestation of the real.

The imaginary in turn, is the world the character (and film viewer) is looking into: the spirals in the coffee cup. It embodies his subjectivity, his imaginations, and his subconscious. The spirals represent abstract forms, and relate the viewer to his own imaginary world. After the interruption of the 'real' café scene, Godard whispers: "I cannot escape the objectivity crushing me nor the subjectivity expelling me." Subjectivity mingles with objectivity here, insisting upon this dualism. This contemplation of the film character looking into the coffee cup, an object yet also a window into the character's own thoughts and subjectivity, serves perhaps as a linking of the real and the imaginary. The character recognizes his subjectivity while also seeing himself as an object in the world. The symbolic, the merging of these two, seems to effect the dialectic of this scene and more broadly, of cinema: the bringing together of inner thought and exterior world. This in turn, (as he too looks into this coffee cup) allows for the viewer to ruminate on his own being.

Godard then points at the necessity of the gaze and of language as he whispers "I have to listen, more than ever I have to look around me at the world, my fellow creature, my brother." In order to become an objective being, man must look around himself. This is the potential of cinema—to convey that objective world to the viewer, to make him aware of objects, of people, of the exterior world surrounding him. The coffee cup is perhaps a mirror of the film itself: the looking at a bended reality and the simultaneous looking into oneself. It embodies again the symbol of a mirror (as alluded to in Hitchcock's *Psycho*): the possibility of attaining self-consciousness by looking at oneself as object in a mirror, and that same possibility in looking

through a film screen. The coffee cup opens up the possibilities of subject becoming object. In being looked back upon as object by the camera or the character in reflexive films while at the same time entering an imaginary world where thoughts prevail, the viewer is made self-aware of his own subjectivity and objectivity.

Godard seems to attempt at dealing with his own identity and objectivity within the film as well. The scene is an interior discussion but it embodies also a dialogue (between filmmaker and viewer). The contemplation of the spirals in the coffee cup and the noises of the cafe are mirrors of what the narrator describes in the monologue. The act entails immobility: the creator stops acting in order to merely think. The film is stopped to question the filmmaker's own subject, and hence the viewer's as well is entailed in this contemplation. Godard speaks in the place both of the character and of the viewer. Through this monologue, the filmmaker manifests his own presence in the film. He contemplates and hence recognizes his own subjectivity but also sees himself as an object in the world, vulnerable to exterior interventions. A subject becomes less alienated, less object, and hence subject only when it is consciously faced with the real, with objectivity. Reflexive film inspires this possibility to the film viewer.

This contemplation brings Godard as a filmmaker to a halt—to a questioning of what type of film is to come after this: a film that continues to move towards absurdity (Ferdinand's accidental suicide in the final scene of *Pierrot le Fou*, for example) or towards films that are perhaps more symbolical, such as the ones he makes towards the end of his life? It seems that after making *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, Godard no longer believes in language: it vanishes. A later film perhaps exhibits the culmination of his inquiry in the nature of cinematic language, as Godard says *Adieu au Langage* (2014).

Where Hitchcock brings the viewer into his own mind, leading him through different gazes and orienting the way he is meant to feel, Godard rather enables the viewer to contemplate for himself by looking symbolically into a coffee cup, watching as things move around spontaneously, completely enveloped in his own mind. Hitchcock takes the viewer and uses him; Godard summons the viewer symbolically through monologue, placing him almost directly in the filmmaker's position—showing him the camera, sharing with him the arbitrary nature of his choices, and allowing him to think freely. Just as his films are freed from cinematic conventions, so do his abstract visuals and spontaneous edits suggest a similar freedom for the film viewer: to forget about a story, a character, or even of a film altogether, and to simply look into a coffee cup for a while, letting thoughts spiral wherever they will.

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