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THE DYNAMICS OF PROXIMITY:
HITCHCOCK'S CINEMA OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA

by

Scott E. Peeler

An Essay

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the Faculty of the Graduate School

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INTRODUCTION

> The space of hatred and combat can only be studied in the context of impassioned subject matter and apocalyptic images.[1]

The implication of space in film is worth exploring in detail particularly with regard to the films of Alfred Hitchcock, since he is, perhaps more than any other filmmaker, concerned with the dynamics of proximity. Possibly because of his experience as a set designer on Graham Cutts's silent films *Woman to Woman* (1922), *The White Shadow* (1923), *The Passionate Adventure* (1924), *The Blackguard*, and *The Prude's Fall* (both 1925), Hitchcock very early in his career was faced with the task of expressing himself--without words--through setting, set shape, and room size. In Francois Truffaut's book, *Hitchcock*, the Master relates an important (since he remembers it) childhood episode in which his father arranged for the chief of police to lock him in a jail cell

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[1]Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. xxxii. The psychological/phenomenological approach of this essay has been informed by a body of thought centering around Bachelard and others. In particular, inspiration has come from his chapters on the space of the house ("From Cellar to Garret" and "Drawers, Chests and Wardrobes"). However, by his own admission, Bachelard's book "examine[s]...the quite simple images of *felicitous space*....eulogized space....On the other hand, hostile space is hardly mentioned in these pages" (pp. xxxi-xxxii).

for five or ten minutes, admonishing that, "This is what we do to naughty boys."[2] Consequently, we see in Hitchcock's films (which were all visually designed by him in the storyboard process) a pervasive aura of claustrophobia which involves a certain amount of connotated guilt and fear. As I intend to explain, this claustrophobia has far-reaching implications in five hermeneutic contexts, proving to be an important key to his moral-aesthetic universe.

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[2]Francois Truffaut, Hitchcock (New York: Simon & Schuster, Touchstone Revised Edition, 1985), p. 25.

I. CLAUSTROM AS WORLD

In several films, Hitchcock exploits proximity to suggest the closeness of nations and the inherent danger this presents. These "political" films each use close situations as allegorical representations of a sort of world-wide cabin fever; we are given a microcosmic metonym: a crowded train or boat for a world on edge.

The Lady Vanishes (1938) prophesied the second World War and even warned Great Britain of its own blindness to the coming Nazi threat. The film opens with an overcrowded inn where a riot of multi-national travelers are desperately trying to find accommodations for the night. Inevitably, strangers are forced to share bedrooms (politics makes strange bedfellows) and Hitchcock explores the cultural gaps that ensue. When the train arrives the next day, the same travelers are crowded into the tiny train compartments, halls, dining cars, and baggage areas. Restricting most of the remainder of the film to the train compounds the claustrophobic effect it has on the audience, release coming only when violence (symbolizing war) erupts in gun shots, extending the action outside the train.

In Saboteur (1942), the Nazi villain turns a factory into an inferno while the American hero unwittingly feeds the flames by trying to douse the fire with gasoline.

Here, the contained space of the factory provides the metonym for the world--as Hitchcock's claustrophobic depiction of the Statue of Liberty and the villain's fatal fall represent America and its expulsion of the Nazi element--set on fire by war, the world suddenly exploding in violence (with an added criticism of United States' involvement).

Probably Hitchcock's most effective use of the claustrom-as-global-microcosm is in Lifeboat (1944). What is suggested in The Lady Vanishes provides the crux of Lifeboat: the world is composed of different, disparate people who must deal with the fact that they occupy a very limited space. Tallulah Bankhead's wonderfully bitchy performance aside, this cramped, claustrophobic area of the lifeboat is the real "star" of the film. Made at the close of World War II, Lifeboat concerns a group of people who have survived a sinking ship, imaging the world recovering from the War. The ambiguities of and contrasts between altruism and distrust these survivors feel toward the German sailor in their too small boat make Lifeboat a quite lucid, accessible, and timely allegory.

In the 1960's, Hitchcock made two Cold War films which, although inferior to his World War II films, use the same claustrophobic sensibility in portraying global tensions. Torn Curtain (1966) concerns a couple's

penetration of the Iron Curtain (in the cramped cabin of an airplane), assassination of a Soviet agent (Gromek's head stuffed in an oven), attainment of a secret scientific equation (in a small classroom), and subsequent escape (*via* a rickety little bus and an impossibly tiny crate). Like *Saboteur*'s fiery factory, Hitchcock represents the sudden eruption of a world-symbol to chaos at the Ballet, where a well-timed "Fire!" sets the crowd ablaze in a claustrophobic stampede.[3] 1969's *Topaz*, which shares plot similarities with *Torn Curtain* (but a slightly different subtext revolving around the comparison of love to terrorism), also uses small spaces in moments of international crisis: Philippe Dubois' daring infiltration of the revolutionaries' hotel-room headquarters, the ensuing chase through the crowd, and his return to the small flower shop are all set in claustrom situations.

None of these films associates their small, constricting spaces with guilt and, aptly enough, they are also among the least of Hitchcock's artistic accomplishments. Hitchcock is at his most bland (*Topaz* in particular seems interminable even at only 127 minutes)

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[3]This scene, also, seems to repeat itself in Hitchcock with varying degrees of hysteria: Richard Hannay in *The 39 Steps* (1935), Roger O. Thornhill at the auction in *North by Northwest* (1959), and of course Jill Lawrence/ Jo MacKenna in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934/1956).

when being political. He is <u>not</u> a political filmmaker, but superior at expressing elements of the psychological dimension where guilt figures prominently. These films are pervaded by an obvious lack of directorial enthusiasm which undercuts their visceral impact on the viewer and a lack of inventiveness and insight which severely flaws their artistry.

II. CLAUSTROM AS HOME

One notices among Hitchcock's Hollywood-made studio films a necessary reliance upon closed forms and spaces. Given the filming circumstances, a sense of claustrophobia was almost inevitable. However, Hitchcock put what might have been a severe limitation to his advantage by careful selection of thematic subject and superior use of cinematography.[4]

Several of his films, particularly in the 1940's, make splendid use of their single, central houses as concentrated areas of confusion, terror, suspicion, and entrapment. Rebecca (1940), with its house a pressure cooker of familial-erotic bonds, accelerates to a fiery climax in which the pressure--the stubborn residue of Maxim de Winter's previous marriage--is finally sloughed off. This image, of the burning home, of the family romance gone berserk, was repeated by Hitchcock in the smoking garage of Shadow of a Doubt (1943) and much later in Family Plot (1976).

Suspicion (1941) and Notorious (1946) are perhaps

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[4]The studio set did prove to be too stifling for most Hollywood directors: compare the aesthetic uninventiveness of George Cukor's primarily monotone Gaslight (1944) to what Hitchcock or Fritz Lang might have done with the same material.

the best examples of Hitchcock's portrayal of the dangerous marriage against the backdrop of a "haunted" house or forbidding castle. Anyone who has seen _Suspicion_ will remember his beautiful use of web-like shadows to convey Lina MacKinlaw's sense of entrapment and fear: her marriage to John Aysgarth has made her his object of prey--she is caught like a fly in a spider's web, about to be devoured. The Gothic mansion of _Notorious_ is a formidable presence, but its tensest moments take place in smaller chambers: Mrs. Sebastian's bedroom, the drawing room, the study, and the wine cellar. These threaten Alicia: Mrs. Sebastian, who distrusts her from the first and who convinces Alexander to poison her; the drawing room, where Alicia realizes the danger of the _demi-tasse_; the study, where Alexander and his cohorts plot their post-war revenge; and the wine cellar, where Alicia and Devlin find the crucial ingredient for the Nazis' atomic bomb. The Sebastian master bedroom, in contrast, is quite large, indicative of the _lack_ of a hold, the absence of power, of Alexander over Alicia. The literally tight situations for her are with Devlin, who meets her at her small apartment, wraps her in a scarf, romances her in a hotel room, and kisses her in the wine cellar. Alicia, then, is emotionally bound to Devlin and not to Alexander, simply as signified by Hitchcock's use of space.

Rope (1948) and Rear Window (1954) are the clearest examples of Hitchcock at work creating a purely claustrophobic milieu for the erotic bond. What results are nearly theatrical (because limited to a single, artificial set), but still visually innovative films involving a dangerous and potentially dangerous relationship, respectively. Rear Window seems less confined than Rope in that we are given multiple perspectives of the apartment, point-of-view shots from several characters, and sequences that take place outside the apartment (although usually viewed from it) involving a variety of settings/apartments, situations/relationships, and characters/neighbors. However, the claustrom of L.B. Jeffries' apartment clearly reflects his fear of Lisa Freemont and her offer of marriage. Already trapped in his home by a broken leg, the possibility of marriage brings to Jeffries the threat of an additional castration. Confinement is equated with impotence.

Rope is even more extreme in its visual exposition of sexual bondage through spatial bondage. Not only does the camera confine itself to a single drawing room (we are afforded glimpses into a foyer and a kitchen, but deprived of Jeffries' luxury of looking out the window), but the viewer is forced to watch the majority of the film in one shot. We cannot look in different directions (as an edited

film would accommodate us) and, without a periodic cut, watching Rope is a little like depriving oneself of the relief of blinking.[5] The sado-masochistic tension between Philip and Brandon builds to an unbearable point under the weight of Hitchcock's continuous filming, finally released when violence erupts, and a few cuts made, at the film's climax. The homosexual relationship at the center of the story is already extraordinarily tortuous, in the hands of Hitchcock and his ingenious use of space the torture is amplified to its extreme.

With The Birds (1963), Hitchcock presented a vision of the home as a literal trap. Melanie Daniels and the Brenner family are surrounded in their home by flocks of vicious birds. Mitch Brenner has boarded up all the windows and doors to insulate his family from the outside world and its attendant chaos, the birds. In an excellent sequence, Hitchcock photographs an external attack on the house entirely from within, reinforcing the claustrophobic

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[5]It brings to mind the forced film-watching sequence in Stanley Kubrick's A Clockwork Orange (1971). It has been widely noted that Hitchcock is a master of audience manipulation, but Rope, with its explicit connotations of bondage, gives new meaning to the phrase, "captive audience." For a superior explanation of Hitchcock's relation to his audience, see Robert Stam and Roberta Pearson, "Hitchcock's Rear Window: Reflexivity and the Critique of Voyeurism," in A Hitchcock Reader, ed. by Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland Poague (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1986), pp. 193-206.

fears of the family (and of the audience). The fear is not only of the penetration of the house by the birds outside it but of suffocation by the house itself; it is an impossible situation. The home seems to withstand the attack, but the bird-infested room upstairs (and Melanie's terrifying entrapment within it) belies the safety of the home/womb: the house seems safe, but in reality it endangers her life.

III. CLAUSTROM AS PSYCHE

Hitchcock also uses real space as a metaphor for psychic space. In several films, characters ascend to top-floor rooms where psychological information is revealed. The room at the top physically displaces the seat of thought, the mind. Spellbound (1945), a film literally about psychoanalysis, makes use of an upstairs psychologist's office in this way. Doctor Constance Petersen slowly ascends the staircase to the office/ apartment of John Ballantine whom she mistakenly believes to be one of her colleagues. She enters the room (his mind), and for the first time notices that something about "Doctor Edwardes" is amiss. In Strangers on a Train (1951), Guy Haines climbs the stairs to Mr. Anthony's bedroom, but discovers Bruno there instead. Truly a reflection of Bruno's psychology, the small upstairs bedroom contains a crucial clue to the Oedipal Bruno: the son is furtively sleeping in the father's bed and wishes to be mistaken for him. The tiny confessional space in I Confess (1953), like the psychoanalyst's office in Spellbound, provides a naturalistic setting for the revelation of information, but it has metaphorical dimensions relating external space to internal space. The bell tower in Vertigo (1958) functions in much the same

way: the truth about Madeleine Elster and Judy Barton's involvement in her murder is finally revealed (the black demons confronted in the form of the shadowed nun) only when Scottie climbs the stairs to the top (as if through a painful psychoanalysis), and only when he resolves to face the truth about himself and his feelings by entering the displaced realm of the psyche. Likewise, Cathy's upstairs bedroom in _The Birds_: Melanie's encounter with the birds is a confrontation with the self, and the experience violently traumatizes and changes her psychologically into a frightened little girl like Cathy, under Lydia's dominance.

Hitchcock also uses _downstairs_ chambers for psychological implications. The basement frequently appears in the Hitchcockian _oeuvre_. The wine cellar sequence in _Notorious_ is an example of the discovery of the dark, hidden secret (the valuable and extremely dangerous uranium) within the realm of the submerged, the subconscious. The uranium has actually been hidden within a smaller space (the bottle) within the restricted area of the cellar. The location of the secret as downstairs, below, underneath, hidden from sight, suggests its repression into the unconscious. The basement always stands for the _id_: _e.g._, in _Family Plot_, in which the basement prison cell finally entraps the evil villains. The final sequence of _Stage Fright_ (1949) takes place

inside a circus wagon, beneath a stage, in a theatre. Eve Gill, an actress, realizes that her boyfriend Jonathan Cooper is the murderer and has been lying to her. Hence, the theatrical metaphor and the circus symbol (which links to the calliope music playing during Jonathan's fictitious story of the murder) delineate her entrapment within a plot in which she has unconsciously played a central role.[6] And, of course, Lila Crane's discovery of "Mrs. Bates" in Psycho (1960) most clearly illustrates the function of the Hitchcockian basement. Norman's secret, his possession of and by his mother, his Oedipal necrophilia, is hidden away from Sam and Lila in the "fruit cellar." [Hitchcock had a great sense of humor.] The traumatic horror of the monster in the swinging chair climactically reveals Norman's *id*--psychologically, he is a rotting corpse--and Lila's recoiling hand sends the overhead lightbulb swinging, a signifier of the madness around her.

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[6]Her "performance" continues as she lures Jonathan to his death (he is split in half by the safety curtain--it's curtains for Jonathan). Her father applauds from the front row.

IV. CLAUSTROM AS INTESTINE

Films which deal with sado-masochistic relationships, specifically of a homoerotic nature, use space appropriately. For Hitchcock (according to Robin Wood), the homosexual is necessarily a sadistic villain:[7]

> The Hitchcock villain has a number of characteristics which are not necessarily common to all but unite in various combinations: a) Sexual "perversity" or ambiguity: a number are more or less explicitly coded as gay (the transvestite killer in _Murder!_, Philip in _Rope_, Bruno Anthony in _Strangers on a Train_); others have marked mother-fixations (Uncle Charlie in _Shadow of a Doubt_, Anthony Perkins in _Psycho_, Bob Rusk in _Frenzy_), seen as the source of their psychic disorder....[8]

On the figure of the Other, or Monster in the horror film, Wood writes:

> _Deviations from ideological sexual norms--notably bisexuality and homosexuality_. One of the clearest instances of the operation of the repression/projection mechanism: homophobia (the irrational hatred and fear of homosexuals) is only explicable as the outcome of the unsuccessful repression of bisexual tendencies: what is hated in others is what is rejected (but nonetheless

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[7]Andre Letour in _The Paradine Case_ (1947) is a very notable, sympathetic exception--we are led to suspect him of the murder of "his beloved Master" but his innocence is revealed. Letour kills himself from the remorse he feels, having betrayed Colonel Paradine with another woman. To some degree also, Hitchcock treats Alexander Sebastian in _Notorious_ with sympathy, although he is clearly a villain.

[8]Robin Wood, "Hitchcock, Alfred," in Christopher Lyon, ed., _Directors/Filmmakers: The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers_, vol. 2 (Chicago: St. James Press, 1984), p. 262.

> continues to exist) within the self....
> Both Murnau's Nosferatu and Whale's Frankenstein can be claimed as implicitly (on certain levels) identifying their monsters with repressed homosexuality. Recent, less arguable, instances are Dr. Frank'n'Furter of The Rocky Horror Picture Show (he, not his creation, is clearly the film's real monster) and, more impressively, the bisexual god of Larry Cohen's Demon.[9]

The nearly explicit homosexuality of Philip and Brandon in Rope (based on the true story of a homosexual couple who strangle a male friend) and the sado-masochistic dynamics of that relationship find reflection in Hitchcock's use of space in the film. Addressing the symbolic representation of sadism in literature (specifically in the novels of the Marquis de Sade), Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel describes and interprets the Sadian setting thus:

> It has often been observed that the Sadian scene takes place in an enclosed space. But, one may ask, considering natural sites and architectural constructions as projections of the body itself, what is the unconscious meaning of this enclosure?...
> It is in this way that it seems to me that we should understand the location of the Sadian scene: it is about a passage through the digestive tube (the 120 days are described by Sade as a 'voyage'), a passage which ends at the rectum in which the victim is enclosed by the fence formed by the sphincter ring of the executioner who holds, immobilizes and manipulates him to his will.[10]

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[9]Robin Wood, "An Introduction to the American Horror Film," in Bill Nichols, ed., Movies and Methods, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 200-201.

[10]Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, "Reflexions on the Connexions Between Perversion and Sadism," in Int. J.

Hitchcock's space in Rope is thus appropriately intestinal. The apartment constricts of itself, but the snake-like meanderings of the camera make watching the film a voyage through the bowels.[11] Intestinal space is used somewhat less effectively in the less explicitly homoerotic Strangers on a Train: the trips by train and the fatal ride through the Tunnel of Love establish the anal-sadistic erotic relationship between Guy and Bruno. In Frenzy (1972), the camera's penetration of and withdrawal from the intestine-like hallway and stairs of an apartment building during Babs's murder visualize the anal sadism (and inherent homoeroticism) involved in the brutal act. As Richard Blaney becomes more and more trapped by the growing suspicion around him--created by the enamored Bob Rusk--Hitchcock's spaces enclose him more and more tightly until, incarcerated, he is surrounded (in an overhead shot) by the four walls of his tiny cell.

Psycho-Anal. (1978), 59, pp. 28, 30.

[11]Reading from left to right, the layout of the apartment duplicates the digestive process, the journey through the bowels. The food travels from the kitchen through the dining room and into the living room furnished with, among other things, "stools." The storage building next door, glimpsed through the window, parallels the trunk's function to store dead matter like feces in the bowels. Also, David is strangled from the "rear" and "dumped" into the trunk upon which Philip and Brandon serve the fecal pate.

V. CLAUSTROM AS VAGINA

Finally, the entrapping claustrom in Hitchcock equals the _vagina dentata_. Jeffries and Scottie (in _Rear Window_ and _Vertigo_, respectively) both find themselves terrified of the womb: Jeffries is the _penis captivus_, transfixed within the orifice of his own apartment by the forced impotence of a broken leg and by the aggressive Lisa who tries to entrap him with the prospect of marriage; the traumatic climb to the bell tower in _Vertigo_ reflects Scottie's fear of the feminine and his concomitant impotence--he cannot "rise" and enter the trap door.[12] Anthony Keane in _The Paradine Case_ finds himself, after several romantic visits to Mrs. Paradine's prison cell, publically humiliated in court (symbolically castrated) by the black widow in the "box" or witness stand.

Extended Analysis: Marnie

In contrast, many of the Hitchcock heroines who find themselves victimized by men are violated within a womb-like space. Two sequences epitomize his spatial depiction of _Marnie_ (1964): the early one in which Marnie undergoes a transformation in identity from Marion Holland

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[12]_Cf_. Robin Wood, "Male Desire, Male Anxiety: The Essential Hitchcock," in _A Hitchcock Reader_, pp. 219-230.

to Margaret Edgar and the later one in which Mark rapes Marnie, only to find her the next morning floating face down in a swimming pool.

Marnie's transformation serves as Hitchcock's initial exposition of her; it is the first time the audience can see her face. The film opens with a tracking shot from behind her as she approaches a loading platform, cutting to a sequence in which Mr. Strutt describes the details of Marnie's theft to two amused detectives: Strutt speaks of her in terms of her sexually appealing physical attributes, her appearance. Marnie's transformation sequence, then, is the key to understanding her since it details the changes Marnie makes in her appearance and thus in her identity as perceived by the world and the men about her. Here, a statement of a shot's content, followed by an analysis of the meaning of spatial phenomena, will demonstrate the significance of Hitchcock's manipulation of space.

1) The first instance of music (apart from the credits sequence) accompanies a tracking shot behind Marnie walking to her hotel room. She carries a yellow purse under her left arm and, as the camera slows and Marnie continues on, she is in long shot with a bag in her right hand, a bellhop in green on her left carrying her voluminous luggage and boxed purchases. The camera stops and watches as Marnie and the bellhop continue down the corridor. Hitchcock appears from a door at left, turning away from the camera to watch Marnie who, as she reaches the end of the corridor, turns right.

In this shot, Marnie appears full length in the

frame as she walks down the corridor;[13] she is in control--she has gained power and influence by stealing money from Strutt's womb-like safe seen rifled earlier. Hence, she dominates the bellhop here, who can barely manage to carry all her luggage and who wears green to signify the jurisdiction money has over him. The elongation of the corridor suggests uterine space and Marnie's domination of it as a result of her theft. She and a man/boy walk through the passage in an image of the sex act,[14] but the journey is made on <u>her</u> terms: she leads to the bedroom; he must carry her burdens; he works for her; they walk together at her pace; she, reversing her mother Bernice's exchanges as a prostitute, pays him; etc. So long as she can dominate the male (with all those overcompensating "boxes"), the frigid Marnie is emotionally safe. The cameo appearance of Hitchcock here points the shot out as Marnie's key image. He turns away from the camera, just as Marnie has consistently faced away from the

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[13]This spatial motif may be seen in (1) the opening shot of Marnie at the railroad station, (2) the horse barn embrace sequence, and (3) Mark's search for Marnie on the ocean liner, the psychosexual implications of which are traceable to (4) Bernice's elongated apartment in which the primal scene takes place and (5) Bernice's descent of the stairwell after awakening Marnie from her primal scene dream.

[14]Conceivably, and appropriately, this symbolic sex is climaxed by Marnie's yellow purse's suddenly erupting, gushing money (shot 4).

camera since the film's beginning, revealing the back of his head--an important clue, given that the back of the head symbolizes the unconscious mind. The passage down the narrow corridor, then, is the concretization of Marnie's unconscious.

2) Cut to a medium shot of Marnie in her hotel room. There are two suitcases on her bed: a green one on the left, a pink one right. Marnie picks up a clothing store box at left, opens it, removes the garment inside, and throws the box away at right. The camera dollies into a close-up of the pink suitcase as more clothing is unpacked from boxes and placed in the suitcase.

3) Cut to a close-up of the pink suitcase from a perspective ninety degrees counter-clockwise from shot 2. Marnie's hand appears in the frame to place two plastic bags of gloves into the pink suitcase, a used bra, slip, and tweed suit into the green suitcase in the background of the shot.

Marnie's subsequent appearance within the sequence as disembodied hands suggests that, although she has found a temporary panacea through theft, she remains a partial individual for whom each successive theft will never be enough. With a purse full of money, she remains only a pair of hands, not a complete entity; Marnie will continue to steal unless the larger psychological issues which underlie her kleptomania can be resolved. This inner division is reflected in the division of space by the two suitcases and purses on her bed. The bed (symbolizing the focus and place of sexual fulfillment), two suitcases and purses suggest both the splitting of Marnie, identified by

her womb spaces, into fragments[15] and the obstacle this splitting provides her sexuality. Marnie's frigidity is imaged by the splitting bags which lie on the bed, preventing its use for sexual fulfillment and reflecting the traumatic effect of the primal scene on Marnie.

4) Cut to a close-up of both suitcases (from the same perspective as in shot 2) and two purses placed in front of them: a beige purse in front of the green suitcase, a yellow purse in front of the pink. Marnie's hand opens the yellow purse, removing a compact, a nail file, a wallet, a comb, and lipstick tube to reveal the stolen money hidden beneath. The contents of the purse are abruptly dumped into the pink suitcase and the purse is tossed into the green suitcase.

5) Cut to a close-up of the compact and the wallet. Marnie's hand opens the wallet to remove a Social Security card reading "Marion Holland." She opens the compact and pries up the mirror with her nail file to reveal three other Social Security cards reading "Mary Taylor," "Margaret Edgar," and "Martha Heilbron." Marnie selects "Margaret Edgar" (her real name), returns the cards, closes the compact, and inserts the new card into her wallet.

Hitchcock also suggests Marnie's splitting by her four identification cards, each concealed by an enclosed space and enhanced by an extreme close-up: "Marion Holland" inside her wallet, the three others behind the compact's mirror. The false "Marion Holland," found in the enclosing wallet, defines Marnie's elusive identity as only grasped through the money found in wallets and to the initial

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[15]The images themselves split. First, the suitcases appear "split" open (in shot 2). Then, as if through a mysterious process of mitosis concealed by editing, the suitcases "produce" twin purses (in shot 4). Marnie is not just, in the vernacular, a "bag," she is four (with as many identification cards to prove it)!

trauma with Bernice's paying customer. The space behind the compact's mirror has several meanings: that the mirror connects to Marnie's identity reinforces her desperate equation of identity with appearance, since a mirror presents only an image or reflection of the person; Marnie dare not expose the painfully aching individual (or child, even) behind that mirror. The compact contains make-up which signifies her ability to change her identity by physical disguise (as do the nail file, comb, and lipstick); she is literally a made up person, living a lie. In Hitchcock's tight framing, suffocating spaces, and flattened depths, Marnie hides her alternate identities behind the mirror. Only the phallic nail file Marnie uses to pry open the mirror and enter the constricted space can penetrate into these submerged identities (including Marnie's real one, Margaret Edgar), just as her psychological dilemma requires the aggressive and abrasive Mark's later prying into her past, delving into her psyche, and forcefully entering her body. The nail file also suggests Marnie's imminent "declawing" by Mark, who sees her as a jaguarundi in need of taming.

6) Dissolve to a close-up of a wash basin in which Marnie is removing the black dye from her hair. The dye drips into the water, dissolving into suspended black clouds.

Hitchcock dissolves to a shot of the black dye's

dissolving from her hair to show Marnie's head encircled by the oval wash basin. Yet another womb image, the circumscription of Marnie's head by the basin provides a description of her psychological state. Her kleptomania results from her futile attempts to return to the womb (the shot resembles others in which Marnie places her head in her mother's lap). The intrusion of the phallic faucet from the top left corner of the frame foreshadows Mark's role in Marnie's next, more fundamental, transformation to mature sexuality. The water provided by the faucet facilitates the cleansing of the blackness from Marnie's hair, just as Mark will facilitate the cleansing of the darkness from her mind.[16] Also, the faucet's occupation of such a small space within the frame symbolizes the dominance of Marnie's Mother-complex over her desire for men. When Hitchcock resolves the complex, Marnie transfers her head from Bernice's lap to Mark's shoulder.[17]

7) Cut to a close-up of a blond head of hair. Marnie flips it back, revealing her face for the first time. Triumphant music accompanies this last step in her physical transformation.

This final revelation of Marnie's face, although

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[16]Later, Marnie, playing "Freud and Jane" with Mark, says, "He will wash your sins away."

[17]This transference of the object of desire is imaged by Hitchcock in a series of tightly-spaced close-ups (e.g., Marnie's desperately clinging "Help me" following the free association sequence).

technically in close-up, is shot from a greater distance than in preceding shots. The increase in space around Marnie's head implies a simultaneous increase in her identity, albeit as an incomplete, false one. As the shot is still a close-up and Marnie's hair not naturally as blond as she has dyed it, her psyche still needs much delving. Marnie appears whole before this physical transformation sequence and again following it, but between her false identities Marnie ceases to exist except as an anonymous pair of hands, those hands which steal uncontrollably and which seem to have more autonomy than Marnie herself, the hands which Mark must "declaw" if he is to "tame" her.

Apart from Hitchcock's use of color coding and symbolic editing, the sequence works mainly in terms of its use of space as symbol. Several props image enclosed space: the yellow and beige purses, the bag, the suitcases, the store boxes, the bags of gloves (and the gloves themselves), the wallet, the lipstick tube, the compact, the space behind the compact's mirror, the wash basin, and even Marnie's clothes (particularly the concavity of the brassiere). The constant use of close-ups and tight framing, in conjunction with the series of cuts, increases the claustrophobic tension of the sequence and identifies the thief Marnie with images of the womb, linking her

kleptomania directly to her Mother-complex. However, Hitchcock also portrays Marnie's self-dividedness through the metaphoric properties of the cut and by the repetition of independent body parts (as opposed to long shots in which Marnie's whole body appears).

One may summarize the sequence as a series of revelations or openings. Doors open, as do suitcases, boxes, purses, a wallet, a compact. These images of enclosed space linked to Marnie serve, when opened, to reveal information about her to the audience. Marnie's dramatic flip of her newly-blond hair and the first revelation of her face climaxes this series of revelations. Hitchcock, then, uses the sequence and the imagery of space within it as a means of exposition for Marnie's character.

Marnie's honeymoon sequence takes place within a confining ocean liner cabin; Mark Rutland, although her husband, copulates with the frigid Marnie against her will. Her attitude toward him has, up to this point, been one of distaste and irritation. Mark is forever "intruding" on her personal space, clearly that of the impenetrable womb--the purse, the suitcase, the safe, and the rooms of the cabin seem possessions to her--which Mark eventually violates.

1) Medium shot of Mark, in the sitting room of the ocean liner cabin suite at night, angrily springing out of his chair and moving right to the door of the bedroom. The camera pans with him.

2) Cut to a medium shot of Mark entering the bedroom from the left. He and Marnie argue. He slams the door with a bang. The camera moves forward and turns left to a close-up of Mark.

As Mark becomes sexually threatening, the medium shot gives way to the space-depleting close-up which will dominate most of the sequence. Marnie, feeling somewhat protected by the space she has created for herself (the bedroom off limits to Mark), loses her security by his violent entry and slamming of the door (punning on "bang"), clearly foreshadowing the rape to come.

3) Cut to a close-up of Marnie, who pronounces, "No!"

4) Cut to a close-up of Mark.

5) Cut to a close-up of Marnie. Mark's hand appears and rips off her nightgown.

6) Cut to a close-up of Marnie's and Mark's legs. The nightgown falls to the floor around Marnie's ankles.

7) Cut to a close-up of Marnie in shock.

8) Cut to a close-up of Mark, who apologizes and puts his robe around her.

The initial rape takes place, in a series of short fragmented close-ups, evidenced by the glazed look on Marnie's face which makes its first appearance here. As in the transformation sequence, bodily parts of the characters suggest that Mark's intrusion goes to the heart of Marnie's fragmented identity. In simultaneously sharing her confined spaces, he has joined in her psychosis. She later accuses him of this, proposing a mental illness in his

attachment to her. The eroticism of this spatial intrusion will be consummated in the rape.

9) Cut to a medium close-up of Mark and Marnie with a porthole in the background circumscribing her head. As Mark embraces and kisses her, the camera dollies in for a close-up.

The gradual constriction of space repeats as Mark kisses Marnie: she feels smothered, violated. The space that was once privately hers has been intruded upon, reemphasized by the porthole which, like the basin in the transformation sequence, encircles her head as a womb-image and emblem of her psyche. Later in this sequence, the sea viewed through the porthole will again serve as a symbol for Marnie.[18]

10) Cut to a high angle close-up of Mark bending over Marnie. His head and shoulders dominate the frame. Marnie's head seems squashed at the bottom of the frame.

11) Cut to a low angle close-up of the same.

Simply by the amount of space Mark takes in the frames of these shots, the audience should know that he has power over Marnie, who occupies a relatively tiny space. Contrast these shots to shot 6 in the transformation sequence: Mark's phallic faucet at the top of the screen seems to have taken over the frame here while Marnie's head, which dominated the earlier shot, is overwhelmed by Mark. Hitchcock further emphasizes Marnie's entrapment by

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[18]Hence her name (Marnie/marine/maritime/mermaid/ etc.).

his use of two angles: Mark completely surrounds her, suffocating her.

12) Cut to a medium-high angle close-up of Marnie's open, dull eye peering over the shoulder of Mark who faces away from the camera. The camera dollies into a close-up of her full face, completely devoid of expression. Marnie moves back as the camera moves in on her. She lies down in bed on her back; the camera hovers above her, capturing her in a high angle medium close-up. The left half of Marnie's face is in shadow.

13) Cut to an extreme close-up of Mark's face, the right half of which is in shadow. The camera closes in until only his eyes fill the frame.

Now that he has joined Marnie in her psychosis, Mark turns his face from the camera [again, the back of the head symbolizes the unconscious]. Marnie, who appears only as an eye, is completely swallowed by Mark's body--his fantasy, as signified by the presence of the back of his head. The camera advances on and over Marnie as if the audience were raping her, careful to keep the space around her limited by tight framing and a medium close-up. The shadows on Mark's and Marnie's faces complement each other as they have joined in the psychosis together; the shot ends with a close-up of Mark's eyes, which outnumber and conquer Marnie's solitary eye.

14) Cut back to the high angle medium close-up in shot 12. The camera pans left and up to the small porthole. Fade to black.

15) Fade in to the same porthole; it is morning. The camera pans right and down to Marnie's empty bed and then right to Mark in bed, waking up.

16) Cut to Mark's view of the empty bed.

17) Cut to a medium-high angle shot of Mark sitting up and getting out of bed. The camera tracks right, left, then right again as Mark looks for Marnie in the sitting

room and bathroom, then leaves the suite.

The tightly framed close-ups which composed the rape sequence have disappeared, as has Marnie. Only the womb-like porthole, which symbolized her, remains, functioning as a clue to her whereabouts. The bedroom, which seemed so constricting in the previous shots, now seems full of empty space in Hitchcock's looser camera work. Aptly so, since tight spaces belong to Marnie, now absent (perhaps even destroyed).

18) Cut to an infinity perspective of the hallway outside the cabin. Mark enters from the right, walks away from the camera, then exits at left.

19) Cut to an infinity perspective of a ship's deck. Mark, in extreme long shot, runs toward the camera.

20) Cut to a high angle of the wake of the ocean liner.

The infinity perspectives which characterize the remaining shots in the sequence allude back to the hotel corridor in which Marnie sexually dominated the bellhop. In that shot, the young bellhop walked slowly away from the camera. In shot 19 of this sequence, however, the mature Mark, an aggressive presence in Marnie's uterine space,[18]

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[18]The casting of Sean Connery in the role of the powerfully animalic Mark is particularly apt. Already, he had completed three James Bond films (Terence Young's _Dr. No_ [1962] and _From Russia with Love_ [1963], and Guy Hamilton's _Goldfinger_ [1964], establishing the strong screen persona, with which he will always be associated, of a suave, seductive sadist who never hesitated to slap or spank a woman (or "girl," as he referred to them) if she got "out of line." Francois Truffaut argued (in _Hitchcock_, p. 20), that the Bond series "is nothing else than a rough

runs toward the camera. Marnie's death by drowning is the implied result, as the cut to shot 20 suggests (visually punning on "wake"). But the shot also serves as a reminder of the womb-space Mark has violated.

21) Cut back to shot 19, panning as Mark disappears up a stairway at right, through the small opening in the deck above.

22) Cut to a skewed infinity perspective of the deck above. Mark approaches from the right.

23) Cut to another high angle of the wake.

24) Cut back to shot 22. Mark climbs a stairway at left, exiting the frame.

In this group of shots, Hitchcock uses space in another way to suggest the same thing he suggested in shots 18-20. Mark climbs stairways, entering the spaces to the decks above. Symbolically, he rises (erection image) to penetrate openings right and left, with Marnie's destruction (in shot 23) again the result.

25) Cut to Mark running down a hallway toward the camera. There is a porthole at left. Mark moves into a close-up. He looks to the right and down to see...

26) Cut to a high angle long shot of Marnie floating face down in the ship's swimming pool.

The key components of the rape scene repeat here to tie the sequence together. The porthole reappears, as does

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caricature of all Hitchcock's work, and of North by Northwest in particular," a Cary Grant in grotesque. Aside from this, however, Connery resembles Tippi Hedren's previous co-star from The Birds, Rod Taylor, adding further support to Donald Spoto's theory (in The Art of Alfred Hitchcock, New York: Hopkinson and Blake, 1976), that Psycho, The Birds, and Marnie form a thematically and structurally connected trilogy.

the threatening close-up of Mark. Most subtly repeated, however, is the movement right and down in conjunction with the porthole image, which strongly identifies the audience with the rapist, as in shot 12. Following the rape, the camera/audience looks (in shot 15) at the porthole, then right, and down to Marnie's empty bed. In shot 25, Mark, by a porthole, looks right and down to discover Marnie floating in the pool. In long shot, Marnie seems overwhelmed by the volumes of space surrounding her; she is literally engulfed. Her sense of security in small spaces has been stolen from her; the robber is robbed.

Hence, not only does Hitchcock manipulate space to signify states of mind, he creates motifs around spaces to show, as he does here in Marnie, a psychological transformation. He inverts the corridor space of the hotel to the infinity perspectives of the ocean liner to delineate Marnie's change; he repeats the womb-image but alters Marnie's relationship to it to articulate the unstable relationship between her and her mother. Hitchcock's depiction of space changes to suit the depiction of his changing characters.

Other Vaginae: Frenzy, Dial M for Murder, Psycho, Rear Window

The murder-rapes in Frenzy likewise occur in similar

womb settings. Bob Rusk intrudes upon Brenda Blaney's matrimonial office (a bawdy/body pun?), fingering her file "drawers," then sexually molests and strangles her. The violation of the office mirrors the murderous and sexual violation of Brenda's body.

In filming Tom Wendice's attempted murder of his wife in Dial M for Murder (1954), Hitchcock uses similar claustrophobic techniques, but Margot's castrating scissors defeat the phallic strangulating scarf. Tom is later "caught," *penis captivus*, in the apartment.

However, his shower sequence in Psycho remains, undoubtedly, Hitchcock's most powerful and brilliant exposition of the equation of the violation of space with rape and murder. The film as a whole (and if there are any Hitchcock films about real haunted houses, they are Rebecca and Psycho) is extremely claustrophobic: Hitchcock sets sequences in bathrooms, seedy motel rooms, Marion's small tract house, cars, the Bates Motel office and parlor, Norman's child-like bedroom, the fruit cellar, and the prison cell. The amazing shower sequence consists mostly of circular shapes--Marion's head, eyes, open mouth, and navel, the shower head, curtain rings, and drain--classifying the setting as explicitly womb-like. The jarring intrusion of Norman's angular, phallic arm and knife, then, makes the stabbing sexual, a symbolic rape.

Prefigured to some degree by the grisly bathtub death of Mrs. Thorwald in Rear Window, Marion Crane's shower stabbing functions as a monstrous intrusion of the male into the womb setting. Norman Bates invades Marion's privacy by spying on her through a peephole (another womb penetration), then follows through by actually entering her bathroom while she showers and piercing her body with the knife. Given Norman's temporary psychological possession by his mother's personality, his castration anxiety in the face of the vagina dentata of the enclosing motel room (and of Marion's threatening sexual maturity) provokes him to violence. Norman, as his mother with a knife, becomes the teeth in the castrating vagina. He ironically inverts the potential danger of Marion and turns the tables on her. The tooth-like knife (like the teeth in Thorwald's saw) against the circular shapes and space of Marion in the shower (or the intimidating Mrs. Thorwald in her amniotic bath) becomes the only means by which Norman/Thorwald can resolve the situation without damaging his perception of reality, without changing his psychological condition. Norman and Thorwald succumb to psychosis.[20]

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[20]For a more detailed psychoanalytic reading of Bates' actions as they relate to form, see Raymond Bellour, "Psychosis, Neurosis, Perversion," in A Hitchcock Reader, pp. 311-331.

SUMMARY

To summarize, Hitchcock uses the claustrophobic spaces in his films for several effects: the claustrom is a metonym for the geographical proximity, growing tensions, and potential for violence between nations; the claustrom articulates the unbearable closeness of the home situation, particularly with regard to the family romance; the claustrom is a metaphor for the psyche, or a part thereof; the claustrom suggests the intestinal, anal world of the sadistic personality (usually homosexual); and the claustrom images the womb as emasculator or as phallically violated.

Hitchcock thus capitalizes on the claustrophobia of his audience. Some of his tensest sequences involve the closed form to intensify suspense--recall the shower scene in *Psycho*, Jeffries' terrifying helplessness in *Rear Window*, the runaway car in *Family Plot*, the engulfed Brenners in *The Birds*, and the nightmare dinner party in *Rope*. Hitchcock is not only a master of audience manipulation, but an artist who exploited the requirements for a commercial cinema as a means of symbolic expression. His use of the small space does not simply enhance our visceral enjoyment, but enlightens us psychologically, involves us critically, and appeals to our aesthetic judgment.

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