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THE TELEVISION WORK
OF
ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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**Submitted as fulfilment of the qualification of Ph.D. in
Film & Television Studies**

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DECLARATIONS

Parts of Chapters Three, Five and Six appeared in substantially different form in:

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I declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other University.

I declare that this thesis is my own work.

ABSTRACT

The thesis uses close textual analysis to study and evaluate the television work of Alfred Hitchcock. The corpus consists of the twenty shows personally directed by Hitchcock, including his appearances before and after those shows. In response to most previous writing, which tends to compare the programmes with Hitchcock's films (often unfairly) the thesis emphasises them as products of television. Programmes are evaluated on the basis of their perceived success as television - if they harness conditions related to television production and integrate them with narrative themes or to create meaning. Hitchcock is considered to be the major creative force in each programme.

Chapter One provides a variety of important contexts including a brief history of US television of the 1950s, key literature on Hitchcock and analyses of contemporaneous programmes not directed by Hitchcock. The textual analysis chapters (2-8) consider aesthetic or thematic programme aspects. Chapter Two studies the various roles played by Hitchcock's appearances as series host. Chapter Three considers the impact of censorship on programmes frequently dealing with murder, violence and insanity. Chapter Four analyses Hitchcock's implementation of varieties of voice-over narration, a common device in short dramatic forms. Chapter Five studies Hitchcock's use of point-of-view shots, particularly in relation to their role in the delivery of the narrative twist. Chapter Six considers the key Hitchcock theme of detachment from the world. Chapter Seven looks at moments from the programmes which demonstrate how aesthetic is influenced by television production conditions.

Hitchcock created a number of television masterpieces. His achievements in television are in many ways comparable in quality and consistency to his theatrical films. Even when considered in the context of other 1950s US anthology dramas, the Hitchcock-directed programmes are superior on many levels. Elements of his film style were highly suited to television production. Many of his greatest achievements embrace and harness television production conditions in their presentation strategies to create an integration of style and meaning.

INTRODUCTION

Hitchcock's place as a major figure in cinema and the study of film is assured. His movie legacy is the subject of continuing critical and scholarly interest world-wide. His recent centennial year of 1999 was marked with numerous international conferences where writers and academics met with Hitchcock collaborators to discuss his life and art. Publications on Hitchcock continue to appear, seasons of his films are mounted, artists are commissioned to produce works based around their influences from Hitchcock's movies. He continues to be a central figure in the world-wide teaching and analysis of film.

Within this context, one particular gap in the extant analyses emerges: Hitchcock's work in television, a major element of his career as a producer of images, narratives and characters has been neglected.¹ Despite critical and

¹ During this thesis, when Hitchcock's work for television is mentioned, this will refer to the twenty programmes Hitchcock personally directed for four different series (see Hitchcock-directed section of the Teleography). It is acknowledged that Hitchcock's work for television also includes his introductions to the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and 'Alfred Hitchcock Hour' series (which he directed as well as performed) and his work as executive producer at Shamley

ratings success in the 1950s and 60s, and continued popularity in global syndication, the Hitchcock programmes have been disregarded by critics. Peter Conrad (2000), after a declaration of his interest in all of Hitchcock's cinema films (but little of the literature about them), states: 'Anyone who is genuinely fascinated by Hitchcock will find all his work indispensable' (xi). Conrad's embrace of all of Hitchcock's films, while commendable, makes no comment on just how indispensable his television work might be. The fundamental impetus for this thesis is to provide the first extensive academic consideration of the Hitchcock programmes.

The programmes personally directed by Hitchcock will form the central corpus of study. These will be considered using close textual analysis to consider the level of Hitchcock's achievements within the television medium. The thesis is evaluative, identifying moments of artistic and creative excellence, moments of thematic interest and/or continuity across the programmes, and assessing the efficacy of Hitchcock's approach to making narratives for their intended medium of television.

Whilst entertaining, suspenseful or engaging programming will be acknowledged, examples of excellence will be set apart from less distinguished achievements. A particularly important element used to define excellence and outstanding achievement will be the harnessing of television production elements to the narrative and thematic requirements of each programme - the integration of style and meaning.

Productions, his own television production company. Whenever these roles are included in the argument, this will be made clear.

Television production will not be discussed negatively in terms of 'restrictions'. Issues such as censorship, production budgets and short production schedules are cited as conditions impacting on the content, theme and style of television. However, it is not necessary to simply view such conditions in a negative manner. 'Restrictions' often act as catalysts for personnel to embrace the production conditions in creative (sometimes subversive) ways. Whenever one of the Hitchcock programmes is seen to use aspects of the production conditions to its advantage in this way, turning them from 'restrictions' into opportunities for expression of meaning, this will be considered as an important criterion of excellence.

To provide a context for the critical assessment of Hitchcock's contribution to 1950s American television anthology drama, a number of programmes of the same format and era have also been considered. Programmes from 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' (not directed by Hitchcock) and 'The Twilight Zone' have been studied specifically to provide a contextual comparison with Hitchcock's directorial work. They have been selected to resonate with elements or themes identified and considered in the Hitchcock programme analysis sections.

As a result of Hitchcock's immense contribution to cinema, most previous scholars have sought to make comparisons between Hitchcock's film work and television work (see Literature Overview below). The tendency has been to see the programmes as disappointing in the light of the films, by having cinematic expectations of televisual productions. Inevitably this tendency has found the television shows to be lacking in many areas, since it is not to compare

like with like. By paying attention to the programmes' production conditions and celebrating elements which set them aside as outstanding television, the thesis will avoid such problematic and unfair comparisons. In short, the programmes will be considered as television productions, not as mini-Hitchcock films.

The main chapters are organised around a number of audio-visual elements or themes emanating from viewing of the programmes themselves. Unlike past writing, the chapter topics have not been formulated to link with, reinforce or maintain concepts familiar from studies of Hitchcock's films. The continuities between programmes in relation to each chapter topic are noted and discussed. The decision to organise the material in this way is a consciously polemical one which emphasises the commonalities and links between programmes, as opposed to links with Hitchcock's film work.

The study is not a strictly authorial analysis of the programme which seeks to discover the hand of Hitchcock in every detail of the finished programmes. There is some material on collaborators (writers in particular) who had a major formative and creative influence on the series. However, the thesis believes, an opinion endorsed by previous writers on the subject, as well as members of the shows' creative team, that the two series were formed with the figure of Hitchcock lurking in every detail. Norman Lloyd, the show's Producer or Associate Producer for almost eight years notes:

[Hitchcock] had the ability to delegate, while at the same time being very clear as to what he demanded ... The television show had to reflect Hitch.

This was something we sensed; no one sat down and said this, but it was

taken for granted by Hitch when he hired Joan Harrison [the show's original producer] and myself. We understood his storytelling style so well that we so easily fell into it. (Lloyd 1993: 171-2)

This is an approach to programme-making quite unique in the history of television. How many other shows at this time could be said to have been created 'in the image of' its executive producer? In this and many other ways, Hitchcock's television productions are an exceptional case-study, a set of conditions not seen in television before or since.

The belief that Hitchcock is everywhere at least in spirit within the programmes does not mean everything interesting, creative or artistic can be attributed to his influence. It is already well-documented in the context of his cinematic work that Hitchcock was often receptive to actors' and writers' suggestions for changes of dialogue, even if camera movements and angles remained inviolable.

The creative input of the various writers of the teleplays discussed should be acknowledged. Three of the television writers employed on the Hitchcock series, namely Francis Cockrell, Stirling Silliphant and Henry Slesar, are responsible for more than one teleplay directed personally by Hitchcock. However, the focus of this thesis will not provide the context for a close consideration of their contributions. Although such an assessment is certainly deserved, the main emphasis of the analyses which follow lies elsewhere.

It is believed most credit must be retained by the figure of the director for the presence, form and televisual presentation of the dialogue, since as director,

Hitchcock was in the position to have final say on what was filmed, what gained a place or was edited out, stressed or de-emphasised, left as it was or subject to another take, etc. Dialogue is shaped as it enters the audio-visual medium, it is not simply spoken. The director is one of the most important individuals in that shaping process, even if not the only person involved. Indeed, at suitable points, credit for exemplary performance will be afforded to the actors in Hitchcock's programmes. Their work to create and interpret characterisation and dialogue is frequently crucial to the success of certain moments, scenes or whole productions.

The central issue is one of choice. The thesis is at least in part concerned with teasing out moments in the programmes where directorial choice is at stake, where Hitchcock's hand is seen to be moulding the given material and production conditions in ways which create outstanding television.

All chapters include at least two programmes. In some chapters, the first programme analysed is the primary case study, followed by other programmes which are afforded less analysis, but relate to one of the specific points being made in that chapter. A programme synopsis is provided on the first appearance of a show discussed *at length*, or where it is felt one is required before the analysis to follow. Synopses for programmes not granted extended analysis are provided in alphabetical order in Appendix One.

CHAPTER ONE

Contexts

The following chapter serves to place Hitchcock's television work within various contexts. First of all, an assessment of the major current literature in the field is provided. This discussion is also used as an explanation and context for the reasoning behind the approach taken by this thesis to the broader sphere of academic writing on Hitchcock's movies. Secondly, there is an overview of the US television industry, with emphasis on the anthology drama format. Thirdly, the contexts become more specific to the shows bearing Hitchcock's name with a consideration of his various production roles. Fourthly, a selection of contemporaneous programmes not directed by Hitchcock is analysed. These discussions provide an opportunity to contextualise the Hitchcock-directed examples with comparable programmes, some from 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and others from 'The Twilight Zone'.

Literature

Since it is the express remit of this thesis to break from this pattern of comparison of Hitchcock's films, a polemical decision has also been made not to provide a front-end summary of the major literature on Hitchcock. Apart from the exceptions below, this literature obviously concentrates on his films. This decision is predicated on the thesis' key intention to discover the programmes as discretely as possible from Hitchcock's movie projects. Connections between the films and the programmes do occur during the thesis, and reference to pertinent literature on these matters is made when it adds to the analysis. This approach is part of the project's desire to de-emphasise (whilst certainly not seeking to exclude completely) the comparisons between Hitchcock's film and television work that are exemplified by the existing writing.

Hitchcock and Television

In comparison with the writing on Hitchcock's film work, little has been published on his work in television. With the recent issue of the programmes on DVD and a number of retrospectives world-wide, some for Hitchcock's centenary year in 1999, the programmes have reached a wider audience. They also continue to be syndicated on television world-wide. As a result of this interest in Hitchcock television, more publications have recently appeared. Before this time, some cursory discussions and plot synopses existed, some of which were inaccurate in various ways, alongside some more substantial pieces. The following overview of publications on Hitchcock on television is organised in chronological order.

The first publication to attempt to at least register Hitchcock's work for television, alongside his cinema output, was Peter Bogdanovich's accompanying publication to the New York Museum of Modern Art's Hitchcock retrospective, entitled The Cinema of Alfred Hitchcock (1963). Bogdanovich listed Hitchcock's work chronologically, in order of American release or first transmission. Although he listed Hitchcock's television work, he seems to have had little interest in asking Hitchcock about it. The longest comment on the series runs for fifteen short lines, in which Hitchcock claims not to choose the programmes he personally directs, talks of the main appeals of television being the 'challenge of speed, a complete change of pace, a different approach' and finally tells how he used The Trouble With Harry (1955, Paramount/Alfred Hitchcock Productions, U.S.A.) to indicate to James Allardice the tone and approach he should take when scripting Hitchcock's appearances before and after his television dramas (p. 34). Bogdanovich fails to list "Poison" (Tx. 5/10/58)¹ in his chronology, an error which would be repeated in later articles on Hitchcock's television.

The most scholarly early piece on Hitchcock's television appeared in 1971. Steve Mamber's 'The Television Films of Alfred Hitchcock' was published in Cinema 7/1 (1971: 2-7). Mamber seems to have followed Bogdanovich's listing of programmes as he also omits "Poison" and states that Hitchcock directed 'only nineteen' shows (Ibid: 2). Mamber's article seeks to 'demonstrate the closeness of these shows to the features and the cross-fertilization that has taken place between Hitchcock's work in the two media' in

¹ All transmission dates refer to the U.S.A. premiere airing, expressed as 'day/month/year'.

relation to Hitchcock themes of ‘the “transfer of guilt”, the Hitchcockian “look”’ and his ‘preoccupation with working out special problems of suspense’ (Ibid: 2). The discussion of each programme follows this remit quite closely with frequent links and associations between Hitchcock’s film and television productions. For example, he notes plot similarities between “One More Mile To Go” (Tx. 7/4/57) and Psycho (1960, Paramount/Shamley Productions, U.S.A.): “One More Mile To Go” features a man in a car being followed by the police, similar to Marion Crane’s (Janet Leigh) journey from Phoenix, and a murder clean-up scene involving a body and a car boot, both reminiscent of similar elements in Psycho (Ibid: 4). “Banquo’s Chair” (Tx. 3/5/59) also prefigures Psycho and echoes Jeff’s (James Stewart) voyeurism in Rear Window (1954, Paramount/Patron Inc., U.S.A.) through its use of bird symbolism and references to bird-watching (Ibid: 6-7). The dinner scene is also compared to similar eating scenes in Shadow Of A Doubt (1943, Universal/Skirball Productions, U.S.A.) and I Confess (1953, Warner Bros./First National, U.S.A.) where ‘questions of murder and guilt are hidden beneath conversations of trivialities, with doubts and suspicions suggested’ visually (Ibid: 7). “Breakdown” (Tx. 13/11/55) and North By Northwest (1959, M.G.M., U.S.A.) are linked as in “both, an unfeeling, overly assured businessman is plunged into chaos by the flimsiest of coincidences” (Ibid: 3). Some of Mamber’s film-television connections have been influential and endorsed or elaborated by later writers, particularly Gene D. Phillips (1984: 149-59) and J. Lary Kuhns (in Mogg 1999: 136-41). Mamber’s assessment of “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” (Tx. 23/12/56) and its links to Rear Window calls the programme the ‘weak offspring’ of the film and says ‘the show is entirely

without distinction' as it is a 'banal reworking of an old plot device' (1971: 4). He also notes the similarities between "Bang! You're Dead" (Tx. 17/10/61) and the bus bomb sequence in Sabotage (1936, Gaumont-British, U.K.), describing the latter sequence as a "'mistake'" Hitchcock corrects in the teleplay by not ending the story in death (Ibid: 5). Mamber's piece set the agenda for discussion of the Hitchcock shows by highlighting their affinities and continuities of theme in relation to Hitchcock's theatrical films.

Jack Edmund Nolan provided an expanded and exclusively television-related version of Bogdanovich's chronology approach in his article 'Hitchcock's TV Films' which appeared in the anthology Focus On Hitchcock (A. J. La Valley 1972: 140-4). Nolan provides very brief, sometimes inaccurate synopses of each episode with an emphasis on 'analyses of favorite Hitch themes as they were reflected in the director's TV work' (Ibid: 140). However, his analysis is scant and mainly concerns Hitchcock's interest in the 'interchangeability of guilt' (Ibid: 143) in numerous episodes.

John Russell Taylor wrote 'Hitchcock Video Noir' for Emmy magazine (1979: 50-3 & 85-6) in which he considers Hitchcock's television career from a largely biographical viewpoint. He notes how Hitchcock's highly organised filmmaking style was conducive to television production schedules and budgets, but also in terms of aesthetics and narrative organisation (Ibid: 52 & 86). Taylor traces general influences on Hitchcock's films, such as the 'sensationalist dramatists' whose '[piling of] incident breathlessly upon incident' would have been thoroughly at home in the 'world of soap and serials', a tendency which rubbed off on Hitchcock (Ibid: 52). He also provides a potted history of the

series' inception but remains vague as to whose decision it was to put Hitchcock on television (Ibid: 52-3). Like the official Hitchcock biography (Taylor 1978), the tone is vague and contemplative in parts but does at least consider issues not dealt with elsewhere, such as Hitchcock's effect on the television industry as a director of stature in the developing television medium (1979: 86).

Another longer anthology article by Gene D. Phillips called “‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’: The Television Years’ appeared in Alfred Hitchcock (Gene D. Phillips 1984: 149-59). While most of the article is taken up with synopses, some of which misrepresent the programmes they seek to describe, Phillips organises the programmes broadly by theme rather than chronology, beginning again with Hitchcock's recurring preoccupation from his films, ‘the transference of guilt’ (Ibid: 152). Phillips makes connections to various Hitchcock films in his discussion of certain programmes. For example, he repeats some of Mamber's assessments as he compares “Mr. Blanchard's Secret” disparagingly with Rear Window, describing the programme as ‘a warmed-over rehash of that basic situation’ (p. 154), and “Bang! You're Dead” with the bombing sequence in Sabotage, where Hitchcock is said to ‘correct’ the film's error by not ending the programme in fatal tragedy (p. 156). Phillips ends the piece with a discussion of the programmes' links with Hitchcock's Psycho, in particular “Banquo's Chair” and “One More Mile To Go” (Ibid: 158-9), most of which had been noted by Mamber (1971: 4-6). Tellingly, Phillips ends not with an assessment of Hitchcock's telefilms, his supposed focus, but with praise for Psycho: “[in Psycho, Hitchcock] produced what is unquestionably the best and most popular film of his entire career” (Ibid: 159).

The first book-length ‘companion’ volume, with synopses of all the shows, appeared in 1985 by John McCarty and Brian Kelleher - Alfred Hitchcock Presents - An illustrated guide to the ten-year television career of the Master of Suspense. Although it includes some production context and anecdotal information from interviews, the book is not particularly analytical, interpretative or evaluative. The first relatively short section (Ibid: 1-56), provides a brief history of the show, an overview of its production, smaller sub-sections on James Allardice, ‘Suspicion’ series, Hitchcock’s sponsors, the show’s change from half an hour to an hour and further links with Psycho. The majority of the book comprises a season-by-season list of programmes followed by brief synopses, some inaccurate, all of which lack full credits.

1999, Hitchcock’s centennial year, saw the appearance of numerous Hitchcock-related publications. His television work was still under-represented, but did receive more coverage than most years.

J. Lary Kuhns’ piece titled ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ in Ken Mogg’s The Alfred Hitchcock Story (1999: 136-41), returns to the chronological organisation of the programmes instigated by Bogdanovich. After a brief historical preamble, Kuhns works systematically through the programmes. His comments on the programmes vary from simple plot summaries to slightly extended discussions of theme, technique or evaluation. He also repeats some of the links with Hitchcock’s cinematic productions to be found in previous writings: Rear Window with “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” and Psycho with “Banquo’s Chair” and “One More Mile To Go”; (p. 138-40). Kuhns has his own recurring theme: his disparagement of the use of voice-over in certain shows. He

says of “The Case Of Mr. Pelham” (Tx. 4/12/55) that the ‘first half is told in flashbacks with introductory voice-over narration, a storytelling device carefully avoided in his theatrical films’² (Ibid: 138), and is grateful Hitchcock changes the source material for “Dip In The Pool” (Tx. 1/6/58) to avoid ‘another tedious internal monologue’ (Ibid: 140).

Thomas M. Leitch contributes the most scholarly piece published on Hitchcock’s television to the anthology book Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays (editors Richard Allen and Sam Ishii Gonzalès 1999: 59-71). In ‘The Outer Circle: Hitchcock On Television’, Leitch invokes Andrew Sarris’ concept of film Authorship theory.³ He places Hitchcock’s authorial presence in his television career into a new ‘circle’ for Sarris’ Authorship diagram, an ‘outer circle’, as opposed to the ‘inner circle’ where the true Author figure resides (in Sarris’ formulation). Leitch argues that Hitchcock’s role as television host places his presence, in the perceptions of the audience, in a controlling role. For example, he is frequently in charge of meting out justice to errant characters from the dramas and is thus seen as the most potent individual involved in the

² In fact, Hitchcock uses voice-overs of differing kinds in a number of his movies, including Vertigo (1958, Paramount/Alfred Hitchcock Productions, U.S.A.), Psycho, Stage Fright (1950, Warner Bros.-First National Pictures, U.S.A.), Murder! (1930, British International Pictures, U.K.), I Confess (1953, Warner Bros./First National, U.S.A.) and Rebecca (1940, Selznick Studio, U.S.A.). For further discussion of Kuhns’ views on television voice-over, see Chapter Three’s section on “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” below.

³ See Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (eds., 1979, Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings, 2nd Edition: 650-65) for a reprint of Andrew Sarris’ Film Comment article ‘Notes on the Author Theory in 1962’.

show. He is also the only recurring element of the show from week to week. This created sense of Hitchcock as ‘the true power behind the screen’ (Ibid: 69) means his hosting role, in the ‘outer circle’, feeds into and helps in the creation and maintenance of Hitchcock’s Author persona in the ‘inner circle’.

Martin Grams Jr. and Patrik Wikstrom’s The Alfred Hitchcock Presents Companion (2001) is the latest major publication to deal with Hitchcock on television. It is a labour of love which takes the basic format of the earlier McCarty and Kelleher (1985) book and expands upon it in every direction. The bulk of the book is synopses of every episode from Hitchcock’s series and related shows such as ‘Ford Startime’ and ‘Suspicion’, but each entry has cast lists and major credits. Many entries have ‘Trivia’ sections providing Hitchcock-related links, quotes from various sources, or original interview material from the programme’s personnel, collected especially for the book. There are even lists of Hitchcock-franchise short story anthologies and assorted merchandise promoting the series.

Of most interest here, the book hosts one piece of analysis on the Hitchcock-directed programmes by Ulrich Rüdél, ‘Cinema en miniature: The Telefilms of Alfred Hitchcock’ (in Grams Jr. et al 1999: 97-108). Rüdél notes the tendency of past writing to consider the programmes by comparing them with Hitchcock’s movies and seems to want to offer something different: ‘Hitchcock’s television work should be evaluated on its own merits’ (Ibid: 97). But the article does not follow this avowed intention, is poorly organised and over-reliant on long quotations from various sources. Rather than contemplate the implications of various Hitchcock quotes, Rüdél copies them and leaves them to speak for

themselves. He makes various links between the programmes and films other than Hitchcock's, as well as a few literary references, but none are extensively developed. His programme synopses and discussions remain heavily weighted to mapping similarities with Hitchcock movies, for example: “‘Mr. Blanchard's Secret’ [is] an attempted satire on Rear Window’ (p. 104); ‘Another famous Psycho scene is modeled in arguably the show's best-known episode, “Lamb To The Slaughter”’ (p. 104); ‘In “Bang! You're Dead”, Hitchcock ... corrects his Sabotage error’ (p. 106).

It is into this context of previous authors' concentration on Hitchcock film and television links that this thesis inserts itself. In the process, a part of its intention is to break down the critical tendency to perceive the Hitchcock programmes solely as a minor extension of his movies. Inevitably, some references to concepts from past writings are referred to and used in analysis chapters. However, it is intended that the discussion of each programme will move on from these authors' tendency to list similarities, to consider differences, particularly those differences in aesthetics and narrative associated with the medium of television.

Historical Context - American Anthology Drama

Hitchcock's move into television occurred during the early boom years of the American industry. The early to mid-1950s saw massive growth in the television market. Hitchcock's show was part of that growth and an extremely successful attempt to profit from the interest in the relatively new medium of television.

From 1952 to 1954, most drama programmes on American television were live productions based in New York. Christopher Anderson (1994) sees this brief trend as the 'dying gasps of a culture preserved from network radio, vaudeville, and the theater at a time when television was still only a metropolitan phenomenon' (Ibid: 11-12). There were two main reasons for the emergence and brief predominance of these live telecasts in the schedules. Firstly, live programmes were actually cheaper to produce than filmed ones at that point. Secondly, they met the criteria for prestige productions and showed the networks to be interested in social issues, fulfilling the public interest remit of their broadcasting licenses. Thirdly, many talented writers, mainly from the New York theatre scene, heeded TV's call for material which was quite unrestricted in theme. Writers responded positively to the invitation to explore their own topics, providing a bedrock of (cheap) talent and material which producers found difficult to resist.

Despite their popularity with audiences, the live anthology dramas of American television's so-called Golden Age soon went into decline. The number of live drama programmes across all three networks was fourteen in 1955-56. In 1957-58, the figure had been halved, and by 1959-60, only one live drama programme remained (Boddy 1993: 188).

The demise of live anthology dramas can be primarily attributed to commercial pressures. The tight, restrictive (in terms of time and space) settings of the live drama meant that narratives were usually staged indoors, with few characters, and a short story-time (since ageing was a difficult natural process for live television to effectively or practically convey). The close-up of the face

became the most important presentational device in the drama's vocabulary. As Erik Barnouw states: 'The human face became the stage on which drama was played' (Barnouw 1990: 160).

Many live dramas concentrated on character psychology, stories of relationships and social problems, frequently presenting complex and difficult situations which were hard for characters to resolve. Such complex or problem dramas did not provide advertisers with the ideal environment into which to place commercial messages. Their advertisements presented mini-narratives where personal problems were solved simply by purchasing a product. Such easy solutions seemed fraudulent in the context of the complexity of the live dramas' stories. Since they dealt with social issues, live dramas often used less glamorous actors and were set in unattractive surroundings. They also raised political issues such as economic, racial or other social injustices (Barnouw 1990: 163). In addition, the live nature of these broadcasts meant the programme would play at different times in the schedule depending on the time-zone in which it was viewed; Western states did not deliver a large enough audience. Advertisers could not be provided with a prime-time slot across the whole country (Balio 1990: 33).

Show sponsors became increasingly concerned by the unattractive framework for their campaigns granted by live drama. 1954-55 saw increasing interference with scripts by sponsors. The dramas lost their edge, the element of the dramas the audiences had responded to most positively. The commercial support of live drama began to wane and they soon disappeared (Barnouw 1990: 165). Perhaps more importantly, the networks had realised the distinct

advantages of offering filmed dramas to lure advertisers. It enabled them to invite independent producers to take the risks of television production away from networks. Instead of producing their own programmes, the networks saw the benefits of passing this role to external producers. They could do this without forfeiting any control over programme output (Balio 1990: 33).

Much of the new independently-produced programming would be provided by television subsidiaries of Hollywood studios. As sponsorship deals migrated to Hollywood, where television production concentrated on the filmed drama, so did the creative talent. 'The death of the live anthology was Hollywood's gain: the trend was to film ... Hollywood was now the mecca [for television drama production]' (Barnouw 1990: 166 & 198).

In 1954, two programmes signalled the entry of the Hollywood studios into television. October 1954 saw the debut of film producer David O. Selznick's first traumatic but prestigious foray into prime-time television production. 'Light's Diamond Jubilee' was an extravaganza of drama, music and spectacle, celebrating Thomas Edison's invention of the electric light bulb. A full account of the making of the show can be found in Anderson (1994: 101-132). Notwithstanding the many difficulties associated with the programme, Anderson notes that 'Light's Diamond Jubilee' 'helped to make October 1954 a watershed for television production in Hollywood' (1994: 133).

Also in 1954, Walt Disney Productions signed a contract with the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to produce a weekly series of one-hour shows entitled 'Disneyland'. The programme was to be a showcase for the Disney theme park and for its theatrically released films. It debuted on 27th

October 1954. Many Hollywood studios followed suit by producing such series as 'Warner Bros. Presents', 'The MGM Parade' and 'Twentieth Century-Fox Theatre' (Balio 1990: 33 & 157).

By the mid-1950s, the television industry was geared towards the production of filmed variety and drama series and showcases. Live broadcast dramas were becoming particularly rare. Filmed drama was taking over as the networks' favoured method of drama production.

MCA

One of the newer production companies in the industry was MCA (Music Corporation of America). They would eventually come to be closely associated with the production of Hitchcock's television series.

MCA began as a talent agency. In 1949, it formed its own television production company called Revue. Revue was the idea of Karl Kramer, an MCA vice-president who was hoping to use the company as a method of previewing MCA's roster of contracted stars (Anderson 1994: 262). Revue had become a necessity for MCA since Hollywood's dwindling number of film productions in the late 1940s meant many of MCA's clients were unemployed (Balio 1990: 34).

There was a conflict of interest involved in the inception of Revue. Normally, the Screen Actor's Guild (SAG) vetoed talent agencies' attempts to become producers; the implication was that MCA would create programmes as vehicles for its own clients, to the detriment of acting personnel not in a management contract with MCA. However, MCA was allowed to retain and develop Revue, a decision that flew in the face of many previous decisions by

the SAG and other authorities. There seem to be two main reasons why this was permitted. Barnouw (1990) states that, due to the ‘time of Hollywood panic, the readiness of MCA to finance production and provide employment was welcome’ in an industry starved of funding and active productions (Ibid: 134). MCA’s ability and willingness to invest in television meant it was allowed to act as both talent agent and talent employer. Anderson (1994: 262) presents an explanation of the decision based on MCA’s influential connections (including Ronald Reagan, a prominent SAG member and MCA client), rather than on its financial force. The SAG did from time to time permit a talent agency to produce shows for its own clients, but such decisions to bend rules were made on an individual basis. Revue was a different matter: a permanent television production company which would develop a roster of successful series which it sold to the networks. In 1952, the SAG board of directors granted Revue/MCA ‘a unique blanket waiver’ (Ibid: 262).

Whatever the reasons behind its reprieve, Revue Productions seized the unique advantage offered by the SAG decision and grew so quickly over the next two years that by 1954 its television profits were fifty percent greater than those from the MCA talent agency business (\$9m from television, \$6m from agency commissions) (Ibid: 264). By 1957, Revue was spending \$25m on television production, one quarter of the Hollywood television industry’s *total* expenditure (Ibid: 264). In 1958, MCA expanded into the syndication of films on television when it bought the broadcast rights for the 750-title film library of Paramount studios for \$50m (Ibid: 262; Balio 1990: 34).

Universal Studios had always had close ties with MCA/Revue. Revue rented studio space from Universal to film a lot of its programming. In 1959, the relationship between the companies changed forever. Buoyant with its massive success in television production and distribution, MCA/Revue purchased Universal's full production facilities from Decca Records (Anderson 1994: 164; Barnouw 1990: 196-7). Decca had become Universal's parent company in the early 1950s when it bought a majority share. MCA paid \$11.35m in cash to Decca and later rented the studio lot back to Universal for \$1m a year (Anderson 1994: 61). Eventually, MCA bought Universal Pictures outright (Barnouw 1990: 197). Also in 1959, MCA's annual gross income from television production and distribution stood at \$46m. (Anderson 1994: 262) and Revue was providing one third of the programming for prime-time (Balio 1990: 34).

In 1957, MCA's activity in television production brought it under the gaze of the Justice Department. It became the subject of an anti-trust case and in 1962, the company agreed to divorce itself from the talent agency side of its business (Balio 1990: 34; Anderson 1994: 264).

'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' was one of the hit shows on which Revue's rapid growth in the mid- to late-1950s was based. Other successes included 'Tales of Wells Fargo', 'Wagon Train', 'M Squad', 'Biff Baker USA', 'General Electric Theater', 'Bachelor Father' and 'Crisis'. By the early 1960s, MCA had a solid relationship with NBC (National Broadcasting Corporation): MCA was NBC's 'virtual programming partner' (Vance Kepley Jr. in Balio 1990: 54), meaning it supplied the majority of NBC's programming, producing shows to order.

‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ and ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’

Hitchcock’s roles 1: Director

Hitchcock was a major artistic guiding influence on the shows he directed. Hitchcock’s approach in the creation of these programmes seems similar to the one he took on his films. He pre-planned each programme as carefully as any of his films (McCarty et al 1985: 18). Gordon Hessler (who worked on sourcing stories for the programmes) noted that Hitchcock was:

‘enormously prepared. He knew exactly how to tell a story cinematically and only filmed what would be used ... it was all pictured and storyboarded in his mind very, very carefully beforehand’ (quoted in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 46 & 321⁴)

‘Hitch’s methods for directing a television show were exactly the same as those he used for features’ according to Norman Lloyd (quoted in McCarty et al 1985: 19). He was not averse to delegating creative roles to colleagues, even leaving the set when certain shots were being filmed. He concentrated his attention on what he had identified, in pre-production, as the crucial shots in the shooting script. Most of the time and effort he invested in the shows he directed would be

⁴ Many quotations in Grams Jr. et al (2001) are not referenced. Some appear to be from interviews conducted by the authors, but obviously this is not the case for quotes attributed to Hitchcock. It has not been possible to obtain full source information for a number of the quotes.

focused on those crucial moments, often involving capturing a certain look or performance from an actor (see Taylor 1979: 85).

From the existing literature, and from other correspondence with Mr. Henry Slesar, it seems Hitchcock, once he had been given a television project to direct, was not personally involved in a lot of the work done for the television shows.⁵ In particular, his role in script development during pre-production seems to have been less hands-on than for much of his film work. In 1961 and 1962, Slesar wrote two teleplays which would be directed for the screen by Hitchcock. The first of these, “The Horseplayer” (Tx. 14/3/61), was from Slesar’s short story “Long Shot” (a.k.a. “Father Amion’s Long Shot”). The second story was to be Hitchcock’s only directorial effort for ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’, “I Saw The Whole Thing” (Tx. 11/10/62). Slesar adapted it for the screen from Henry Cecil’s original story. Slesar reports that he only ever had one story meeting with Hitchcock, once they had both been ‘assigned’ to work on “I Saw The Whole Thing”. The teleplay had not yet been written when he met Hitchcock to discuss the way in which the story should be done:

[Hitchcock] had some ideas about the approach to the story. His concern was that the curtain line [the twist] might be foreseen by the audience,

⁵ Henry Slesar was the most prolific writer for the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ and ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’. He began his association with the show when a number of his short stories were purchased by Shamley and developed by other writers for ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’. He later negotiated with Shamley to adapt his own stories for television, such was the importance and suitability of his work for the show.

and I promised to conceal it from them in every possible way. (Personal e-mail correspondence, 9/4/00)

Although Slesar's reports of his personal experience of working with Hitchcock are informative, their collaboration on the show was limited to two programmes. Furthermore, both of these programmes were in the final years of Hitchcock's personal involvement with the shows (other than through his introductions and his role as owner of Shamley Productions), a time when his overall involvement was at its lowest level. It is clear from John Russell Taylor's account of the shows Hitchcock's involvement was highest from 1955 to 1957: 'for the first two years his supervision was very close ... Later, after the series had settled down into a consistent image, he naturally exerted less detailed control' (1979: 85).

Hitchcock's roles 2: Executive Producer

As with many tales surrounding Hitchcock, there is likely to be a good deal more than has been told on the matter of how he came to work in television. The dominant story has Lew Wasserman, then head of MCA and a close personal friend of Hitchcock's, exclaiming 'We ought to put Hitch on the air!' in a managerial conference (Taylor, 1978: 208). The majority of the rest of the planning is reported by Taylor as if Joan Harrison did most of the work in setting up Shamley Productions but under the control of Hitchcock (Ibid: 209).

Hitchcock's level of control over the shows which carried his name is undeniable. As for the series as a whole, it is true his was not a day-to-day hands-

on role; his control must be thought of as in the nature of a proxy. Throughout his career, in films as well as television, Hitchcock was not afraid to delegate roles to those he believed could fulfil his wishes. The television team he assembled at Shamley Productions were from a long line of successful recruits to the Hitchcock fold, chosen for their ability to choose and develop story material in the Hitchcock vein. Norman Lloyd, associate producer then producer on the shows from 1957 onwards, reports that Hitchcock 'had the ability to delegate, while at the same time being very clear as to what was demanded' (Lloyd 1993: 171). John Russell Taylor echoes Lloyd when he notes that:

In 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents', Hitchcock used all his techniques of delegation to advantage. His producers, Joan Harrison and later Norman Lloyd, had both worked with him extensively before and knew exactly what would be likely to come up to his standard. But still, for the first two years his supervision was very close. (Taylor 1979: 85)

Joan Harrison was a long-term collaborator whose knowledge of Hitchcock's work, and the man himself, was perhaps only surpassed by Hitchcock's wife, Alma. Harrison had been Hitchcock's secretary since 1935; by 1939 she was working on his theatrical film screenplays, on such projects as Jamaica Inn (1939, Erich Pommer Productions, U.K.), Rebecca, Foreign Correspondent (1940, Wanger Productions, U.S.A.), Suspicion (1941, R.K.O., U.S.A.) and Saboteur (1942, Frank Lloyd/Universal, U.S.A.) (McCarty et al 1985: 15).

On the first Hitchcock television shows, Harrison worked to a remit set by Hitchcock. That is not to say she brought nothing of her own to the series. Such a scenario is highly unlikely since she associate-produced the show for eight years (from 1955 to 1963). As producer, her work involved the selection of stories for purchase by the show, the day-to-day development of these properties and the allocation of staff and resources for each project. Norman Lloyd reports that synopses of properties under discussion for use in the shows by the production team would be sent to Hitchcock for his approval (1993: 173).

From this list of Harrison's duties, there seems to be little for Hitchcock to do. It appears from correspondence with Jerry Adler, an Executive Producer on both 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and 'The Alfred Hitchcock Hour', Hitchcock was something of a hired hand, even on his own shows:

It is my impression that Hitchcock left all the creative work up to [Joan] Harrison and merely rolled up at the stage door and sat in his chair and directed ... Joan Harrison handled virtually all writing supervision though probably at least sought Hitchcock's comments ... Re casting, once again, I believe Harrison probably made those decisions. (Jerry Adler, Executive Producer 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' & 'The Alfred Hitchcock Hour', personal correspondence, 3/6/2000)

Hitchcock conceded this last point himself: 'Miss Harrison does the casting, and Norman Lloyd ... I try to put out fatherly words of advice without trying to usurp their position' (quoted in McCarty et al 1985: 26).

Adler continues by considering whether Hitchcock chose the projects he directed, a recurring issue for those writers who have investigated the programmes: ‘With Hitchcock actively making motion pictures during the production of the series, it probably required that Joan [Harrison] put the projects together and fitted them into his schedule at somewhat short notice’ (Ibid: 3/6/2000). It seems possible this was broadly true, but with the caveat that Hitchcock’s collaborators knew his tastes so well that properties they deemed particularly appropriate and solidly in the ‘Hitchcock vein’, were frequently saved for him to direct. It is also not outside the realms of possibility to contemplate that casting, as well as story selection may be a factor in the production team saving certain projects for Hitchcock. Can it be mere coincidence which sees Hitchcock so frequently reunited with some of his favourite actors, such as John Williams (who Hitchcock directed three times on television), Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Claude Rains? Although research has failed to fully resolve the matter, it seems clear that fate was frequently given a helping hand by production planning. Even Hitchcock’s official biographer, John Russell Taylor, rejects Hitchcock’s own declaration that he did not hand-pick his own stories (1978: 210).

As director, Hitchcock had the final cut. His style of film-making was always economical with set-ups, angles and takes; and he took this style with him into television. Hitchcock also had exposure to certain properties bought by the programme, in particular, those pre-selected for him by Joan Harrison, but this also means that he had some kind of final choice, albeit a focused one. He would be unlikely to feel he was obliged to direct a story which was offered to

him that he did not wish to direct, but Harrison would be unlikely to offer him such a script in the first instance. As Executive Producer, he always had the right of veto. Those who knew Harrison continually praise her professionalism, her deep and broad knowledge of Hitchcock's personal tastes and her abilities as a producer (Grams Jr. et al 2001: 37). Such an individual is not likely to offer 'dud' scripts to Hitchcock, nor for that matter would she waste money on spare properties. Norman Lloyd reports only one story was bought by the Hitchcock series and never filmed, a Roald Dahl short story. This was not produced not because it was unsuitable but because 'by the time we got around to it, the series had ended' (McCarty et al 1985: 28-9).

Hitchcock's show was created to the specifications he laid down in the first years of production. It was a reflection of his interests in crime, suspense, the macabre and short story fiction. In this way, the whole series is steeped in his presence.

Contemporaneous US Anthology Television Drama

These examples from 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' (not directed by Hitchcock) and 'The Twilight Zone' provide a context for the issues of overall quality, richness and integration of televisual style and meaning which lies at the heart of this thesis. As well as the analyses below, further reference will be made to these programmes in the chapters on the Hitchcock-directed shows when it is felt necessary, to assist in the consideration of those latter show's achievements.

Selection of the programmes to use for this section was a difficult process. Availability has been an issue, although within the selection available, it

is felt the final selection is broadly representative of the shows and a fair cross-section has been achieved. Many other examples have been viewed before a selection was made. I have chosen to include programmes which are of interest and are well-made. The selections have also been informed by the analyses of the shows Hitchcock *did* direct. Certain programmes appear because they contain elements or raise themes or issues also found in the other shows, sometimes with actors or other personnel which link with later analyses of the Hitchcock-directed shows.

'Alfred Hitchcock Presents'

Shows from this series have been chosen as context for the Hitchcock-directed ones because of the thesis' concentration on that series elsewhere.

"The Long Shot"

Synopsis

Charlie Raymond (Peter Lawford) is a failed gambler who owes money to people who want it back. To escape, he answers a wanted advert placed by Walker Hendricks (John Williams) for a travelling companion from New York to San Francisco by car. Hendricks wants someone who can share memories of London along the way.

On the journey, Raymond discovers that Hendricks is on his way to claim a \$200,000 fortune. All the required papers to prove his identity are in a briefcase. Raymond kills Hendricks by running over him in the Nevada desert.

Raymond goes to claim the money at an attorney's office. When he gets

there, the police greet him. They say they have found Hendricks' body.

Raymond confesses to the murder in Nevada, but the police are puzzled. They found Hendricks's body in New York. It seems the man Raymond killed was actually a criminal called English Bob. Bob had killed the real Hendricks himself in New York, and it was Bob whom the police were expecting at the attorney's office.

“The Long Shot” is interesting for its use of voice-over narration from its main character, Charlie Raymond, who Hitchcock's introduction describes as ‘our hero’. As the opening images of the New York bar appear, the voice-over begins as if it is talking of a third person:

Voice-over: A week ago Thursday it was, in a New York bar called Happy Jack's. On the bar was a classified ad section of a newspaper. [The camera tracks right to show the newspaper] On the newspaper was a glass of beer [A bartender places a glass of beer on the newspaper] and behind the glass of beer was a tinhorn horseplayer called Charlie Raymond. [A hand picks up the glass] That's me. [Said as the man takes a drink].

The programme cleverly combines uncertainty and certainty in its first moments. Firstly, there is temporary *uncertainty* as to whose voice we are hearing. Only once we see Charlie on screen and hear the voice-over confirm ‘that's me’ do we realise this voice-over is his. The motivation for creating this temporary

uncertainty is clearly the programme's twist. Charlie kills someone he believes to be Walker Hendricks, but who turns out to be the killer of the real Walker Hendricks. Charlie's victim is actually English Jim. Already the programme is warning us that nothing is as it seems. We might have been introduced to an image of Charlie immediately, with a fade-up to him at the bar, tracking towards a close-up, for example. This opening shot might have been accompanied by a voice-over: 'My name is Charlie Raymond, a tinhorn horseplayer who, a week ago Thursday, was sat in a New York bar called Happy Jack's'. This alternative formulation indicates the decision to temporarily disorientate the viewer over the identity of the narrator is an intentional one that echoes the drama's twist ending.

Conversely, there are strong elements of *certainty* available to the viewer in this opening sequence. The beginning is all the more effective in its project because of the voice-over's listing of elements in the scene which are evident from the image. The bar is referred to and we see a bar scene. The newspaper is named, and then we see it. The beer is mentioned and one appears. This listing of factual elements works to allay any feeling we might have that the programme will seek to conceal facts from us. It is a comforting set of coinciding images and verbal description, acting against the uncertainty raised about the narrator.

Charlie knows how the story will end. His voice-over is in the past tense and refers to events happening 'a week ago Thursday'. What we never learn is where his narration is taking place. As in Hitchcock's "The Crystal Trench" (see Chapter Four), the narrator remains without a context for his narration. There is no cut to Charlie writing his story as a confession at the end of the drama, for

example. All we know is that only a short time has passed between the start of the story and his narration on it.

As a programme with a murder, “The Long Shot” is relevant in terms of censorship. The depiction of English Jim being run over by Charlie with the car is, as one would expect, off-screen. He backs over him once; we hear Jim scream briefly. Charlie pulls the car forwards again; this time no further screams are heard. As the shot of Charlie fades to black, though, we hear him gunning the engine once again. It is implied that Charlie is about to do the same again, to make sure. The programme spares us this. For him to have done it at all is appalling enough. Having been shown how Jim’s head was right behind the back wheels of the car in the shots of him sleeping, our imaginations can do the rest. The programme wishes us to view Charlie as someone who has placed a bet by killing Jim. It just so happens this risk involves killing Jim. To show him reversing over Jim a second time would present him more as a sadist than a gambler.

Concerted attempts are made to make John Williams’ character an unsympathetic one for the American audience. He is weary and dismissive of America and Americans.⁶ English Jim thinks America is ‘too big’, and that the tap rooms are not as good as those in England. He has a stereotypical view of the country, demonstrated by his fears on sleeping outside in the desert: ‘do you think it will be safe? No buffaloes or Indians, I mean’.

⁶ This characterisation was soon reversed fourteen programmes later when Williams played Herbert Carpenter in “Back For Christmas”, an Englishman who relishes his new but short-lived foray in the Land of the Free.

The programme undermines his views by contradicting his ill-founded opinions about his Aunt Margaret whom he has never seen. He does not speak to his aunt in America because she is 'probably an American now' and 'a crashing bore'. However, when we meet the aunt, she has not been Americanised at all; like English Jim, she has clung on to Englishness. She has English tea imported, and has done so every month for the last thirty years and still has an English accent. English Jim is wrong about the USA because he is wrong concerning his aunt. He is marked as arrogant and judgemental.

The programme's delivery of the climax is not particularly exciting. This is mostly the result of the twist being dependant upon verbal explanation. The twist is not related to Charlie getting caught. There is already a fatalism about what will happen, conveyed by Charlie's voice-over. Before he goes to the attorney's office, Charlie has a hunch he is walking into trouble: 'It was all so pat, so neat. Laid out before me with the orderly geometry of a spider-web'. In his life of gambling, he says he 'listen[s] to hunches'. His instincts do not fail him, but he decides not to follow them. Instead, he chooses to claim the money on the toss of a coin, a clear indicator of his fatalism.

The twist is that the man Charlie thought was Hendricks was English Jim, who had killed Hendricks himself in New York. Part of the satisfaction of the twist is for the audience members who took a dislike to English Jim. Now he is exposed as a murderer and conman, they are vindicated for their dislike of him.

“No Pain”

Synopsis

Dave Rainey (Brian Keith) is a millionaire with a dubious past who lives in his house on the Florida coast. Due to an unspecified illness, he is confined to a large iron lung. He lies down, his body from the neck down encased in this large torpedo-shaped contraption on wheels. He looks at people through a mirror fixed to the machine above his head at forty-five degrees. His vivacious young wife Cindy (Joanna Moore) is bored of life with him and his illness and Dave knows it. He coolly asks her just when she intends to get kill him to free herself again. Cindy implies that the time will come soon, but not just yet.

Cindy spends a lot of time with Arnold Barratt (Yale Wexler). He is a handsome young neighbour who is very interested in Cindy. Dave seems to accept their relationship as inevitable. He implies it will be Arnold who will do the deed when Cindy orders him to be despatched.

Arnold returns one night after going swimming with Cindy to tell Dave her body will be found on the coast when the tide goes out. He has done what Dave asked him to: Cindy is dead and he assures him she felt no pain. Dave has successfully played his hand first, hiring Arnold as his trusted hitman from his shady past, before Cindy had the chance to get rid of him.

The prologue for “No Pain” is a fine example of the series at its best. Not only is it subversive and funny, it also sets up the idea of marital conflict. Hitchcock is the compere for a forthcoming boxing match between Steven Forbush and Mrs. Steven Forbush. They are ‘traditional rivals, having met many

times before for the Middle-Class Championship of the World'. Delivered in the usual deadpan manner, the scenario of Hitchcock's introduction echoes the struggle for dominance between Dave and Cindy in the main drama.

The drama wastes no time in informing us of Cindy's dreadful character traits. Her voice is usually high-pitched and has an irritating singing quality to it. She conveys the impression of being self-obsessed and insensitive by touching up her hair in the mirror attached to Dave's iron lung. Later, her laments over Dave's current condition centre on how much of a strain it is for *her*, as a wife tied to an invalid husband.

The narrative starts with Dave and Cindy talking. They are mostly discussing the relationship between Cindy and Arnold but several lines neatly imply and pre-empt the twist:

Cindy: Arnold rented a little sailing boat from a high-school boy. Hardly enough room in the tub for two

Dave: That's very cute. Ever occur to you Arnold's no high-school boy?

The smallness of the boat will inevitably push Cindy and Arnold together. The insinuation is she is having an affair with him. Dave's reply acknowledges Arnold's status as a mature man and expands upon the theme of adultery and sexual relations between Arnold and Cindy. But with the hindsight of the twist, it also reads as a warning to Cindy and us that Arnold might not be what he seems, and that Dave knows it. When Cindy remonstrates against Dave's cynicism, saying Arnold has been 'thoughtful and kind', Dave quickly backs down, as if he

realises he might be giving too much away about Arnold: 'Never mind the stupid things I say. Have a nice sail'.

While Cindy is out sailing with Arnold, nurse Collins (Dorothea Lord) repositions Dave in his iron lung so he can look out to sea. As she does this, she looks worried he might see something out there. 'Not many sailing today' she says, glancing anxiously out to sea. 'No, not many sailing' Dave replies. Dave does then see a boat go by, shown in his mirror. Whether or not it is Cindy and Arnold is unclear (but the boat does seem rather larger than Cindy's earlier description of it). It nevertheless indicates just what is on Dave's mind. When Dave says he would 'rather watch ... the boats' than try to build up his time limit outside the respirator, the nurse understands what he means. She looks back at the sea and says 'Of course, Mr. Rainey'. He wants to keep a lookout for Cindy and Arnold, and ponder his predicament. Dave's concern about what is going on between Arnold and his wife is reinforced by his next line: 'I used to be pretty good with boats. I was pretty good with women too', which triggers his memory flashback to his passionate, confident courting of Cindy. The equation is made between women and boats, so his line about wanting to watch the boats is clearly meant to be read as concern over his wife's behaviour with Arnold. The further equation of boats, women and sex is made more explicit as Dave talks to Arnold later on:

Dave: How was the sail?

Arnold: It was fun. Not much of a boat. But I will say this, your wife certainly knows her way around.

Dave: Around what?

Arnold: Why, around boats, of course.

The flashback, set next to the sea, is enlightening on the matter of Dave and Cindy's quite unhealthy and mercenary relationship. Cindy asks Dave what he will buy next and he replies 'You' without any hesitation. He equates his proposal of marriage to Cindy with 'betting on the horses or buying a block of real estate'. His understanding is related to money, but he is also aware of the psychological effect of his money, and the authority that comes with it, on those who surround him. 'When you own the boat you pay for the liquor and you're the last guy anybody wants around'.

Dave also asks Cindy if Arnold has any money. Cindy says four dollars and sixty cents, 'but he's got prospects'. Dave replies 'Yeah, I know', a further piece of fine double-edged dialogue. His reply could mean 'If Arnold gets hitched to you after I'm dead, his prospects will be good', or 'As soon as he kills you, I'll pay him his money, his prospects will be good'.

After 'Yeah, I know' Cindy turns away and eyes up the cable for the iron lung. She steps into an empty frame, then we cut away to a shot that approximates her spatial POV; the camera pans left along the wire from the wall socket to the respirator. The shot is accompanied by sinister music. There is rhetorical power in having Cindy step into the empty frame, then have her vision 'control' the image of the wire. It clearly demonstrates Dave's relative helplessness in dictating the images. He cannot move into an empty frame, nor is

he the motivation behind *moving* POV shots. Cindy's mobility is her power and is here set against Dave's impotence.

An even more blatant example of Cindy's relative power and Dave's helplessness comes soon after, as they continue to talk. She unplugs the lung and opens the enclosure. This is part of his doctor's regime, to slowly build up his tolerance to being out of the machine, but he can only cope with periods of ten minutes at best. Once the contraption has been stopped, Cindy must only do nothing to be in the wrong. The situation is similar to "Poison", where Timber makes a show of doing something to help (calling the doctor, but only after getting a wrong number, for example). Cindy and Timber demonstrate the same ineptitude which comes across as semi-intentional. Both wish ill on their helpless charges, but both cannot openly demonstrate that desire to the full. Cindy does have the additional caveat of being drunk, but when she does finally close the lung, she forgets to flick the switch and has to be reminded by Dave.

When Arnold returns, Cindy tells him that Dave knows she wants him dead. He is more concerned about how drunk she is. This of course will explain the reason for her drowning if there is an inquest. After he suggests they go for a swim, she describes him as 'calm and dependable'. He says that's what all the girls say about him, and he describes himself as a 'calm and dependable old firm', as he and Cindy walk either side of Dave's iron lung, holding one another's hands over it.

Arnold's curious description of himself as a 'calm and dependable *old firm*' implies a business transaction. It certainly informs the twist by inferring another deal is being done somewhere. Cindy and Arnold's joining hands over

the iron lung implies such a pact or agreement, one that would not be visible to Dave as he lies with his mirror turned the wrong way. As far as we know though, financial concerns have not been an influence on Cindy and Arnold's relationship. When Dave asked how she feels about Arnold, Cindy says she 'adores' him. Her reply is based on sentiment and emotion. Unlike Cindy and Dave's relationship, which the flashback establishes is financially rooted in many ways, Cindy adores Arnold despite his only having five dollars and sixty cents to his name. At the time of Dave's marriage proposal to Cindy (in the flashback), Dave has a yacht, portions of Florida and six million dollars in the bank.

Cleverly, once Arnold has returned, we do not see Dave's reactions at all to Arnold's suggestion to Cindy to go for a swim. The programme's elision is useful as we have no indication from his facial expressions he is in on the plan to drown her.

Another strong factor in drawing us away from guessing the twist is how Arnold is coded as arrogant and just as callous as Cindy. The immediate context of his behaviour is that Cindy has just told Arnold that her husband knows of her intention to kill him (Dave). Arnold knows they have no reason to hide their relationship from Dave. He is framed in a medium close-up as he stands where Dave can see him, next to his mirror. As he removes his tie, he says: 'Oh, I hope you don't think it too cheeky of me, old boy, but I'll have to borrow your trunks'.

Arnold's removal of his tie has obvious pre-coital echoes. He is undressing to spend time with Dave's wife. His arrogance is breathtaking. The

dialogue also declares Arnold as heartless. Implying his intentions to have sex with Cindy is not enough. He is also borrowing the trunks of her helpless husband who no longer has a use for them. We have seen Dave earlier in his swimwear, muscular and vital. It takes a particularly cruel, thoughtless and arrogant man to invoke this memory in us and in Dave. He does not request the trunks, he rather states he must have them. What seems to us *then* as heartlessness, in the light of the twist reads more like collusion between Dave and Arnold, tinged with the mild psychosis required for him to commit the forthcoming murder of Cindy.

The various clues leading up to the twist are finely judged. There are sufficient clues to reward further viewings, but no single piece of information so strong to give away the twist. Even Dave's association with criminals (such as hitmen like Arnold) has been explained by Cindy when she talks of how he fought his way up from 'the seedier side of things', to get 'legitimate power'. This useful dialogue explains his connections to Arnold, this hired killer who is such a 'calm and dependable old firm' because he and Dave go back such a long way.

"The Landlady"

Synopsis

Billy Weaver (Dean Stockwell) has been sent to an English provincial town by his banking employers. There is some suspicion amongst the locals about this stranger in town. There have been a number of burglaries and Billy raises concerns when he so ably assists the landlord with a jammed cash register.

In his search for lodgings, he comes across a boarding house run by a rather strange landlady (Patricia Collinge). She tells him she already has two other paying guests, young men just like Billy. They are Christopher Mulholland and Gregory Temple. Billy finds it strange he never sees the men; he feels he has heard their names before but cannot remember in which context.

Some time later, Billy has still not seen the other boarders. He sits down to have tea with his landlady and she declares the local police have caught the man responsible for the recent burglaries. Billy notices both her pet parrot and dog are stuffed. She says she does it to all her pets that die. Billy's voice becomes slurred and then he freezes. The poison in his tea has done its work. Now his landlady can add him to her growing collection of 'stuffed pets'.

"The Landlady" is from the sixth season of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents'. It is adapted from a story of the same name by Roald Dahl. Of all Dahl's stories used by Hitchcock's series, there are only two not directed personally by Hitchcock: this tale, and "Man From The South". Both were directed by Hitchcock's long-term collaborator, co-producer of the 'Hitchcock Presents' series and actor, Norman Lloyd.

The programme sticks quite closely to the original story. A lot of the dialogue is taken straight from Dahl. There is one large addition to the tale: the back-story of the local burglaries. Dahl's tale is rather short and its adaptation evidently required some fleshing out, even for a twenty-two minute drama. However, the back-story is more than just padding. It adds another dimension to the character of Billy and makes his relationship possibilities with the landlady

more complex. The possibility that he is a criminal helps the programme to partly discourage a view of him as only a potential victim.

When Billy approaches the boarding house, he appears in swirling mist and the scene is accompanied by sinister music played on deep stringed instruments. This comes after the scene in the pub where the local's suspicions have been raised by the ease with which Billy frees up the landlord's jammed till. Is *he* the burglar? We do not know anything about Billy apart from the fact he is a stranger in Bramley. For all we know, the locals' suspicions are right. So the ominous presentation of his arrival at the guest house could mean we are to take him as the threatening presence. Maybe he will somehow be a menace to the life of the landlady.

The burglary story is neatly resolved by the landlady declaring they have found the culprit. Any residual thoughts we might have had that Billy was going to be troublesome are banished. The tale becomes a most basic version of The Lodger (1926, Gainsborough, U.K.): a stranger arrives in town (swathed in mist and darkness), is suspected of involvement in crime, but is found to be innocent. The burglary element thus adds Hitchcockian seasoning to the original story.

The programme intentionally erodes the idea that Billy might be somehow threatening. By imparting information on his reason for being in Bramley (to take up a job as a bank clerk) any fears for his character begin to be allayed. In another sequence added to the short story, the programme virtually resolves all concerns. The programme uses point-of-view structures as Billy creeps through the house, set to a soundtrack of the landlady playing hymns on an organ to her other gentlemen upstairs. What the audience might think is an

attempt to steal, turns into a hunt for information on these two men, as soon as Billy finds money and a watch in a case and replaces everything. The POV structures assist in coding the scene as risky, since it is a technique that gives us very concentrated information on Billy's movements, to the exclusion of other events (for example, when the organ music stops, we wonder if the landlady is on her way to discover Billy?). But by the end, we realise his actions are related to the other question the story has already set up: to find out more about the two men whose names he can vaguely remember as being 'connected with something unpleasant'.

Just as the programme works to allay concerns about Billy's character, it must also plant seeds of doubt about the landlady. A lot of this is done by Dahl's writing and performed to great effect by Patricia Collinge. For example, when she asks Billy to sign the guest book, she says:

Landlady: Law of the land you know. And we don't want to go breaking any laws at this stage of the proceedings, do we?

This is a line taken almost verbatim from the short story, which reads:

'... Before you go to bed, would you be kind enough to pop into the sitting-room on the ground floor and sign the book? Everyone has to do that because it's the law of the land, and we don't want to go breaking any laws at *this* stage in the proceedings, do we?' (Dahl 1992: 6)

But Dahl italicises the word ‘this’. In her performance, Patricia Collinge avoids the obvious and places more emphasis in her delivery on the word ‘stage’, where she raises her voice in pitch up and over the ‘a’ of that word. The line is curious enough; it raises sufficient doubt about the landlady at this point, without the over-emphasis encouraged by the short story text. It is a significant example of how the source material has an influence, but certainly cannot necessarily be seen as the primary influence on the finished production and the meanings it subsequently conveys.

‘The Twilight Zone’

‘The Twilight Zone’ first appeared on American television in 1959. It ran for five seasons, a total of 131 episodes, until 1964. Seasons one to three and five were thirty-minute programmes; season four programmes ran for sixty minutes. It was the creation of television dramatist Rod Serling who wrote the majority of the episodes himself, throughout the show’s five-year tenure on CBS. Filmed at MGM studios, ‘The Twilight Zone’ was seen as a ‘prestige’ show by its network which, despite various problems with sponsorship deals, ‘did its best to keep it running’ (Gerani and Schulman, 1987: 38).

There are numerous reasons to consider ‘The Twilight Zone’ as a comparison to Hitchcock’s television work. It was a direct rival to the Hitchcock show. By the time ‘The show appeared in 1959, ‘The Twilight Zone’ and Hitchcock even shared the same network, CBS (but only for one season - Hitchcock moved to NBC the following year). Perhaps the most important comparable element though is that many episodes also deliver a twist. While the

subject matter is generally far more fantastical in setting, with many more extra-terrestrial and supernatural events than in Hitchcock's series, the stories regularly seek to surprise the audience by turning expectations on their heads in the final moments.

'Twilight Zone' also had its own strong recurring character-presenter in Serling who introduced and rounded up the stories each week. The programmes often shared key creative personnel, including writers Richard Matheson and Charles Beaumont, composer Bernard Herrmann, and many directors such as Robert Stevens (who directed 'The Twilight Zone' debut show and series pilot), Jack Smight, John Brahm, Douglas Heyes, Stuart Rosenberg and Don Medford. Various actors appeared in both series and one important example is provided below by Vera Miles' appearance in "Mirror Image".

On balance, it is felt that the selection of examples below is quite a flattering one to the series as a whole. There are certain shows which are quite primitive in their execution, which seem to have been performed live (or maybe recorded then shown as if they have been performed live). "Static" (Tx. 10/3/61) is one example of this kind of programme. The negative effect on pacing, framing and editing of this recording strategy is remarkable. Since they are more akin to truly live television dramas, a method never used on Hitchcock's shows, these programmes have been excluded from the selection.

“Eye Of The Beholder”

Synopsis

Sometime in a draconian future society, patient 307, Janet Tyler (Maxine Stewart) undergoes her final chance at chemical corrective treatment to make her face socially acceptable.

When her face is revealed, it becomes clear the doctors and nurses caring for her have a different concept of beauty than current Western society - she is ‘beautiful’ (by our standards) while the nurses and doctors have malformed humanoid features. Despite her initial protests, Janet is despatched to have a fulfilled life in a colony for her kind of ‘deformed’ people.

‘Eye Of The Beholder’ is one of ‘The Twilight Zone’ series’ most obvious attempts to deliver a narrative twist. It sets itself a challenging project, one which it finds difficult to sustain over the half-hour running time without raising suspicions in the audience which erode the impact of the twist. Such a twist is entirely dependent upon the withholding of information. As will be discussed later, programmes with such narrative shocks must keep vital information away from audiences to be successful. However, in this programme, the information withheld is the disfigurement of the majority of the characters. When one considers that a key subject for television is the image of the human face (often in close-up), clearly the programme is a risk.

During the drama, the faces of the nurses and doctors are hidden in as many ways as possible - obstructions from props and set, shadows, darkness, silhouetting of figures, etc. There is no doubt there is skill in these various

methods, and that certainly provides some of the programme's pleasures. However, the denial of visual access to the viewer reveals the attempted deception even more. It is so sustained a pattern (as it must be) as to be noticeable after only a few moments. The programme also uses the physical appearance of Rod Serling on the set (he freezes the action with his presence). Although Serling does this in other programmes, it can be viewed in the context of this programme as an attempt to quash thoughts in the audience's minds that most of the people on the set are anything but human in appearance. It does not succeed.

'Eye Of The Beholder' clearly has a strong political subtext of Communism and its restrictions upon personal life. The presentation of this future society is Orwellian in places. At various points, screens emerge from the scenery to show the leader's speeches to the nation, which continue the theme of assimilation and 'ordinariness'. The bandaged woman also declares: 'The state is not God!' as she bemoans her exclusion from society on account of her looks.

With 'Eye Of The Beholder', it is as if for Serling, making the political point about the cosmetic, trivial concentration upon physical appearance in society is too good an opportunity to be missed, even if it means creating a programme the central premise of which is quite antipathetic to the televisual medium, and particularly to the 'short drama with a twist' format. Its attempts to make its audience question the issue of personal appearance are weakened because of the game it so obviously needs to play with its audience. "Eye Of The Beholder" is satisfying largely because it fulfils one's expectations with its twist. The anticipation is not so much the twist itself but just how ugly the doctors and

nurses lurking in shadow will be once revealed. When one compares this to the complexity of disclosure, elision and artfulness provided by a programme such as “Revenge”, the simplicity of “Eye Of The Beholder” is all the more apparent.

“Time Enough At Last”

Synopsis

A timid, bespectacled bank worker called Henry Bemis (Burgess Meredith) loves to read but is cruelly thwarted by both his boss and his wife. One day, he is having his lunch in the bank vault when a nuclear bomb strikes. He exits the vault to find everyone dead. Just as he is contemplating suicide, he is ecstatic when he sees the public library and sets about planning his reading for the many years ahead. He has all the time in the world to do it all. But just as he is about to begin, his glasses fall off and smash on the stone steps of the library.

“Time Enough At Last” has clever touches which, to some extent, reward subsequent viewings. For example, there is a neat anticipation of the twist ending during the scene mentioned earlier where Bemis’ wife rips pages from the poetry book. The camera is tilted down at the paper-strewn carpet as Bemis bends into the frame to salvage the pages. His glasses fall from his nose onto the carpet. He puts them back on and then proceeds to gather the pages. This event is certainly available to the casual viewer but is not remarked upon or made obvious by its presentation.

Of all the programmes considered here, ‘Time Enough At Last’ is perhaps the most divergent in tone from the Hitchcock shows. Although bad

things happen to Hitchcock television characters, there is no example this writer has seen of the sustained cruelty towards one such as that meted out to Mr. Bemis. Hitchcock's dramas frequently reward or let off those who did wrong (until the epilogue condemned them off-screen to some suitable punishment). Mr. Bemis, arguably, does very little wrong. Yet both before and after the nuclear attack, there is a calculated callousness towards him that shows no pity for his plight, which is way out of proportion to what he might be considered to have done wrong.

Throughout the narrative, Mr. Bemis is mistreated at work and home. His wife, so enraged at his desire to read, goes to the length of scribbling on every page of one of the poetry books he has secreted in the house. She then asks him to read something from it out loud. Surprised at her sudden interest in literature, Bemis prepares to turn to one of his favourite odes. His hopes are shattered by the appalling sight of the book's vandalised pages. His wife then proceeds to doubly destroy the book by ripping out some of the already obliterated pages and throwing them on the floor.

Bemis' soul is not destroyed by this vicious behaviour; he seems cheery enough despite these restrictions and setbacks. That is, until the nuclear attack. He is contemplating suicide when he sees the remains of the public library. However, he is obviously elated at his discovery of all the books he will ever need. He then plans out his reading, years in advance. The programme carefully shows his intentions, a pile of books for each year of his future. The programme plays up his immense anticipation only to break him.

The narrative's twist, having Bemis' glasses shatter on the library steps, is as cruel as it is ironic. Just before the voice-over comes in, Bemis mutters in despair: 'it's not fair' over and over. Serling's voice-over adds a further layer of condescension and unjustifiable preachiness. As the camera pulls away from this grieving and broken man, leaving him to his half-blind, lonely fate, Serling intones: 'the best laid plans of mice and men...and Henry Bemis'. Obviously, Serling is quoting half of a literary reference (to Robert Burns), but its placement comes across as clever and cruel in tone.

Serling does not stop there. He goes on to describe Bemis as 'a fragment of the rubble', a 'fragment of what man has deeded himself'. This moralising comment links Bemis in with, and argues he is partly culpable for, the nuclear war, for which the programme has given no context (we hear of no impending danger or threat of the attack - it simply happens). The programme gives us no opportunity to consider how the nuclear war has happened, and so to apportion blame to an innocent such as Bemis for its occurrence is quite astoundingly unfair. The worst Bemis can be accused of is a slightly unhealthy interest in classic literature which maybe takes his mind away from the pressing political problems of the day, but his lack of interest in such matters is mirrored by the programme's depiction of the story

The nuclear war element is a crucial part of the narrative to isolate Bemis and set up the twist, and yet the voice-over goes too far by attempting to make a righteous point. Rather than acknowledging it solely as a narrative device by completely ignoring the political, moral and philosophical dimensions of the

nuclear debate, Serling's last-minute voice-over attempts to divert attention from the programme's previous silence on those issues.

Perhaps this trait towards preachiness can be partly explained by the Cold War climate of the late 1950s - it is as if the programme could not possibly be seen to use nuclear holocaust simply as a plot contrivance without in some way commenting on just how terrible it is. What is more, it is a terror which it is in the power of all of us to prevent. Ultimately, the point is made that if it happens, we, like Bemis, will all be to blame.

And yet one sees this moralising tendency in much of 'The Twilight Zone'. The message of not judging others by their appearance is of course central to "Eye Of The Beholder", and as Serling's voice-over says at the end: 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder. *Lesson to be learned* in the Twilight Zone' [emphasis added]. Serling never seems to miss an opportunity to point up the moral issue. Hitchcock's show, on the other hand, actively and effectively avoids preaching. Again, "Breakdown" provides a fine example. In his prologue, Hitchcock accepts his programmes often 'strive to teach a lesson or point a little moral'. In a story which turns on teaching a lesson to Mr. Callew, that showing one's emotions can even save your life, Hitchcock's epilogue makes no mention of this moral. Instead he concentrates attention on the paralysed predicament of Mr. Callew and seeks audience sympathy for his similar predicament

Hitchcock: Imagine if you can the terror of being inside a television set, knowing that any moment the viewer may shut you off and being powerless to prevent it. And I go through this every week.

This avoidance of the moral issue is of course fully in line with Hitchcock's broader intentions for his programmes. It tallies with his irreverence towards his sponsors and his championing of and interest in those who commit crimes.

Cruelty in prime-time, as seen in "Time Enough At Last", seems far more acceptable than having sight of the human devastation caused by nuclear war. In this regard, the programme is highly self censoring, as one would expect. Of the many casualties which would have surrounded Bemis, only one body is seen after the bomb blast, that of the unsympathetic bank boss. Even then, we only see his arm protruding from under the office desk which has crushed him. None of the other sites where Bemis later finds food, or the library for that matter, are contaminated by corpses.

Interestingly, one can read Bemis' boss' demise as a comment on contemporary (1950s) life. Elsewhere, the programme quite overtly represents modern working life as restrictive and authoritarian. Bemis' boss is coded as a rather obvious representation of this sentiment. While sternly reprimanding him for reading at work, Bemis' boss says 'get back to your cage' as he sits behind his large office desk. Bemis' boss being crushed by the key symbol of his authority and social role is a further irony.

It is problematic as to how this irony should be viewed. Is it an indictment of the society that has allowed the destruction of the world through nuclear war? If so, is the programme thus encouraging us to view Bemis' jovial insularity as a justified reaction to this society? The latter is an untenable position considering Bemis' appalling treatment elsewhere (see above). The

conclusion which seems the most likely, when one considers the self-righteous context provided by Rod Serling's voice-over narration, is that there is no sympathy for anyone in this fictional world. They are all to blame. Serling's story condemns them all in one way or another.

Unlike many of Hitchcock's stories, there is little evidence of the narrative viewpoint being influenced by characters within the drama. This is an issue explored in the chapter on point of view. Hitchcock has been criticised for using characters as empty ciphers in his film work (see for example Lindsay Anderson 1949, in LaValley 1972: 58 - 59), a claim I have disputed elsewhere (see 'Character interiority: space, point of view and performance in Hitchcock's Vertigo', in Pye and Gibbs (Editors), forthcoming). When one compares the Hitchcock show's treatment of characters with 'The Twilight Zone's', it is clear the latter most often uses characters as empty ciphers.

"Mirror Image"

Synopsis

Millicent Barnes (Vera Miles) is waiting at a bus depot and has strange experiences. Her bag is checked in by someone without her knowledge; she is told by the station master to stop asking about the delayed bus when it was the first time she asked; she sees someone exactly like her in the waiting room, but only in a mirror for a second... She tells her troubles to Paul and they then go to board the bus. As she does so, she sees her double already sat on the bus.

Millicent tries to explain to herself what is happening with parallel universe theories, but Paul is concerned she may be going insane. He covertly

calls the police and she is picked up and forced into their patrol car. Back in the depot, Paul notices his bag has disappeared and a man who looks like him is running away. He chases after him, but can't catch up to confront *his* mirror image.

“Mirror Image” is a story of a doppelgänger, much like “The Case Of Mr. Pelham”. The programme wastes no time in setting up its story. A crane shot moves down and left on the exterior of the bus station set, handily picking up the ‘bus depot’ sign as it goes and labelling this space. Then the enigma is set up quickly by the first scene with Millicent and the bus station man. It becomes clear something is wrong when the man accuses Millicent of constantly asking about the delayed bus, when she remonstrates that it is the first time she has asked. Millicent then realises the case she thought she still had with her has actually been checked in and is behind the station master’s desk. She thus begins to doubt herself, and we similarly have concerns over the extent to which her statements can be trusted.

Rod Serling’s voice-over narration once again shows a lack of benevolence towards his characters. The tone is as dispassionate and matter-of-fact as ever: ‘Not a very imaginative type, Miss Barnes’. She is further described as a ‘career woman’, ‘generic’, and a ‘girl with a head on her shoulders’. This is perhaps the clearest example from ‘The Twilight Zone’ of the role of voice-over narration in characterisation. Rather than acting and dialogue, Millicent’s character is painted in these broad stereotypical sweeps in Serling’s voice-over. As the only character in the narrative that really needs to be fleshed out, it is

debatable whether the programme gets much further than these general descriptions.

Vera Miles' casting as Millicent Barnes demonstrates the knowledge of the programme-makers of her previous roles in Hitchcock's film The Wrong Man and most likely in "Revenge", the first programme in the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series. As Millicent, Miles is required to play a character whose life unravels. As Rose Balestrero in The Wrong Man her world fragments as her husband Manny (Henry Fonda) is unfairly troubled by the legal system. For "Revenge", Elsa Spann's life is turned upside down after a breakdown, precipitated (it seems) by an attack by a stranger. In the Hitchcock examples it is not such a supernatural process as in "Mirror Image", but nevertheless, the process is similar. These characters' downward spirals all involve performance of disengagement from the world around them. "Mirror Image" contains scenes near the end where Millicent is attempting to explain (largely to herself) what has happened to her. She talks of parallel universes, then stares into space, lost in her inability to comprehend.

The supernatural element of 'The Twilight Zone' means the narrative world involves aspects we do not identify as being part of our everyday world and this is what Millicent cannot reconcile. Similarly in The Wrong Man and "Revenge", Miles' characters shut out the world because they cannot deal with what it throws at them. All three of Miles' characters demonstrate an inability to resolve conflicts between their view of the narrative world and how the world actually differs from that view. Millicent breaks down because she thinks another world (the parallel universe) is somehow encroaching on the one she thought she

understood. By its encroachment, the supernatural aspect becomes part of the programme's narrative world.

Miles' specific brand of glamour is also important for this 'generic' 'career woman'. She is beautiful, but not stunningly so. She retains a capacity to downplay her beauty (see in particular Chapter Five). In "Mirror Image", glamour is downplayed primarily through costume. She wears a rather unflattering rain hat which conceals her hair, and a full-length, conservative raincoat that hides her figure.

Along with Rod Serling's voice-over near the beginning and at the end of the narrative, the programme also affords Millicent a brief opportunity to convey her own thoughts in real-time on to the soundtrack. She attempts to explain what is happening to her, after she has seen 'herself' reflected in the rest-room mirror. Its only role seems to be to exclude the possibility Millicent is delusional or ill:

Millicent: I must be sick. I must be running a fever. [She puts her hand to her face and forehead to feel for the effects of this fever] I'm not even warm. I don't have any fever!

This self-awareness reduces the number of explanations for Millicent's predicament and in turn endorses the supernatural/scientific theories expounded later, mostly by Millicent. Unlike Hitchcock's "The Case Of Mr. Pelham", in part, the programme acts to narrow down the list of possible explanations.

Just as Millicent's voice-over begins, Paul appears. For a large part of the programme, he acts as a sounding board for Millicent's further thoughts and is a

useful character in that he prevents the programme from being reliant upon these voice-overs from Millicent.

By the time Millicent is taken away by the police, the narrative has fulfilled many expectations of it as a 'Twilight Zone' story: mystery, parapsychology, a 'scientific' explanation that does not really explain everything. Ending with the introduction of Paul's double is a fine twist as it is not overtly flagged by the rest of the tale. It also happens to contain the most effective moments in the programme.

Paul walks resignedly into the bus depot, observed by the old station manager. He picks up his case from a bench and places it on the floor. He then removes his hat and puts that on the bench. This is all done in one shot, but post-production has effectively turned it into two shots. As Paul places the case on the floor, there is a post-production zoom-in from the wider shot to a close-up of the bag. The same shot as before then reappears as Paul puts his hat down. This engineered close-up of the case guides the viewer's attention to the item which is central to the coming twist.

It is somewhat confusing as to why the creation of this shot seems not to have been possible on set and has become the job of post-production staff. After all, the programme supplies a close-up of the space where the case was, once it has disappeared, so the required camera set-up was achieved. The engineered close-up may well expose the programme-makers' dilemma as to whether the close-up was needed. During filming, the argument that it was not required won out, but after post-production began, minds seem to have changed.

The inclusion of the close-up of the case certainly demonstrates a lack of faith in the audience's ability to absorb the contents of the wider image. Compare this use of close-up, in what is a POV structure echoing Paul's spatial position, with Hitchcock's use of similar techniques in "Revenge". "Mirror Image" uses the close-up to simply say to its audience: 'this object is important, notice it'. Hitchcock, however, often uses close-ups and other framings not only to point up important elements of the image, but to exclude others, or draw attention away from parts of the same image which are also important (see Chapter Three on censorship). "Mirror Image" presents no such complexities of expression.

Within the same shot as before, Paul then walks towards the camera and as he bends down, we see he is stooping to take a drink from a water fountain. As he bends, his body blocks our view of his case. When he straightens up, the case has gone. There follows the close-up of where the case should be. This fine visual shock, accompanied by a sharp sting of music, is followed by some equally fine acting as Paul notices the case has gone. His feelings are expressed without words. Despite attempts at rational explanations, Millicent failed to resolve what has happened to her. Similarly, Paul's reaction to the disappearance of his case cannot be articulated. It is only right that he reacts with a noise to convey his baffled shock.

We cut from the close-up of where the case had been to Paul in close-up as he says 'aahh'. It is a confused, powerful sigh, a perfect expression of his lack of comprehension. He makes a noise in the most non-committal way possible. He opens then closes his mouth in a slack-jawed manner and makes a simple noise with his throat. The noise is not acted upon by his tongue or lips; it is an

unmediated noise from Paul's vocal chords. He knows this is an event meriting a reaction, but this noise clearly demonstrates he is unsure what the reaction should be.

Only once Paul has seen his double running from the bus depot does he have a focus for his reaction, a figure that might help him explain the situation. If only he could catch his double, he might discover just what has happened to him and Millicent. But his double is better than him. He can run faster, he looks younger. What is more, the double knows he is better than Paul. He is able to look over his shoulder and smile at Paul as he escapes into the night. As with Millicent's double who we see sitting in the bus, Paul's double has an air of smug arrogance about him. In Hitchcock's "The Case of Mr. Pelham", the double is also better in every way - he is far more successful in business than the original Pelham (see Chapter Three).

There are many interesting elements in 'Mirror Image' which connect it in various ways to Hitchcock's work on television. It is a story of a doppelgänger; it contemplates sanity and insanity, much like "The Case Of Mr. Pelham". The programme is careful not to make a solid explanation, but clearly wants to explain more than "The Case Of Mr. Pelham", which leaves it fully open-ended (see Chapter Three). "Mirror Image" floats more theories (insanity, illness, a double, someone playing a trick, a parallel universe) but never *fully* commits itself to one. Serling's voice-over at the end of his tale offers the following:

Voice-over: [Rod Serling off-screen] Obscure metaphysical explanation to cover a phenomena [sic]; reasons dredged out of the shadows to explain away that which cannot be explained. Call it parallel planes or just insanity. Whatever it is, you'll find it in the Twilight Zone.

When one considers this, alongside Millicent's earlier voice-over, when she contemplates and refutes the possibility the incident has been caused by illness, one can see the programme's emphasis on supernatural explanations.

The phrasing of the above voice-over is also telling. There is clearly an attempt to shift the audience away from thinking Millicent (and also Paul⁷) to be insane; that would be '*just* insanity', too mundane an explanation. As a show which much more frequently than Hitchcock's dealt with supernatural themes, this vested interest is understandable. However, the programme does not match Hitchcock's in its capacity to maintain an open verdict on what has happened to its protagonist. Hitchcock's presentation resists confirmation of any particular explanation.

Having considered some of the characteristics of the Hitchcock shows in comparison with some of their contemporaries, the initial focus for the analysis to follow is Hitchcock's appearances as genial, warped host of the programmes.

⁷ The twist, which sees Paul victimised in the same manner as Millicent, obviously serves to shift the audience away from the insanity explanation too. One would have to believe in collective or contagious madness.

CHAPTER TWO

“Good Evening” - Hitchcock’s Prologues and Epilogues

For the majority of programmes, Hitchcock’s most important personal contribution to each instalment was his appearances. This role should not be underestimated. He directed every prologue and epilogue, and the filming of these segments involved multiple versions of the same script using different camera set-ups, selected foreign-language versions such as French and German, and also versions which expunged the sponsor-baiting jibes. At a conservative estimate, Hitchcock directed well over one thousand different appearances between 1955 and 1965 (see Grams Jr. et al 2001: 45). Since this thesis primarily considers those programmes directed by Hitchcock, its focus will be on Hitchcock’s appearances before and after those instalments.

Background

Hitchcock's appearances on television were innovative, but not unprecedented. The idea of affording a member of creative personnel some air-time to present their show already had a long history in many media.¹ Cecil B. De Mille, one of the first 'personality' directors, had hosted the 'Lux Radio Theater' for a number of years as a pastiche of the film director. His public image, cultivated alongside his radio work, presented him with jodhpurs, riding crop, calf-length leather boots and large black megaphone.

In the cinema, anthology (or portmanteau) films had been framed by appearances by writers or other luminaries. In the UK, Quartet (1948, Ken Annakin, Arthur Crabtree, Harold French and Ralph Smart, GFD/Gainsborough, U.K.) was introduced by the author of its four tales, W. Somerset Maugham. The success of this film spawned two 'format sequels', Trio (1950, Ken Annakin and Harold French, Rank/Gainsborough, U.K.) and Encore (1951, Pat Jackson, Anthony Pelissier and Harold French, GFD/Two Cities, U.K.). The anthology film did not take long to appear in the U.S.A. One of the first attempts was O. Henry's Full House (1952, Henry Koster, Henry Hathaway, Jean Negulesco, Henry King and Howard Hawks, T.C.F., U.S.A.), introduced by John Steinbeck.

Although performed and directed by Hitchcock, the prologues and epilogues for 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and 'The Alfred Hitchcock Hour' were written by James Allardice. Allardice had been a playwright and worked on a

¹ As Ken Mogg (personal correspondence, 2000) indicated, the plea for an audience's indulgence before the telling of the tale may be traced back to the tales of the Arabian Nights, with Scheherezade as anxious host.

film screenplay of his own Broadway success At War With The Army (1951, Hal Walker, Paramount/Fred K. Finklehoffe, U.S.A.) starring Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. The MCA talent agency signed him up and he began writing short sketches for television shows, including Emmy-award-winning work on the 'George Gobel Show' in 1955. MCA brought Hitchcock and Allardice together and they had an instant affinity through their mutual black sense of humour (McCarty et al 1985: 36). Hitchcock directed Allardice's scripts at Revue studios. According to a number of reports from his colleagues, Hitchcock would attend the studio approximately four times per series to direct anything between fourteen and twenty-four prologues and epilogues in two days (McCarty et al 1985: 39).

Speaking in his 'John Player' address in London (National Film Theatre, 27 March 1967) Hitchcock reported that the original conception of the series 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' was as a showcase for English short story writing (Ken Mogg, MacGuffin website, accessed 5/2/98). Taylor notes that to this end Hitchcock's preliminary involvement with the show included bringing such authors as John Collier and Roald Dahl to the attention of his production team (1978: 209 and 1979: 85).² The emphasis upon Englishness is not only apparent in the show's selection of story material, but also in Hitchcock's introductions.

Hitchcock's presence is the strongest 'English' influence: 'The English, you see, have always had an inborn ability to see the humour in tragedy and to recognise the fine line that divides the two' (in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 44. See note

² Collier's and Dahl's stories were liberally plundered for use in the show. Hitchcock personally directed two by Collier and four by Dahl.

5, p17). His clear intention to create a programme which juxtaposed comedy and tragedy, drawing on a long English tradition of black humour and the macabre, was clear from the beginning. James Allardice was reportedly 'shown' what the tone and approach of the introductions should be by Hitchcock - he screened The Trouble with Harry for the writer to note the film's 'poker-faced English humour on subjects which others are supposed to take very seriously, like death' (Taylor 1978: 207).

Hitchcock also drew on elements of his personal eccentricities to cultivate the persona of the sinister uncle crossed with an English gentleman. As Taylor notes, Hitchcock was aware of the stereotypes he mobilised in the show:

Since television, he [Hitchcock] felt, deals in stereotypes, it was the perfect place for the stereotyped view of him and what he did - which otherwise he might rather resent - to be turned to advantage. He wanted the shows ... to live up exactly to what people expected when they saw his name - thrillers with a twist in the tail, outrageously cynical black comedy. (Taylor 1978: 209)

With his constant uniform of dark suit and tie, Hitchcock the man's funereal outfit was perfect for the macabre themes of the shows and the introductions which presented Hitchcock the persona. Numerous introductions refer specifically to Englishness, including some considered below. "Wet Saturday" (Tx. 30/9/56) uses the English love of tea-drinking, playing it off the equivalent American 'institution' of the commercial break. "The Perfect Crime" (Tx.

20/10/57) is introduced by Hitchcock sending up the great English detective character Sherlock Holmes. The introductions' use of the macabre and grotesque ranges from the description of the series' premier programme "Revenge" (Tx. 2/10/55), a tale of implicit rape, as 'really a sweet little story' to Hitchcock's hobby of collecting shrunken heads prefacing "Back For Christmas" (Tx. 4/3/56). As just one of many examples of Hitchcock's personal tendency towards the grotesque, Donald Spoto writes: "I hate to say it", said Hitchcock, obviously not hating to say it all, "but I always thought a good red wine put into one's mind the thought of menstrual blood." (Spoto 1983: 403). Hitchcock's appearances involved many examples of the inclusion of taboo or distasteful elements. None were as shocking as those remarked upon by Hitchcock in real life perhaps, but they followed in the tradition he set.

The music chosen as the theme for 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' was by Gounod, "Funeral March of a Marionette". It was selected by Hitchcock after he heard it used for F. W. Murnau's silent classic Sunrise (1927, Fox, U.S.A.). On Murnau's orders, it had been used to soundtrack 'the sequence involving the young couple and a photographer' (Spoto 1983: 371). It is an element of the show which, like Hitchcock's appearances, was crucial to the programmes' tone. Its 'tip-toeing melody', played on woodwind and pizzicato strings, conveyed the balance of the sinister and the playful, the tragic and the comic, embodied by the constructed persona of Hitchcock and the show moulded in his image.

Furthermore, the macabre music echoed the show's narratives and their frequent presentation of traumatic events bursting into the lives of ordinary people. Such a

general description fits most of the tales, particularly the debut episode “Revenge”.

Hitchcock’s film cameos and the television appearances

Hitchcock’s introductions developed his on-screen persona but they had a precedent within his own movie work. They build upon the image seen fleetingly in most of his motion pictures beginning with The Lodger, A Story of the London Fog (1926, Gainsborough, U.K.). Charles Barr (1999) states that Hitchcock’s adoption of the film cameo was influenced by the ‘appearance’ of Dale Collins in his novel which served as the basis for Hitchcock’s Rich and Strange (1931, British International Pictures, U.K.): Collins wrote himself into his own book and interacts with the main characters before and after their international adventures (Ibid: 122).

It will not have escaped the notice of Hitchcock-spotters that the tone of his film appearances was often humorous or mischievous. In Blackmail (1929, British International Pictures, U.K.), Hitchcock played an Underground passenger harassed by an unruly child. Strangers on a Train (1951, Warner Bros./First National, U.S.A.) presented Hitchcock attempting to board a train with an awkward load: a cased double-bass. In the year that his television shows began, Hitchcock was the subject of one of Cary Grant’s bluntest comedy glances on the back seat of a bus in To Catch a Thief (1955, Paramount, U.S.A.), accompanied by suitably whimsical music. In this manner, Hitchcock’s film appearances set the humorous and playful tone for his television persona.

A smaller number of Hitchcock's cameos in his films were linked with the narratives or themes of the films in which they occur. In Notorious (1946, R.K.O., U.S.A.), he is seen drinking champagne at Alex's (Claude Rains) party. The amount of champagne left for Alex's guests is an important suspense issue. Alicia (Ingrid Bergman) and Devlin (Cary Grant) need to escape the party, break into the wine cellar and discover the secrets behind its locked door. By drinking champagne, Hitchcock is aiding in their discovery by Alex and his butler, since they must go to the cellar to re-stock supplies, whilst Alicia and Devlin search for clues. One of Hitchcock's most mischievous appearances, Notorious exemplifies his ability to entangle his cameo with the fabric of the film's narrative situation, an important issue which will be discussed at length with regard to some of his television introductions.

Hitchcock's appearance in Strangers on a Train can be viewed as another example of the theme of the double that pervades the film. Hitchcock carries the instrument, the double-bass, that most accurately 'doubles' his appearance in terms of bulk and silhouette. Along with his 'Reduco' slimming advert appearance in Lifeboat (1944, 20th Century-Fox, U.S.A.), this is perhaps the strongest indication from his cameos that Hitchcock was acutely aware of his physically grotesque appearance. Hitchcock would continue to exploit this perception of himself as ugly and unattractive to women in his television appearances for comic effect.

Industry perks and drawbacks

The filmic glimpses of Hitchcock pale in comparison to the frequent exposure afforded to him by television. For almost every week of every year for a decade, Hitchcock could be seen at the beginning and end of his television programmes.³ They are the single most important aspect of Hitchcock's career as regards fixing and creating the image of Hitchcock in the public imagination.

The appearances made Hitchcock a property whose name, likeness and endorsement could be sold and re-sold across the media. In addition to numerous publishing contracts using Hitchcock's name, his work in television spawned a plethora of products, from board games to long-playing records (see Grams Jr. et al 2001: 87-95, for examples of this marketing).

However, the Hitchcock appearances' most important industry-related role was in terms of censorship. The programmes were scrutinised by two main official bodies: the Motion Picture Production Code and the Bureau of Standards and Practice (run by the television networks) (McCarty et al 1985: 44). Both of these bodies took a dim view of successful criminals, a problem for a show dealing frequently in crime tales with a twist. As Norman Lloyd reports:

Our crime *does* pay endings created quite a stir with the network censors.

... In order to inject the proper measure of irony - which was the key

ingredient in the Hitchcock show - it was often necessary for the bad guy

³ When new programmes were not being made for the summer schedules, the networks chose approximately a dozen instalments to repeat. The programme was rarely dropped from the schedules, usually in exceptional circumstances (for example, the Kennedy assassination).

to appear to prevail. It would have been more difficult to get that ironic twist in at the end with the use of a so-called 'happy ending'. As a result, there was a total necessity for a disclaimer. (in McCarty et al 1985: 44-5)

Hitchcock called the epilogues, these disclaimers, a 'necessary gesture to morality' (Ibid: 45). In fact, the retributions meted out on the successful villains were 'actually worse than having none at all' (Lloyd quoted in Ibid: 45). Frequently, they were designed to conjure up thoughts in viewers' imaginations which would otherwise have lain dormant. The criminals were often aptly despatched in a similar way to their victims within the teleplay narrative. For example, Arthur Williams (Laurence Harvey) in "Arthur" (Tx. 27/9/59), it is implied, is pecked to death by a hungry flock of man-size hens after feeding his ex-fiancée to them within the story. Similarly, Mr. Princey (Sir Cedric Hardwicke) in "Wet Saturday" is the victim of his murderous daughter (Tita Purdom) as she goes into a trance and re-enacts her murderous crime of passion, only this time with such ferocity that the weapon, a croquet mallet, is broken by Princey's head.

Even when the criminal is caught by the authorities (rather than killed in a further twist), they are trapped in ironic situations that conjure up further horrors. Charles Courtney (Vincent Price) in "The Perfect Crime" is discovered as a murderer when his victim's teeth are found in the fabric of a vase, accidentally smashed by his cleaning woman. Mary Maloney (Barbara Bel Geddes) in "Lamb To The Slaughter" (Tx. 13/4/58) attempts to re-enact her crime on her second husband but the meat is insufficiently frozen to bludgeon

him to death. This latter example leaves us with the distasteful image of someone being beaten with a large, wet, fleshy leg of lamb: Hitchcock says ‘The meat was soft as jelly’.

The main objective of the chapter is to investigate and assess the role of Hitchcock’s personal appearances before and after the narratives. The chapter will consider the achievements made within the appearances, including: the implications they have for the cinematic treatment of space, setting, time, television and ‘live-ness’; their relationship and allusion to the narratives and their themes; their role in setting the tone for each narrative; Hitchcock’s personal achievement in his performance; their ability to make us laugh, albeit often at Hitchcock’s expense.

“Arthur”

*Interviewer: If you were going to be murdered,
how would you choose to have it done?*

Hitchcock: Well there are many nice ways: eating is a good one.

(Crawley et al 1966 in LaValley 1972: 27)

Synopsis

Arthur Williams (Laurence Harvey), a New Zealand chicken farmer, relates the tale of his perfect murder in flashback. He was engaged to Helen (Hazel Court), a manipulative gold-digger. One day, she announces she is seeing

Stanley Braithwaite, and is going to marry him. They part acrimoniously, but Arthur gets used to being alone, buying labour-saving equipment and enjoying solitude for over a year. He shows his new gadgets to John Theron (Patrick Macnee), a local police detective who visits.

Arthur's solitary existence is interrupted by Helen's unheralded return. He is enraged by her slobbish ways, her audacity and her disruptive presence. After she admits to Arthur she would rather be dead than be out on the streets, Arthur strangles her.

Approximately two weeks later, John visits again in his professional capacity. He questions Arthur but his story is convincing. Arthur realises the case means nothing if the police cannot find Helen's body.

John returns later with Inspector Ben Liebenberg (Robert Douglas). They leave none the wiser and place Arthur under surveillance. Arthur decides to fake an escape by staying in local caves for three days. On his return, he finds the police wrecking his farm. Arthur says he was looking for Helen in the caves, but he got lost there himself. Unable to prove Arthur's guilt, the investigation winds down.

Returning to the present, Arthur concludes his story by reporting his friendship with John Theron. Impressed by the taste of a gift of some cockerels, John asked for Arthur's secret chicken-feed recipe. Arthur shared the ingredients with him, except one: Helen's pulverised remains.

Of the eighteen appearances made by Hitchcock for his self-directed television shows, the appearances for "Arthur" constitute the most conscious

example of integration of themes between narrative and prologue and epilogue. Hitchcock introduces issues developed within the drama. A major factor in this synthesis is the strong sense of affinity Hitchcock creates through his use of visual style (for example, particular camera movements) and privileged mode of audience address.

After the introduction, Arthur looks directly into camera as he begins to tell his story. He is permitted to speak to the audience directly, an exclusive mode of address usually only afforded to Hitchcock. It is the only sustained and unequivocal example in Hitchcock's whole body of work where he allows a character to address the camera in this way.

At the end of the flashback narrative, we return to Arthur as he gives his final piece to camera. He leans nonchalantly against a large grain silo with his hands in his pockets and his head cocked back on one side. Once he has finished speaking, Arthur turns on his hammer mill and then Hitchcock appears again. In order to punish Arthur for his crime and ostensibly appease the censors, Hitchcock tells how Arthur was tragically pecked to death by man-sized chickens. As he speaks Hitchcock is leaning just like Arthur, his head cocked back and to one side.

These similarities in presentation invite us to draw parallels between Arthur and Hitchcock. In one particular way, Arthur can be seen as a surrogate Hitchcock in the narrative which follows. Both Arthur and Hitchcock share strong tendencies for highly organised, habitual behaviour. Hitchcock was well-known as a creature of habit. For example, he would wear the same dark suit and tie every day, even when he was working in Los Angeles in the summer (Taylor

1978: 139). He would go to the same restaurant for dinner whenever in Los Angeles (Ibid: 138-9). He and his wife Alma returned to the same place, the Palace Hotel in Saint Moritz, for Christmas every year they could, after their honeymoon there in 1926 (Ibid: xii & 57). For his part, Arthur makes references to his routines and how Helen's return to the farm has upset them all. Once he realises how disruptive Helen's presence can be, he says to her in a determined and angry voice: 'I like my life the way it is now. And I won't have any changes'.

Hitchcock and Arthur also share strong, obsessive impulses to keep their houses clean. Hitchcock said in interviews that after he uses the bathroom, it is spotless, as if nobody had ever been in (Spoto 1983: 423). Alma Hitchcock once said of him: 'Hitch is neat to the point of obsession'. She said that Hitchcock described himself as an 'ashtray emptier' (Ibid: 115). As for Arthur, his obsession with household cleanliness is clear from his horrified reactions to Helen's dirty habits. During just one evening, she manages to soil several parts of his house and Arthur fumes with anger as she creates more and more mess.

Bearing in mind these similarities between Hitchcock and Arthur, the introduction also raises themes which are picked up and developed by the narrative of "Arthur". The introduction takes place on an unconvincing hen house set, linking in with the main narrative, set on a New Zealand poultry farm, through Hitchcock's risible decision to 'go into the egg business'. Five years after Mrs. Stevens (Jessie Royce Landis) was seen to nonchalantly stub a cigarette into the sticky yolk of a fried egg in To Catch a Thief, this introduction gives Hitchcock another opportunity to 'express his unending hatred of eggs'

(Taylor 1978: 205). Peter Conrad (2000) also notes Hitchcock's 'mistrust of eggs which are, after all, excreted by hens' (241). The introduction is not as contemptuous as Mrs. Stevens' action towards eggs, but is interesting in its implications. Hitchcock attempts to induce his hens to lay eggs with squared edges. As he says:

Hitchcock: Its advantages are obvious. No more eggs rolling off the table. Valuable storage space saved in the refrigerator ... but the hens seem rather slow at grasping new ideas.

Hitchcock uses the absurdist humour of the introduction to link into the main narrative of "Arthur" in a way which goes beyond their common use of poultry farming. He achieves this through the presentation of the very first moments of the programme. As with the previous instalments of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents', the familiar pan to the right begins this show, searching out Hitchcock. The expectation that Hitchcock will be found at the end of this camera movement has been built over 151 previous programmes. Within those instalments, there are other exceptions to this rule, but the prospect of Hitchcock being found at the end of the pan right is more often fulfilled than subverted. Instances of subversion of the norm thus become more striking.

At the beginning of "Arthur", the pan right discovers a hen, nestled in straw on a shelf in the mock hen house. To emphasise this unusual discovery, the camera lingers on the hen for a moment, then continues its search for the

expected figure of Hitchcock. He finally comes into view, found by the roving camera, leaning against the wooden wall.

Whilst undoubtedly contributing to the introduction's comedic tone by undermining audience expectation, the hen's appearance also alludes to the central narrative circumstance of "Arthur" and Arthur's method of body disposal. In the introductory pan, a hen has replaced a human (Hitchcock). In "Arthur", the hens consume a human, replacing and recycling Helen. Already, visual and thematic parallels are being drawn between Hitchcock and Arthur.

Furthermore, the character that is consumed by hens (Helen) has a name closely resembling the word 'hen'. The Helen character in the original short story, on which the television programme is based, was called Susan. The programme-makers decided to change her name to Helen, and the choice is inspired. The name Helen is sufficiently different from the word 'hen' not to be completely obvious that some connection between the two is being implied. Her name is not 'Henrietta', for example, a choice which would make the association too obvious. The name change from Susan to Helen emphasises the interchangeability of the hens and Helen.

Consumption is a key theme in "Arthur". The introduction provides a clue to the theme which the narrative picks up and works through at greater length. The narrative is also concerned with what follows consumption: digestion. The programme creates a web of consumers and digesters. At the start of the narrative, Arthur kills, cooks and then is seen eating one of his hens, an example of the normal pattern of human consumption. Helen's dead body is later consumed and 'digested' by Arthur's hammer mill. The mill is a mechanical

representation of the human digestive system. The hens then consume Helen's body, digest her and convert her into fine meat. Finally, Arthur gives some of the hens fed on Helen's flesh as a Christmas present to his friend Sergeant Theron. Once the Sergeant eats the birds, he will think of it as normal consumption, which it is. But it is also the closest he will ever come to cannibalism. So the programme provides direct examples and metaphorical versions of consumption and digestion.

But what about the end product of these processes: bodily waste?

Obviously, human waste is not shown. That would not get past the censors, but the programme contains some metaphors for and allusions to waste and the processes which involve its excretion. The concept of the square egg in the introduction is the first example of this. The joke raises ideas of defecation. Certainly, the square-egg idea is funny, but some of the humour in the concept relies on connotations of extreme bodily discomfort. The square egg is alluding to the process of egg-laying in hens which has many elements in common with human defecation. Despite Hitchcock's disappointment in the hens' unwillingness to lay square eggs, their reluctance is understandable considering the pain it would cause. The square egg hints at, but does not mention, the likely agony caused by trying to squeeze such an object out of one's body.

The introduction implicitly links the two processes of hens laying eggs and humans defecating through the square-egg joke. The three shared aspects of these two different processes are:

1. they are both acts of expulsion, they rid the body of an object;

2. they both require effort and (in the case of square eggs at least) some discomfort;
3. the results of both processes appear below the waist, in the taboo area close to or involving sexual organs.⁴

However, the introduction only alludes to the human act of defecation, the procedure itself, not to the product of that procedure.

Similarly, within the narrative of “Arthur”, there are no direct references to waste. The closest the programme gets to showing waste on-screen is Helen and her dirty habits. Helen has no sense of guilt at the messy by-products of her presence. She does not realise how much her mess bothers Arthur, she considers him far too fussy. When she has returned from her lover, she and Arthur have a meal, after which Helen leaves the washing-up because ‘we can wash them in the morning; what’s the difference?’ ‘Apparently none!’ replies Arthur in a voice of suppressed anger. Helen stubs her cigarette out in Arthur’s white porcelain bowl, even though she is aware it is not an ashtray. As Conrad (2000) has noted in Hitchcock’s movies, ‘A woman wielding a cigarette is almost as frightening, in Hitchcock’s estimation, as a woman behind the wheel of a car. In either case the female is ignited, placed on the offensive’ (242). The female smoker as threat marks Helen out as a presence that must be neutralised.

But Helen is not shown once she has been really made into waste - we do not see her corpse. Instead, while she is alive she represents waste in human

⁴ The anatomy of a hen literally equates the laying of the egg with defecation. Although both functions have their own bodily aperture, the results of both emerge very close together, from behind the hen’s cloaca.

form. In comparison, Arthur's life is dedicated to the elimination of waste of all kinds. He does not even waste time or energy: he saves both with the handy devices on his one-man farm. Crucially, Arthur's obsessive need to reduce waste provides some of the motivation to murder Helen. Their dreadful incompatibility is centred on Helen's remarkable capacity to produce waste and Arthur's struggle to avoid or eliminate it.

Arthur's reasoning for murdering Helen can be heard in dialogue just before he strangles her:

Arthur: If I threw you out, you'd be miserable.

Helen: I'd rather be dead!

Arthur: A very wise decision I think, my dear, and the least I can do for old times' sake [He closes in behind and begins to throttle her] is grant it!

The conversation provides the context in which Helen is first defined as waste, and then turned into it through murder. Arthur helps Helen to define her life as pointless, just before he puts an end to it.

It has already been noted how the introduction draws parallels between the processes of egg-laying in hens and human defecation. One of the major differences is the end products of each process. The hen's egg-laying produces a useful result to be eaten or, if impregnated, form new life. In comparison, defecation has no such positive or productive results. It produces a threat to hygiene and health. By linking defecation to egg-laying, the introduction is also implicitly comparing eggs to faeces. It certainly seems Hitchcock's well-known

personal hatred for eggs is at work here, but by linking eggs with waste, the introduction also conveys an implicit fear of femininity, as well as anxiety over human waste and defecation.

The fear of the female capacity to produce an exclusively feminine type of human waste is also contained in the narrative. It is a theme discussed elsewhere by writers on Hitchcock's movie work. Conrad (2000) notes: '...for Hitchcock, the messy fluency [of domestic dripping, droppage and spillage] is associated with women... The female body is a leaky sac of fluids' (244). Helen becomes the personification of mess and waste. Her nonchalant behaviour as she steadily soils Arthur's home drives him to distraction. Helen is not just associated with mess because she is clumsy and reckless. The fact Helen is a woman adds to her natural ability to soil Arthur's surroundings. As has been noted, the human expulsion of bodily waste is linked to the productive and reproductive expulsion of hen's eggs by the introduction. Helen's womanhood associates her with both the expulsion of waste and more productive kinds of expulsion. She is human and so she defecates, but as a female she also menstruates. Obviously human menstruation is not quite like a hen's. An unfertilised hen's egg is still useful, a product in its own right. When Helen produces an unfertilised egg, it has failed to serve its purpose in creating new life. The egg's potential as a life source has not been realised. Helen's ovulation is not a useful end-product. She poses a greater threat to Arthur's clean and organised environment because her femaleness means she is a 'leaky sac' with superior potential to create waste.

When one considers Arthur's own sexuality, it is difficult to describe his characterisation without using the word 'camp'. Laurence Harvey's performance consistently endorses a homosexual reading of the character. That is not to say Arthur should be seen as or considered as homosexual. As William Rothman has commented during his discussion of Handell Fane in Murder! (1930):

I believe there is no major figure in a Hitchcock film who takes himself to be a homosexual ... They view themselves not as desiring one another, but as joined in denying all love (1982: 82)

The observation is consistent with the character of Arthur. He is essentially an isolated figure in *all* aspects of his public and private life on a self-sufficient farm.

Arthur is coded as homosexual through a number of specific traits, rather than being unequivocally 'outed' by the programme. His desire for control is one crucial aspect of this coding. His control can be seen in his narcissism and extreme neatness. He is house-proud to an extent usually associated with women: he owns knickknacks and tea-sets. His home is certainly not a masculine space. He exudes a self-confident air which often verges on arrogance, but this may be read in a positive light, as his expression of defiance against a society which too often condemns those who are different. His self-possessed nature is both a celebration of his difference and a ready-made defence against possible detractors. Arthur's campness is central to understanding the programme's expression of fear of the female. Arthur has been presented as a camp character

so the idea of recoil from Helen might become more acceptable and believable. If Arthur were to kill Helen solely because she makes a mess in his home, we might consider him rather too readily motivated. Arthur's equivocal sexuality adds another dimension to his purpose.

As Arthur eats his roast chicken dinner near the beginning of the programme, his words introduce the idea of sexual difference and emphasise the differences between himself and Helen. He speaks to camera in a frontal medium shot, sat at a table with his meal in front of him:

Arthur: ...Helen believed in her own golden rule: Every man for himself.

... Of course, in her case it was different: it was every woman. Perhaps you'd understand it better if I told you exactly how it happened...

[Flashback narrative begins.]

The monologue indicates that sexuality has a role to play in the story which is about to unfold. The 'golden rule' is only altered in terms of sexuality or gender. The monologue raises this topic just as the story, as told by Arthur, is about to begin, placing it at an important transitional moment in the programme. Its position just before the flashback emphasises its importance in the interpretation of the story to follow.

"Arthur" is one further step on from two earlier programmes also directed by Hitchcock: "Lamb To The Slaughter" and "The Perfect Crime". "Arthur" picks up from where these programmes left off, developing the themes into an even more disturbing tale of murder, consumption and violation of the human

body. The final touch in “Arthur” comes when Arthur turns on his hammer mill and we hear its engine roar. Apart from providing the last clue to the audience as to how he got rid of Helen’s body, the machine is a fitting prop with which to end this tale of consumption and bodily functions. The machine mimics the natural human process of consumption and digestion. The large hopper at the top is like a mouth. The machine’s industrial, neat body disguises the grinding process (digestion) that goes on inside. And once again we are spared the sight of the end product of this process: there is no soiled and messy exit chute to demonstrate defecation. All is neat, tidy and spotlessly clean.

However, we do have the noise of the hammer mill. Arthur has used it to grind up Helen’s body, to process it and rid his life of her wasteful presence. So not only is the hammer mill there as an allegory for the digestion process, it is also a waste disposal unit. With the push of a button, its mechanism can be set to work on getting rid of the waste Arthur must hide.

In this way, the hammer mill resembles a toilet. The purging bellow of the machine replaces the sound of flushing water. It would be another year before Hitchcock would show a real toilet to such controversial effect in Psycho. In “Arthur”, the hammer mill is an appropriate substitute. It maintains the programme’s interest in consumption and digestion and also continues to elide the visual depiction of defecation or waste. One can see “Arthur” as one step forwards in Hitchcock’s career-long intention to ‘nudge the cinema towards explicitness about the body’s diurnal crimes’ (Conrad 2000: 343). Not only did Hitchcock seek to push this project on film, culminating as Conrad says in the

scene in Family Plot with the chemical toilet (2000: 343), but also in his small-screen career.

Hitchcock revels in the implications of consumption, digestion and cannibalism raised implicitly in “Arthur”. Within the confines of the censorship code, he is able to make connections and set up allusions to taboo and unsavoury subjects. If he had treated these matters explicitly, then “Arthur” would have never made it onto the air. The lack of any more direct allusions to human waste is quite remarkable. In the context of the consumption and digestion metaphors, one might expect some similarly clear allusions to waste. The fact there are none shows how Hitchcock’s presentation of the story, as a flashback presented by Arthur, is itself a reflection of Arthur’s own aversion to waste. If one considers the blatant ways in which Hitchcock draws intentional visual parallels between himself and Arthur during the programme, Arthur’s hatred of waste and mess can also be seen as a reflection of Hitchcock’s similar obsession with cleanliness. Hitchcock’s presentation of this story is not only resonant with Arthur’s character. It says just as much about Hitchcock’s own personal habits.

The story is framed by Arthur in the present. The manner in which these appearances are handled is similar to Hitchcock’s own introduction and conclusion monologues. Arthur is permitted the privilege of addressing the camera directly in the same way as Hitchcock, thus following a different narrative convention to most of Hitchcock’s other television work. Arthur’s pieces to camera have several implications for a reading of the narrative. In terms of the plot and the creation of suspense, Arthur’s first appearance as a storyteller reduces the possibility that the narrative will end with a Hitchcockian twist

which sees Arthur punished. Our first view of him tells us that whatever he will do within the story he is to tell, he will get away with it (notwithstanding the absurd comeuppance meted out through Hitchcock's epilogue). The settings of his first pieces to camera are the same as those used in the flashback narrative, ruling out the possibility that he is speaking in the 'present' from somewhere other than his farm. For example, it is not possible he is talking from prison.

Arthur's monologue to camera also feeds into his characterisation. The often privileged position of a story narrator via disembodied voice-over is further enhanced by his access to his audience through direct address to camera. The confidence and control he exhibits within the narrative is obsessive. Arthur's address to us is another form of control and an extension of his narrative domination. Arthur seems to be dictating narrative events, what is and is not shown.

Hitchcock's own monologues to camera are challenged by Arthur's audacity. Arthur seems to be contesting Hitchcock's role as the source of the story by taking on Hitchcock's mantle. As with the series' searching camera which (usually) alights on Hitchcock, Arthur is similarly found by the travelling camera before his monologue begins. From black, the frame comes up to show a barn full of hens, clucking and milling around. The camera slowly tracks back until Arthur appears frame-right in the foreground, holding the hen which becomes his dinner. The pattern of Hitchcock's introduction is therefore intentionally mirrored in the start of the narrative with the introduction of Arthur. In both instances, we move from hen to human. Both Hitchcock and Arthur need not move a muscle to gain the attention of the camera, so strong is their

magnetism. They are discovered by our investigation, not through their declaration of their presence.

Arthur's monologue acknowledges the rarity of his address to camera, albeit implicitly:

Arthur: [to camera] Greetings! Lovely day isn't it? No doubt you're very surprised to find yourself visiting me here on my poultry farm in New Zealand.

The beginning of the monologue is designed to provide information on the setting of the story to follow. The fact the farm is in New Zealand is something we could not guess without being told, for example, since the programme is set-bound and the landscape featureless. But the real 'surprise' is not that, through the magic of pre-recorded television, we have suddenly been whisked away to New Zealand. The surprise comes from how we are being told about it; by a character we do not yet know who seems to be calling the shots with the same privilege as Hitchcock.

Arthur's first sentence shows his knowledge of the televisual apparatus, its ability to record and re-order events, to alter the associations between time and space. He is aware of the fakeness of the situation in which he is giving this speech to camera, similar to Hitchcock's declaration of this unreality in his introductions each week. Hitchcock expresses his knowledge of his phoney situation with unrealistic sets and his incongruous dark suit 'costume' within these supposed environments.

Arthur's language pattern is also important in conveying his self-awareness and confidence. For example: his chicken farm is 'completely and perfectly run by one man - myself'. Arthur's words have an undoubted smugness, but also a sense of drama. The sentence withholds its purpose (self-congratulation) until the final word 'myself' which is delivered after a brief yet pregnant pause. Several such pauses punctuate Arthur's speech:

Arthur: ...well-known statesmen, artists - [pause] - people who, shall we say - [pause] - have made their mark. ... I could be quite famous if I chose to be. The reason you've never heard of me - [pause] - is that I succeeded. I succeeded - [pause] - and only failure in the particular accomplishment I'm speaking of - [pause] - brings notoriety.

These pauses are part of Arthur's careful address to his strangely positioned audience. The pauses express his confidence and sense of control over the information he imparts. Although what he is doing at the beginning of the tale is partly a confession of guilt, the tone of his address is not a plea for forgiveness. His pauses convey that he is not being forced by pangs of guilt into confessing to murder. On the contrary, he is revelling in the self-congratulatory glory of it.

It is not only Arthur who is showing his perception of the world of television. Arthur is being played by Laurence Harvey, an actor who would have been well known to a large section of the television audience. During the year of "Arthur"'s release, Harvey had been nominated for a Best Actor Oscar for Room

at the Top (1959, Jack Clayton, Remus, U.K.). Another dimension of knowledge is added by an acknowledgement of Harvey's fame.

Hitchcock's reversal of Arthur's fortunes in his final monologue is absurd and amusing:

Hitchcock: There was a very sad end to our story. Because of the excellent bone, meat and blood-meal Mr. Williams kept⁵ supplying them, his chickens grew to *enormous* size. Then it happened. One day as he shouldered his way through the hungry flock... but it's too awful to describe.

Arthur's perfect crime goes undetected, but a by-product of his murder provides a suitable and ironic rough justice. The hen's '*enormous size*' now requires Arthur to 'shoulder' his way through to feed them. The hens have turned the tables by becoming man-size, living up to the adage 'You are what you eat'. Helen has returned in the form of the flock to wreak an ironic, highly improbable revenge.

Arthur's death is also a reassertion of Hitchcock's control. The fact Hitchcock's epilogue is so outlandish is beside the point. Not only does his report of Arthur's unpleasant demise put Arthur in his place, it also re-injects Hitchcock's black humour into proceedings, replacing Arthur's smug arrogance.

⁵ Is the use of the word 'kept' here meant to insinuate that Arthur was a mass murderer? Or did Helen's body provide enough feed for a sufficient time to justify the use of this word after just the one murder? We will never know.

Hitchcock's epilogue might ruthlessly despatch Arthur as so much chicken-feed, but Hitchcock delivers Arthur's sentence in a detached manner. The comedy of the epilogue reasserts Hitchcock as the dominant story-teller, but this same comedy also undermines the message that 'crime does not pay'. One need only look at the similarities in presentation of Hitchcock and Arthur to discern an implied affinity between them. Some of these similarities have already been noted above, but the parallels continue to be made right to the end. As Arthur begins his final piece to camera, after a dissolve from the final flashback image, he leans against one of his large storage vats. His head is cocked back and to frame-right (his left). Although he does not lean against the background set, Hitchcock's stance during his epilogue echoes Arthur's. Hitchcock stands with his head similarly cocked back and to the right. Hitchcock is implying a kinship with Arthur which goes deeper than their shared storyteller roles.

In his appearances for "Arthur", Hitchcock raises a complex set of issues. Some of these issues are raised specifically by his own directorial input, others are conveyed through James Allardice's sharp and vibrant scripting. In its complexity of theme and important links to the main narrative, the introduction and epilogue of "Arthur" is central in Hitchcock's television work. However, other programmes use the Hitchcock appearances to different but no less interesting effect.

Setting the tone

“Revenge”

At the beginning of the series, Hitchcock’s introduction for “Revenge” is short and to the point, but revealing about the drama to come, his attitude towards it, and also the attitude with which we as an audience are expected to watch. The camera seeks Hitchcock out with a pan right (a regular feature of the shows’ commencement; it has already been demonstrated how the show was able to subvert our expectations with this pan right - see the section on “Arthur” above for example). The camera maintains a respectful medium-shot distance from its subject. There is little sense of intimacy, more a feeling of Hitchcock in his role as affable, yet unapproachable host. Hitchcock seems to be standing at an off-screen table, an iron-work chair partially visible to his left. He talks to camera:

Hitchcock: Tonight’s playlet is really a sweet little story. It is called “Revenge”.

Hitchcock’s use of diminutives (‘playlet’ and ‘little’) downplays the serious issues of the programme. His inclusion of ‘really’ also implies that something within the narrative may contradict this claim for its ‘sweet’-ness. His final sentence quoted above adds further irony by stating the title, a single, powerful word which carries connotations of spite and hatred. The inclusion of both ‘revenge’ and ‘sweet’ also evokes the saying ‘revenge is sweet’. The kind of

revenge taken in the narrative is less than sweet; the introduction is misleading in an impish, knowing manner. Hitchcock pronounces the 'V' of "Revenge" by drawing his thick bottom lip up between his teeth, relishing the word with a tinge of sadistic glee which echoes the introduction's overall tone.

Hitchcock insinuates that the programme to come is an innocuous, benign piece of light and frothy entertainment. It is undoubtedly entertaining but Hitchcock's tone intentionally belies the issues which are raised within the narrative in a mischievous manner. The device allows him to impose his own reading upon the material, one at odds with the evidence of the programme. It also competes with the other 'framing' of the narrative provided by the show's sponsors (at this time Bristol-Myers). Through deprecatory remarks towards the consumerist intrusions of advertisements, Hitchcock conversely serves to reduce their importance in relation to the programme. Therefore, although the story is introduced as unimportant by Hitchcock, the advertisements are presented as of even less importance (except in terms of revenue).

The introduction to "Revenge", as the first in the series, sets the tone for the rest of the programmes. The majority of introductions are in the mischievous, misleading, ironic and detached vein witnessed before "Revenge". There are exceptions to this tone which are significant through their rarity, exceptions considered elsewhere in this thesis. However, "Revenge" provides a broad blueprint for Hitchcock's appearances.

Television, film and theatre - Hitchcock's club

[On Hitchcock's film cameos - they] do not inscribe passive, unconscious audiences through cultural constraints but rather engage audiences on a conscious, contractual, elective basis. (Thomas Leitch 1991: 10)

'These clubs are terribly exclusive ... I am the club's only bunny'.

Hitchcock, scripted by Allardice, introduction to "I Saw The Whole Thing" ('The Alfred Hitchcock Hour').

"Revenge" also instigates another theme within Hitchcock's appearances which occurs throughout the series. Allardice's scripts often allude to and toy with the facts of television itself: its production, distribution and transmission. A number of appearances are made ironic, witty and mischievous through intelligent play with these facts. They also seek to confuse the relationship between audience and programme. The series is presented as if it is an exclusive club requiring active subscription on the viewer's part. The show is 'marketed' through the appearances as something akin to a theatrical film. This hybridity of form is echoed in the production of the show, as pieces of drama recorded on celluloid, post-production edited on said film stock, yet transmitted as television. The above quote from Thomas Leitch couches Hitchcock's film cameos in his overall discussion of Hitchcock's game-playing relationship with his audience (1991). Hitchcock's television appearances frequently extend this

The Hitchcock show was filmed at Revue Studios (the Universal Studios back lot) on 35mm film stock (Lloyd 1993:183). Similarly, Hitchcock's introductions were filmed in advance for inclusion before and after the dramas which they book-end. However, the Hitchcock show was being produced in an era which had witnessed a rapid decline in the number of live television drama anthologies. Hitchcock's introductions frequently allude to this popular television drama format, highlighting their theatrical origins. There is a playful attempt to keep the audience on its toes by implying 'live-ness' where none exists. The result of this mischief is the creation of a sense of hybridity, of a filmed show pretending to be live, and the creation of a running in-joke, comforting and rewarding to regular viewers and still humorous for the occasional Hitchcock 'subscriber'. These and further implications are discussed with reference to a number of examples below.

"Revenge"

"Revenge" begins this trend as Hitchcock is about to introduce his very first programme to be aired:

Hitchcock: [The story] will follow... [he looks off-camera]. Oh dear, I see the actors won't be ready for another sixty seconds. However, thanks to our sponsors' remarkable foresight, we have a message that will fit in here nicely.

At the end of the very first introduction in the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series, Hitchcock ushers in this 'sweet little story' about implied rape and violent retribution with yet more playfulness. Hitchcock knows full well the story to follow is not 'sweet'. He also knows it has been filmed in advance and then put through post-production. However, his introduction implies two things: that his introduction is being transmitted live, and that the presentation to follow will also be live. It soon becomes clear to viewers that "Revenge" has not been produced live in the studio. Those who do not realise this immediately through the quality of the images (considerably more challenging on a mid-50s television monitor than with today's technology) will discover the programme's filmed status later through Hitchcock's use of montage. Hitchcock is playing with audience expectations, implying a purely fictional 'live-ness'. He is also asserting control. Hitchcock's implicit assertion that the programme is live invites the audience to prove Hitchcock wrong. By watching carefully and assessing what we see, we realise he was joking and our level of knowledge about the programme's true means of production will catch up with Hitchcock's. The introductions create a distancing, ironic humour, but they also place Hitchcock as the person in charge.

The introduction implies a theatrical event is about to take place. Unlike a filmed story, which can be shown and re-shown at any time, as long as one has the correct facilities, live television theatre begins at a specific time. Its performance is scheduled and that schedule must be kept by all concerned (the actors *must* be ready). By implying 'live-ness' for his programme, Hitchcock is according his show some of the importance of an event. Like Psycho, the

audience must see it from the beginning. In reality, the audience can join the programme at whatever time they wish. They know this; Hitchcock knows this, but if they want to be fully-fledged members of Hitchcock's club, then they must be on time.

“Mr. Blanchard's Secret”

Hitchcock's introduction for “Mr Blanchard's Secret” raises and expands on the issue of ‘live-ness’. Hitchcock explains at the end of his monologue that we must have an advertisement break ‘to divert you’ while ‘our cast scrambles for places behind the curtain’. The introduction jokingly codes the programme as live, but in addition, elements of the viewers' world begin to impinge on the fictional, recorded world where Hitchcock resides. Earlier in the introduction, Hitchcock stands with an umbrella over his head. Water falls down on it and he speaks:

Hitchcock: Good evening, friends. Would you all please examine the tops of your television sets and see if one of you doesn't find a goldfish bowl with a crack in it? [He puts out a hand to check for rain. It stops.] Thank you. By the way, I have been asked to announce that some of you are missing this programme unnecessarily. You have moved and not kept us informed of your address, so we don't know where to send the show to you. I hope you'll take care of that matter at once.

The introduction intentionally misrepresents the relationship between television and viewer for comic effect. The viewer is told he or she can affect what happens on-screen (by pouring water on to the television set). The audience is also told the programme is something they must choose to receive. It is narrow-cast to households which subscribe.

The purpose of this introduction is primarily humorous, and yet it draws attention to the audience-programme relationship, emphasising and reinforcing intimacy. Hitchcock pre-empts cable and satellite subscription systems by telling viewers they must subscribe to be sure to receive the show. They are told they are members of an exclusive club, not simply television viewers who happen to be tuned to that channel. Once again, it is implied that the programme is an event. Those who are watching have chosen to watch (since they must subscribe), in the same way the audience of a movie have chosen to visit a cinema to view it.

The closing monologue sees further complication of the concept of dramatic form. Hitchcock's monologue likens the programme to the printed format:

Hitchcock: So much for the fictional feature of our weekly magazine.

Next we turn to a short factual piece. As for myself, I'm continued on the back pages, among the advertisements. [Break for advertisement]

The concluding remarks mention another product, the magazine, which like the theatrical film one must choose to consume. Hitchcock likens his final

appearance to the back pages of such a publication, languishing amongst the advertisements. And yet Hitchcock's monologue can also be seen as an advertisement itself, for 'Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine'. It is also a reference to Babs Fenton's (Mary Scott) occupation in the drama, that of short story writer, dealing in crime and mystery. The mention of magazines ties in logically with both the introductory monologue and the main narrative 'feature'.

"Dip In The Pool"

The introduction to "Dip In The Pool" sees Hitchcock on the set of a ship. A life preserver adorning the ship's railing identifies the vessel as the 'S.S. Hitchcock'. Hitchcock is lying in a deck lounge, draped in a blanket, reading a copy of one of his own anthology books. His monologue once again draws attention to and pretends to misunderstand the technology of television. He explains that the transmission (from the 'ship' to the television sets in the country's living rooms) has only been made possible through one of the 'longest extension cord[s] in history'.

Hitchcock subtly implores the viewers to stay tuned, punning on the word 'channel' in the process. He reports that:

Hitchcock: The Captain informs me that changing channels is not only foolhardy but also extremely dangerous, so I don't believe you ought to try it.

The 'Captain' in this introduction is an oblique reference to the programme's 'sponsor' as a controlling and authoritarian presence. The reference is developed during Hitchcock's appearance after the narrative.

Hitchcock's monologue continues by drawing parallels between the ship's Captain (that is, the fictional, set-bound ship on which he is supposedly sailing). Hitchcock states that:

Hitchcock: Our voyage should be over in a few minutes, but we're approaching rough water. I think I shall move nearer the railing.

Hitchcock's speech likens the programme to the cruise, stating that both will be coming to an end very soon. The 'rough water' to which he refers is the commercial slot which interrupts his monologue. The final sentence above implies that commercial breaks make him nauseous; he must move closer to the railing in order to be in a better position to throw up. Unlike Botibol's seasickness, which is used partly as an indicator of his lack of breeding within the tale, Hitchcock's nausea is another example of his ironic, measured and aloof contempt for his 'sponsor'. The same sponsor will force Hitchcock to play the rear end of a pantomime horse in the epilogue for "The Horseplayer".

After the advertisement break, the camera frames Hitchcock's right side and then tracks back as he stands up. The moment gives the impression that Hitchcock has been bent double over the railing, as if he has been vomiting during the commercial. As he stands up, he reinforces this implication by saying: 'That was worse than I expected!', a statement which also applies to the 'rough

water' in which we are being asked to believe. He then reports that the Captain/sponsor has told him to get off the ship. Once the programme ends, Hitchcock must go, whether the ship is mid-ocean or not. Like the tale's poor Mr. Botibol (Keenan Wynn), Hitchcock leaps off the ship and into the water below. The ending of Hitchcock's epilogue therefore echoes the ending of the drama.

“Bang! You're Dead”

Hitchcock appears in familiar surroundings to deliver his prologue. He stands in the ticket booth of a movie house. It is likely many members of his television audience would have seen images of Hitchcock and even heard his voice in this setting the year before as they queued to see Psycho. The marketing strategy for Psycho included cut-outs of the director stood in cinema foyers and next to ticket booths as public-address systems played recordings of Hitchcock's voice, informing movie-goers they would not be allowed into the theatre once the film had started, and further requesting them not to reveal the ending to those who had not yet seen the film. Later in Hitchcock's introduction to “Bang! You're Dead”, his appearance is similarly used as a platform to dispense advice rather than as a vehicle for black humour.

However, the beginning of the introduction seems as normal. Hitchcock returns to toying with the concept of live versus recorded television and the concept of interaction with the viewer across time and space:

Hitchcock: As usual, all we ask is that on those occasions when you can't view our show that you let us know so that we can send it to someone else. Please don't be a no-show.

In this example, Hitchcock assumes strong loyalty from his followers, who should be considerate enough to inform the network if they cannot watch the weekly Hitchcock helping. In addition, Hitchcock's words imply his programme is a finite resource, produced in the right quantity depending on the number of households wishing to watch (like the number of film-prints produced from the original for distribution to theatres). His is not a broadcast programme, with all of the scatter-shot implications of such a mode of delivery. Instead, the Hitchcock programme is characterised as one which must be chosen and one tailor-made for its select audience. Hitchcock viewers subscribe, they do not tune in.

The normality (even repetition of theme and allusion) in this introduction is soon altered by Hitchcock's comments. After he has "dramatised the title of tonight's play" by firing a joke pistol which unfurls a small flag bearing the word 'BANG', the tone alters. Hitchcock's 'usual flippancy' is replaced by an appeal to consider the following narrative as serious, warning the audience not to 'regard it lightly'.

There are other instances when Hitchcock's appearances plead for the audience to consider serious messages conveyed in the dramas. Grams et al (2001) note how an episode called "Memo From Purgatory" (Tx. 21/12/64) highlighted the 'problem of juvenile gangs' (473). But such comments never

become moralistic and preachy in the same way as ‘The Twilight Zone’ discussed earlier. Whereas much of ‘The Twilight Zone’ drew parallels between its dramas and broad themes relating to ‘the human condition’ (prejudice based on appearance in “Eye Of The Beholder”, nuclear war in “Time Enough At Last”), Hitchcock’s programmes with serious messages dramatised more grounded social issues. “Bang! You’re Dead” does not present possible solutions to the matter of wide gun ownership. It simply uses this fact about American society as a basis for its drama, but does not wring its hands about what should be done about it.

Although this introduction strikes a sombre note, Hitchcock’s final comment again harks back to the publicity and showmanship surrounding one of his most thrilling and sensationalist movies, Psycho:

Hitchcock: Now I must hurry to the theatre, for I don’t want to miss the beginning.

It seems he cannot remain completely serious for long. Hitchcock is no hypocrite. Having restricted film audiences by not allowing them to join the screenings of Psycho once they have begun, he follows his own movie code of conduct. In so doing, he also continues the allusion to his television broadcasts as exclusive narrowcast products. One must elect to go to a theatre to view them. Similarly, the Hitchcock television experience lies somewhere between television and film. The introduction to “Bang! You’re Dead” and the other

examples above, do their best to present the show as a curious hybrid - a television event.

Direct allusions to the narrative

Hitchcock's appearances have been described by television critic John Crosby as 'magnificently irrelevant' (quoted in McCarthy et al 1985: 41). The following examples demonstrate they frequently bear relevance to the narratives they introduce or follow, even those which at first seem simply absurd. These Hitchcock appearances make links with the narratives of the dramas. As with the extended discussion of "Arthur", and the instance from "Dip In The Pool" above, echoes of the drama are to be found within Hitchcock's own pieces to camera. Sometimes such associations are less than subtle; other times, they are delicately inferred.

"The Case of Mr. Pelham"

Hitchcock introduces the drama from a blank studio environment. He expresses his regret that 'tragedy will not strike tonight'. There will be no 'torture or any type of violence'. Instead, the story will concern the 'little insidious devices that can drive a man out of his mind; like putting bubblegum in his coat pocket'.

After the teleplay has ended, Hitchcock appears again, struggling with two men in white coats who hold his arms. He wears a loud and garishly-designed tie, as did the real Mr. Pelham (Tom Ewell) in the story. He pleads with the men as he struggles to get free:

Hitchcock: But I'm Alfred Hitchcock, I am, I can prove it!!

Man in white coat: Sure, sure, everybody is!

Hitchcock: I am, I insist!

The camera then pans left (and one assumes cuts or dissolves in the process) and the image blurs. Again we see Hitchcock (the real one this time?) looking towards the other Hitchcock as he is dragged away.

'Real' Hitchcock: An astounding hoax! He carried off the impersonation brilliantly, except for one thing: bubblegum in his pocket, indeed. Alfred Hitchcock wouldn't be caught dead with bubblegum in his pocket. [A loud gunshot rings out off-screen] Poor chap.

There is little subtlety in these appearances. They echo the narrative explicitly, leaving insinuation to the introductory messages of other programmes.

The most important aspect of Hitchcock's appearances before and after "The Case of Mr. Pelham" is that they allow the Pelham-double to get away with his actions. The narrative is frequently at pains to stress that the Pelham-double has not actually committed a serious crime. The real Pelham notes on a number of occasions that the police would be of little help. The only crime committed by the Pelham-double might be trespass, in the real Pelham's apartment.

By playing down the criminality of the Pelham-double, Hitchcock is able to keep the teleplay completely open-ended. For him to explain how the Pelham-

double was discovered and paid for his crimes would require the imposition of an explanation on the story. It would rule out a number of explanations which would be swirling in the minds of viewers. If the Pelham-double was punishable by the ordinary rule of law, then this would negate the real Pelham's instincts that his double is somehow not of this world.

“Wet Saturday”

The customary pan right at the beginning of “Wet Saturday” does not find Hitchcock, at least not at first. Instead we see a sign resting on an artist's easel which reads ‘Moved to new location’. The panning camera briefly rests on the sign and then pans further to the right. Hitchcock comes into view in long-shot through what seems to be a slot in a door, as if Hitchcock is being held in a prison cell. His voice is echoing, conveying his distance from the camera and his enclosure in the room. He is lying on a curious shelf, his head pointing to frame-left. On the shelf to his left is a silver tea service.

As Hitchcock expresses his satisfaction at his new quarters, there is a cut to a closer framing of him. His voice becomes less distant, more like his normal tone of voice. His words introduce the theme of Englishness and cultural difference, a matter which is raised by the narrative of “Wet Saturday” with its rural English setting and characters:⁶

⁶ “Wet Saturday” is one of four Hitchcock-directed shows set totally or partially in England. The others are “Banquo's Chair”, “The Crystal Trench” (Tx. 4/10/59) and “Back For Christmas”.

Hitchcock: And now, if you don't mind, the time has come for what has become an institution for Britishers, even for those who have been permanently exiled to the barbarous regions of the world. [He begins to pick up the silver teapot]. Oh, speaking of institutions, here is an American one; it is called a commercial.

There are parallels here between "Wet Saturday" and Hitchcock: both are English imports into an American context. Aspects of the English culture, such as fear of social opprobrium, 'causing a scene' and fair play, are central to character motivations and hence the narrative, in "Wet Saturday". Hitchcock's introduction acknowledges his place as a cultural interloper. But he makes no apologies for his Englishness; in fact he assumes his audience would prefer to join in with his tradition (a cup of tea) instead of sitting through the product of their less refined culture (the commercial). Englishness is presented as superior to American-ness.

Once Hitchcock's epilogue has condemned the Princey family members to death or imprisonment in their absence in line with censorship requirements, he returns to take another cup of tea. He is disappointed to discover he has run out of Vermouth. Hitchcock, after strongly asserting his sense of affinity with the English tradition of tea-drinking, finally subverts this image by his mixing spirits with his tea. Plain tea would be far too innocent a beverage for Hitchcock's screen persona. Hitchcock reaches for another container on the shelf and takes out an olive on a cocktail stick. He daintily stirs his tea with it and says 'Fortunately, I still have plenty of olives'. Hitchcock has revealed himself as a

cultural hybrid through his mixture of tea and cocktails. He might be English, but his is a warped, aberrant version of Englishness. Much like the Princey family, in fact. Under the surface veneer of Hitchcock's and the Princey's civility and normality lurk unconventional, elements. Vermouth in tea parallels murder and deceit in rural England.

“One More Mile To Go”

Hitchcock's appearance before the narrative of “One More Mile To Go” is unusual as it takes the form of a poem. He is first seen in a simple head-and-shoulder shot as he says:

Hitchcock: Good evening.

Most of you have doubtless read

How Anne Boleyn lost her head.

King Henry VIII, no longer fascinated said:

‘Let her be decapitated’.

Thereupon the legend goes, her ghost roamed about each night

With utmost dignity and charm

With her head tucked underneath her arm.

The camera tracks back to a medium shot of Hitchcock at this point. In his left hand, he cradles a replica of his own head:

Hitchcock: Now with two heads it occurs to me,

I can think more clearly than with three.

However, if the worst should come,

One head's a basic minimum.

Therefore in my work, I hardly dare

To roam about without one spare.

Tonight's legend tells of modern life

And how to solve a problem - wife!

The tone of the introduction is a careful mixture of humour and the macabre.

There are elements which presage parts of the narrative to come. As with Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, the husband in the story tires of his wife ('no longer fascinated') as a result of her insistent and violent nagging. The form of murder is not as spectacular as decapitation, but is no less effective. Both decapitation and the man's hitting his wife with a poker involve bringing down metal objects on to the head or neck of the victim.

The 'legend' goes on by telling of Anne Boleyn's subsequent haunting, 'with her head tucked underneath her arm'. Although her 'haunting' of her husband is not supernatural, the dead wife's presence as a corpse is the reason for the man's problems in the story. In a real and physical sense at least, the man's wife comes back to haunt him (cf. Hermione in "Back For Christmas").

The tale of decapitation also refers to bodily dismemberment. Since the narrative is concerned with body disposal, this allusion to another possible, gory solution to the problem is teasing and sensationalistic. The shocking images conjured up by the introduction are not fulfilled by the narrative presentation.

The final two lines of the poem are paternalistic, misogynistic and derisory of marriage. They misleadingly state that the teleplay will show how a modern equivalent of Henry VIII might get rid of his 'problem' through murder. In fact, no such solution is found by the murderer in the play. As with all the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' stories with clear-cut criminals, they are caught, even if sometimes, this societal retribution is only conveyed by Hitchcock's closing remarks.

The lead-in is important for its instigation of the call for sympathy for the wife-murderer. The wife is defined as the 'problem' even before she is seen on-screen. Since the argument between the couple is inaudible to us, these words near the end of the introduction do not allow our view of the scene to be impartial, instead, we are encouraged to favour the man. The rest of the narrative continues this support for the wife-murderer through POV structures, editing and unsympathetic characterisation of other characters particularly Steve Brodie's over-helpful, opinionated and insistent state trooper.

"The Perfect Crime"

In the introduction to "The Perfect Crime", Hitchcock appears as a mockery of Sherlock Holmes, dressed in his traditional black suit, black tie and white shirt, but with a deerstalker hat (which is rather small for him) and holding a large curved pipe. As he begins to 'smoke' the pipe, we realise he is blowing bubbles through it. Hitchcock instantly introduces a tone of deadpan frivolity.

The remit of the introduction, deflating the Holmes persona, relates directly to the programme narrative. During "The Perfect Crime", John Gregory

(James Gregory) similarly debunks the reputation of Courtney (Vincent Price), the arrogant and self-centred criminologist. Gregory's success in this endeavour is evinced through Courtney's murderous reaction to the possible trashing of his flawless reputation.

Hitchcock reduces the Sherlock Holmes persona to the most minimal iconography of costume and props. The set primarily consists of a large table-lamp, a small side table and a strongly patterned winged armchair in which Hitchcock reclines in a superior manner. His introductory words make direct reference to the world of Sherlock Holmes: 'Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and Doctor Watson, wherever you are'. Hitchcock proceeds to undermine and make gentle fun of the Holmes persona. After a long and ponderous blow on his bubble-pipe Hitchcock pretends to forget the subject of tonight's drama. He performs his lines to convey an inauthentic dullness of mind:

Hitchcock: Tonight's case is er... [looks up as if searching the far reaches of his brain and blows on his pipe. He gestures with his right hand, a swift pointing gesture as if to say 'Ah, now I've got it!'] Tonight's case is called "The Perfect Crime".

Hitchcock as the great detective is forgetful with a mind that cannot be trusted fully with the title of the narrative to follow. In the narrative, Courtney's reputation is similarly ruined by Gregory's systematic reassessment of the West murder case.

“Back For Christmas”

The lead-in to “Back For Christmas” is one of the more curious instances of macabre humour in ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’. It is barely connected with the narrative of the teleplay and Hitchcock’s monologue admits as much. He also expects his audience will be prepared for his introduction to have little to do with the tale to follow:

Hitchcock: [Holding a shrunken head which is mounted on a short pole and square stand] Oh, good evening ladies and gentlemen, especially the ladies. Now you see what might happen if you fall asleep under the dryer. Shrunken heads are a hobby of mine, collecting them of course, not making them ... As you have no doubt already guessed, tonight’s story has nothing whatsoever to do with shrunken heads.

Despite Hitchcock’s comment that the introduction has no association with the drama to follow, his particular address to the ‘ladies’ ironically and humorously places them in the role of victim. Through carelessness, they might fall foul of the dangers of hairdryers and become part of Hitchcock’s collection of shrunken heads. Hitchcock alters his address after the teleplay; now he talks specifically to the ‘gentlemen’ in the audience:

Hitchcock: I think the lesson of that story is worth repeating. [He makes a dainty spooning/digging motion with his right hand.] Gentlemen: dig deep.

From the introduction's warning to the victim, the lead-out switches to a warning to the prospective perpetrator of murder - hide your tracks better than Herbert Carpenter (John Williams). Through this warning to future spouse-murderers, the epilogue also points to a future in which marriages will continue to be intolerable and in which murder will continue to provide the only hope of escape.⁷

The role of these examples is to provide allusions to the narratives they surround. In doing this, they echo many of Hitchcock's preoccupations, such as Englishness ("Wet Saturday", "One More Mile To Go", "The Perfect Crime") and the perils of married life ("One More Mile To Go", "Back For Christmas"). They also reward the attentive viewer who can draw parallels of theme from the introductions to the dramas.

⁷ Such marriages are a recurring motif in Hitchcock's work and this epilogue provides another example. A Hitchcockian marriage involves frustration and a sense of interminable and unbearable entrapment (often on both sides, but in particular for the male). "Back For Christmas" provides an exemplary presentation of this view of marriage in its narrative about the murderous escape of a hen-pecked husband from his insufferably organised and stifling wife. Other programmes witness characters whose view of marriage echoes this Hitchcockian sensibility, but whose view is proved wrong, such as Babs Fenton in "Mr. Blanchard's Secret". Filmic examples include Inspector Oxford (Alec McCowen) and his wife (Vivien Merchant) in *Frenzy* (1972, Universal, U.S.A.) and the married couple in *Rear Window*. Such unfulfilled marriages are normally at the periphery of Hitchcock's movie narratives, but provide suitable primary material for his television tales, since television involves the scaling down of narrative elements and a greater concentration on the domestic sphere.

Hitchcock's appearance space and the narrative space

Hitchcock's appearances frequently take place in a liminal space, partially discrete from the narrative worlds of the programmes, but frequently associated in some way with those worlds. Often this is achieved by importing bare elements from the narrative world into Hitchcock's world (or vice-versa). In the introduction to "Lamb To The Slaughter" for example, we see Hitchcock in a supermarket, equipped with props used in the programme's narrative. However, Hitchcock does not simply use the same space as that featured in the programme. For Hitchcock's appearance, the space is configured and presented differently. Lighting, mise-en-scène and cinematography are manipulated to adhere to the general codes already established as the way Hitchcock's 'host space' is constructed.

Hitchcock's 'world' follows certain codes and rules. If a prop is required, it is often outsized. For example, Hitchcock poses with a gigantic Yale key in the introduction to "I Saw The Whole Thing". The sets might generally be described as spartan. Even more elaborate sets are intentionally dressed to be unrealistic. We are never expected to believe Hitchcock to be on a mountain ledge or in a real supermarket (in "The Crystal Trench" (Tx. 4/10/59) and "Lamb To The Slaughter" respectively). Only Hitchcock speaks in his world, an indication of the control he maintains over his surroundings. The one exception to this rule is during the epilogue to "The Case Of Mr. Pelham". As he is forcibly carried away by the mental institution orderlies, Hitchcock begs them to believe he is the real Hitchcock and not an impostor. One of the orderlies replies 'Sure, everybody is'.

The single example comes at a rare moment where Hitchcock is not in full control of his surroundings (and it is not the ‘real Hitchcock’ anyway, is it?). The space provided for, and built up by, Hitchcock through his appearances also serves to define an arena, somewhat apart from the narrative, in which Hitchcock can be Hitchcock, or play out and develop his Hitchcock star persona.

The following section will consider the different effects of appearances which meld the world of Hitchcock’s appearances with the narrative worlds of the dramas themselves - whenever Hitchcock is seen on a set which also appears in the drama.

“The Perfect Crime”

Hitchcock’s epilogue to “The Perfect Crime” is rare amongst the appearances he made for his self-directed shows. It is an instance in which Hitchcock appears on a set actually used for the narrative. Hitchcock is shown from a long shot as he walks through a doorway and across the set. Spatially, the set is as it was in the narrative. The furniture remains in the same positions. The one major change to the set is that the furniture has been shrouded in white sheets. Like the Carpenter’s house in “Back For Christmas”, Courtney’s house is in storage. Perhaps we are to assume the house has been moth-balled for the last forty-five years (the story is set in 1912; the programme was first transmitted in 1957).

Hitchcock comes to rest in front of Courtney’s glass cabinet housing his trophies of victory. There is a cut to Hitchcock in a medium shot and he leans on

the cabinet and explains what has happened since we last saw Courtney's self-satisfied face.

Hitchcock: I regret to inform you that Courtney did not retain his last trophy [he points to the empty space in the cabinet, marked once again by an empty card] for very long. He was caught.

The epilogue is an important one for Hitchcock's assertion of power. In "Arthur", Hitchcock's exclusive narrator's privilege is temporarily usurped by Arthur Williams, only to be recouped by Hitchcock's ability to condemn the murderer to a gory death after the narrative has ended. In this instance, Hitchcock's presence within the narrative world of Courtney is a reassertion of total control. He has full access to Courtney's domain, as expressed by the long shot of Hitchcock striding through the space, and his ability to view Courtney's precious items from each of his successful cases.

Hitchcock is careful to draw our attention to the space on the cabinet shelf. Courtney had maintained the space until he found an artefact pertaining to his concept of the perfect crime. The gap was filled by the vase Courtney made from the body of John Gregory, implying that he believed his murder of Gregory *was* the perfect crime. But Hitchcock shows us this was not so; the self-centred Courtney is brought back to earth. The vase was not, after all, a trophy of the perfect crime. Instead it provided the evidence which convicted Courtney, when a careless cleaning woman broke the vase and 'bits of Mr. Gregory' were discovered in the remains.

The epilogue is noteworthy for its lack of sympathy for the character that has been baked into this vase. Hitchcock ties up the narrative in a way that does not raise the matter of pity for Gregory. His appearance is a matter of relating information to the viewer that adds a further frisson of ghoulishness, not to offer sympathy for the unfortunate victim.

It seems rather bizarre that Hitchcock should choose to appear within the set of “The Perfect Crime” in order to deliver the sentence on Courtney. Much the same could have been done from the ‘Sherlock Holmes armchair’ in which Hitchcock appears before the narrative. In addition, Hitchcock’s presence has the unsettling effect of dragging the setting into the present. “The Perfect Crime” is a period piece, set in New York in 1912. To have Hitchcock stride on to the set is to make us all the more aware of the temporal artifice of the narrative, a device which takes the sting out of the programme and encourages us to consider the story as ‘only a programme’.

The lighting of the set during Hitchcock’s appearance differs greatly from the lighting used within the narrative. The story takes place at night-time; the set and characters are lit in a constant high-contrast register. Faces and shapes are strongly back-lit. As we watch Courtney place the revolver in his glass cabinet at the beginning of the tale, this lighting scheme becomes immediately apparent. When Hitchcock walks on to the set, it is obvious the method of illumination has altered. The set is awash with a neutral, non-expressionist light. The effect renders the set lifeless. The space is bleached of its tension and drama. It is like an empty theatre after the players and the audience have gone, when the strong house lights come on, overwhelming the subtleties of the stage lights. The

lighting acts to draw us out of the fictional world, as does the distant, high-angle shot of Hitchcock striding on to the set.

Hitchcock's epilogue on the set both places him within the story realm, and yet simultaneously negates his place in that world. He plays no part in it. It is as if his presence alters the nature of that world. The set might be the same in both introduction and narrative, but sufficient difference and distance is opened up by the programmes through the divergent treatment of that common space through framing, lighting and other effects.

“The Crystal Trench”

Both of Hitchcock's appearances for “The Crystal Trench” are presented on the same studio-based mountain ledge set which features in the narrative. He addresses the audience, standing on the ledge, framed in a medium/long shot. A rope, attached to the ‘mountain’ higher up, crosses the path made by the ledge:

Hitchcock: I thought I would cut this rope since it seems to be obstructing my path. I can't seem to find my partner, he was here a moment ago, then let out a cry and disappeared. [He looks down the slope, then cuts the rope with his knife. Off-screen thumps, bangs, as of someone falling down a studio mountain. Cut to medium shot of Hitchcock against the mountain.] My, my, I seem to have made a faux-pas! My friend was on the other end of that rope. Rotten luck. He was also my business partner, but the show must go on.

There has been no attempt to integrate Hitchcock with his supposedly mountainous surroundings. He is dressed, as always, in his dark suit and tie, white shirt and black shoes. His incongruity is humorous, but is also honest. The set is evidently a set; the lighting is even, consistent and obviously studio-standard. There is no bid made to naturalise the set through fake wind or snow. As with “The Perfect Crime”, the set is drawn out of the realm of the story world through its mode of presentation rather than the reorganisation of its structure as a set. During the scene within the narrative set on the ledge, the weather is presented as far less temperate than during this introduction. However, even though snow and wind are used, the set remains unrealistic, even within the narrative. Therefore, Hitchcock’s unwavering commitment to his normal uniform is an acknowledgement of the studio setting. The studio, like Hitchcock, is only pretending to be somewhere else. Hitchcock’s knowing pretence is an important element of the ironic humour of the introduction.

“Lamb To The Slaughter”

“Lamb To The Slaughter” also places Hitchcock within a space used in the main narrative. However, it differs from “The Perfect Crime” and “The Crystal Trench” as it makes alterations to the fabric or dressing of the set; Hitchcock’s appearances are not so strongly linked with the worlds of the narratives but are arguably more interesting for it.

The introductory sequence to “Lamb To The Slaughter” is filmed on a set which features in the narrative. However, its use of a narrative set is not as clear-cut. Hitchcock appears in the aisle of a small supermarket, stood sheepishly

behind a trolley. A policeman is writing him a ticket. He takes the ticket with a fair amount of trepidation, looks at it, then addresses the camera:

Hitchcock: He gave me this ticket for blocking an aisle during the rush-hour. I don't understand - I was in the slow lane.

The set itself is comprised of high shelves behind Hitchcock, stacked with goods. To his left, the cash desk runs parallel with Hitchcock's trolley which faces the camera. On the desk is a large white contraption which resembles a weighing machine. The policeman stands in front of a large stack of tinned food. Once he has been handed the traffic ticket, the camera tracks in to Hitchcock for a medium close-up.

Within the narrative, the store set is remodelled to become the place where Mary shops for her vegetables just after she has killed her husband. The scene is brief, without dialogue and rendered in a single shot. The camera is positioned looking along the counter. The shop assistant stands to the left of the frame and packs Mary's bags. Mary is to the right, rummaging in her purse for money. The shelving in the background is the same as in the introduction, but holds different goods. There is a visible, diegetic light-source, a white, round lamp that hangs at the centre-top of the frame. Behind Mary is a poster urging customers to 'Have A Bar-B-Cue'. On the counter top, behind Mary's shopping bags, is the same white weighing machine which is present in the introduction. The shop within the narrative is altered and enhanced in order to convey a more realistic space.

The introduction contains elements of two types of fiction. It mobilises both an absurd fictional narrative (Hitchcock gets a traffic ticket) and a fictional presentation before the main narrative (Hitchcock introduces the show). These two fictions are in conflict from the beginning. It is intentionally ambiguous in the way it presents a self-contained but absurd narrative event that also contains Hitchcock's piece to camera.

On one hand, Hitchcock is acting in a tiny narrative; ostensibly, he is being given a ticket for blocking a supermarket aisle in the rush-hour. On the other hand, many elements of the introduction dilute the purity of the dramatic fictional form. Hitchcock looks at the camera, a glance at first. Then he addresses us, making us aware that this is not truly a fiction, not in the same sense as the teleplay to follow. By direct address, Hitchcock draws our attention to the fakeness of the situation. He acknowledges the presence of the camera and so the brief effect of its invisible recording of a dramatic event is shattered.

These two fictional addresses to an audience (the narrative and the direct address) are in conflict even before Hitchcock glances at the camera. The famous pan-right across the studio set usually finds the figure of Hitchcock. In the case of "Lamb To The Slaughter", the first shape we see is a tower of canned goods, then a policeman, then finally Hitchcock, looking suitably cowed by the presence of this authority figure. Just before the cans appear, the backdrop is the normal, mottled pattern of light which so frequently served as the setting for Hitchcock's presentations. During the pan-right, the scene becomes more 'realistic', in that the set is shown to have a number of trappings expected of a shop. However, the

set never looks like anything other than a set. The dual fictionality of the introduction is reflected in the set's fake-realistic nature.

Hitchcock is rarely seen so quiet on our first sight of him during an introduction. He is preoccupied with the policeman whose disapproval of Hitchcock has stunned him into silence. Hitchcock does not even say his normal 'Good Evening'. Instead, for a moment, he is a participant in this brief fiction. As he takes his ticket from the policeman, he is like an actor in a play of his own. As soon as he glances at the camera, the fiction of the introduction becomes the dominant address.

Hitchcock without Hitchcock

In order to truly appreciate Hitchcock's role as host, we must lose or replace him. This was done on two Hitchcock-directed programmes: "Four O'Clock" (Tx. 30/9/57) from the 'Suspicion' series and "Incident At A Corner" (Tx. 5/4/60) for 'Ford Startime'. The latter involves Vera Miles, superimposed on to a scene from the drama, and is quite innocuous. In order to demonstrate most emphatically the perils of losing Hitchcock to a more damaging presence, in an introduction which echoes the more traditional ones accompanying television anthology series, Dennis O'Keefe's introduction will be used as the example.

"Four O'Clock" ('Suspicion' - hosted by Dennis O'Keefe)

The lack of a Hitchcock introduction to the programme makes one realise the importance of his appearances before and after the other shows. Hitchcock's

presence and Allardice's words are sorely missed. Dennis O'Keefe's introduction is wooden and condescending. Worst of all, it is educational. Instead of Hitchcock's humorous, deceptively informative (if frequently irrelevant) remarks, O'Keefe delivers a dry introduction based on a potted history of the clock:

O'Keefe: For most of his history, man has told the time by such simple devices as hourglasses, sundials and clepsydras. In case you don't know what a clepsydra is, it's a water-clock.

Already, the introduction alienates the viewer: O'Keefe knows what a clepsydra is and feels he must explain to the audience. It is most likely such a definition is required for the majority of the audience but that is not the point. O'Keefe's educational role means his words set up an 'us-and-them' tone. He has greater knowledge and is kind enough to share it with us. The introduction continues in the same vein:

O'Keefe: The first mechanical clock is attributed to Pope Sylvester II in AD 996. In Europe, clock makers were an exclusive set drawn from the ranks of jewellers, locksmiths, astronomers and priests. They kept their standards high and their prices higher. In America, however, the first clock makers were carpenters and mechanics. They soon learned how to achieve mass-production of good, cheap timepieces, like the everyday, common-garden variety dollar-and-a-half alarm clock. Without this

combined history of European science and American gumption the central character in our story tonight might never have found the perfect weapon. For after all, there are difficulties in killing one's wife with a clepsydra.

The history lesson is also a celebration of American commoditisation through mass-production. Europeans may have the knowledge but it is only because of the American democratic desire for timepieces to be available to all (not just the elite of Europe), that cheaper watches and clocks were made. American expertise is not in invention but in adaptation of products for a mass market. American democratisation and entrepreneurial spirit saves the day.

The joke (and the twist) of the introduction returns us to the clepsydra. It now becomes apparent why it was necessary to ensure the audience had some kind of definition of this water-driven timepiece. However, the definition is not detailed and leaves a good deal of scope for misunderstanding. Also, the joke falls rather flat because it reminds us of our role as the viewer who is being educated. To get the joke, we must remember O'Keefe's brief definition of the clepsydra. The joke tests us, making sure we have remembered his description, and means the introduction ends in as smug a manner as it began.

Further disappointment in the introduction is provided by the setting. O'Keefe is in the set of a smoking room, complete with traditional furniture and fireplace. He is shown winding an alarm clock. The literal-ness of this prop is not commented upon or made the subject of any knowing, open comment on its unsophisticated inclusion. Nothing is done with the prop which one might

consider inventive. It is not a square egg, a giant key, or a Meerschaum pipe that blows bubbles. Also, O’Keefe’s clothing, a plain, sensible suit, and the setting go together. There is no playful use of incongruence which is available to the continually incongruent Hitchcock. The final and perhaps most important factor in the dreadfulness of O’Keefe’s introduction is his performance. He is wooden; he has a sense of awkwardness and discomfort about him. Despite the attempt at a joke at the end, he delivers the whole introduction in a humourless, nervous manner. McCarty and Kelleher (1985: 22) report that O’Keefe left the show after this premiere episode (one assumes after recording more than one introductory piece) and was replaced by Walter Abel. O’Keefe went on to host ‘The Dennis O’Keefe Show’ in 1958 but the programme was short-lived.

Performance

An overlooked element of Hitchcock’s appearances is his performance skill, particularly his use of voice and facial expression. Although an exhaustive account is not possible, some high performance achievements should be noted.

“Revenge”

In the introduction to “Revenge”, Hitchcock puts into words the remit of the television shows in the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ series:

Hitchcock: ...Like the other plays in our series it is more than mere entertainment. In each of our stories we strive to teach a lesson or point a

little moral. Advice like mother used to give. You know: ‘walk softly but carry a big stick’; ‘strike first and ask questions later’; that sort of thing.

Hitchcock performs the lines perfectly. He speaks quietly and intimately, drawing the viewer in with his words, only to deliver ‘advice’ based on retribution, hot-headedness, deception and violence. The advice is ‘like mother used to give’, echoing Hitchcock’s own troubling and warped view of the ferocious maternal figure (see for example Robin Wood 1989: 361-2). As Hitchcock says ‘that sort of thing’, he wrinkles his nose up. The facial expression both seeks to reassure us of the veracity of the advice and also lets us in on the fact he may be half-joshing. His performance is masterful. Minimal movements and gestures speak volumes over and above the spoken words.

“I Saw The Whole Thing” (‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’)

Hitchcock’s appearance before and after “I Saw The Whole Thing” outshines all other aspects of his creative influence on the programme, at least in terms of entertainment value. In particular, Hitchcock’s introduction is sublime, a piece of consummate performance to rival any of his actor employees.

Hitchcock appears holding a man-sized Yale key to announce he has opened his own ‘key club’. Members must have a key in order to gain entry to his exclusive establishment, and he goes on to explain:

Hitchcock: These clubs are terribly exclusive since membership is limited to men. My club is completely different, it is for women. Inside

the club is everything a woman could want, including me. You see, I am the club's only bunny.

The script by James Allardice is alluding to the recent appearance of the Playboy clubs created by Hugh Hefner. Hitchcock's performance of these lines, which cast him as an improbable sexual commodity for consumption by women, is priceless. After a slightly shaky and mechanical delivery at the beginning, Hitchcock finds his stride as the camera tracks in closer to him. On the line which begins 'Inside the club', Hitchcock first shakes his head and furrows his brow as he says 'everything a woman could want', emphasising the word 'everything', leaving us in no doubt that his female members will wish for nothing. He then pauses briefly. As he delivers the punchline, 'including me', his performance is a model of restrained yet telling movement which conveys the comic absurdity of the lines and the veiled conceit of his so-called key club idea. On the punchline, he closes his eyes and does his best to look coy and sexually available, no mean feat when you are Alfred Hitchcock. He also moves his body in a very slight twisting motion whilst keeping his feet in the same position, another important indicator of his mock-innocent and coy demeanour.

Hitchcock returns after the narrative to report that his club has been shut down by the Sheriff who is 'now our only member'. The sight of Hitchcock in full bunny costume must have been too much for the authorities to handle, even in the early 1960s. The epilogue is rather underdeveloped and disappointing in the light of its accomplished introduction.

Although the introduction is one of the most amusing pieces of performance by Hitchcock on television, the basis of its humour is cruel. In order to go along with the joke, the viewer has to take it for granted that Hitchcock will be considered by most people to be grotesque. The fact Hitchcock plays along with this assumption (in fact, believes it himself) makes the humour of the performance no less tragic. Rather, his realisation that this kind of joke can work with him as its subject implies his full self-acknowledgement of his physical offensiveness.

Hitchcock's film cameos are amongst some of the first demonstrations of this tragic-comic facet of the Hitchcock persona. His acknowledgement of the truth of his unattractive appearance is evident in some of his film appearances, such as in Strangers on a Train, where his bodily attributes are echoed in the size and shape of the double-bass he struggles with as he boards a train in Metcalf. In Torn Curtain (1966, Universal/Alfred Hitchcock Productions, U.S.A.) he is seen holding a baby in a hotel lobby, a cameo that compares Hitchcock's flabby cherubic-ness to that of the baby, whilst also making contrasts in terms of their age and desirability.

Hitchcock's television appearances developed this aspect of Hitchcock's persona, an aspect which, as it relates to the fact of his physical appearance, was also part of his real self (e.g. see Spoto 1983: 399). His attitude to marriage, as presented in his films and television programmes, is perhaps symptomatic of his inner desire to be desired. Although married to Alma Reville for many years, what Hitchcock's narratives tell us about his view of marriage is that he felt somehow trapped. One of the main facts of his life that restricted him was his

physical appearance. Hitchcock's persona often comes too close to the truth for comfort, or unequivocal humour.

It has been noted above how, amongst many other roles, Hitchcock's appearances for his shows played an important part in quelling the censors, a role which can also be viewed with some scepticism since Allardice and Hitchcock frequently made matters worse. Within the programmes' narratives, however, there was less scope for subversion. The next chapter will consider the production conditions of the shows in terms of the impact and influence of censorship on the content and presentation of Hitchcock's television work.

CHAPTER THREE

Murder in the Living Room - Censorship

Although Hitchcock's series frequently dealt in tales of murder and deception, the perception that all of the programmes were similarly violent is incorrect. A cursory look, even at those directed by Hitchcock, shows the murderous content of the programmes is less than might first be assumed. Of the twenty teleplays directed personally by Hitchcock, it may come as some surprise that only six actually present a murder within the diegesis of the programme. Most fatal and non-fatal violence within the series is implicit and off-screen or completely elided. However, Hitchcock's television career was still being watched by concerned organisations as well as by the viewing public.

American television censorship in the 1950s and 60s was administered in a number of official and unofficial ways. Most officially, the Motion Picture Production Code applied to television as it did to movie productions. The same

censorship rules were administered by the same board or office. However, television was also monitored by other bodies such as the conservative Catholic Legion of Decency which frequently campaigned for the tightening of censorship laws for the domestic medium of television. Furthermore, sponsorship deals within television meant programmers were under pressure to create popular programmes which would not alienate elements of the audience through overt political or social messages, sex or violence. The sponsors required as large an audience as possible for their products. Particularly in the 1950s, prime-time television courted a homogeneous audience, not yet defined as niche groups by demographic research.

The Hitchcock show was sponsored by a single company, Bristol-Myers, during its first four seasons. The company made medicines and health and beauty products. By the late 1950s, as audiences began to fragment, joint or multiple sponsorship became the norm. For the fifth season of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents', Bristol-Myers had been joined by Clairol as co-sponsors. Television networks then began to sell their airtime between and within programmes to many companies: sponsors no longer sponsored, they became advertisers. The Hitchcock programmes followed this industry pattern. By autumn 1962, the first season of 'The Alfred Hitchcock Hour' had multiple sponsors (Grams Jr. et al 2001: 389)

The implications for censorship of these different organisational approaches to sponsorship and advertising are obvious. As Jerry Adler noted, when 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' was sponsored solely by Bristol-Myers, they

'had to be sensitive to their products, i.e. not having someone murdered with an overdose' of pills (personal correspondence, 3/6/2000). Hitchcock noted:

We can't do anything that mentions the name of our dear sponsor - who makes Bufferin [a painkilling drug] - because of the residuals. Not that we wouldn't like to ... I decided to have [a] butler come in and announce, 'Mr. Hitchcock, your grandfather is here.' To which I would reply haughtily, 'Well, fine, send the old *duffer in.*' (Hitchcock quoted in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 24. See note 4, p.17)

Scripts were given to the sponsors before they went to air so the company could voice any objections to theme or content before production went ahead. Once multiple sponsorship or advertising developed, such practices became unworkable and 'thus the network had total responsibility in the censorship area' before the programme was made, although they 'did screen the final edit (before compositing) of the shows for [the advertisers' representatives]' (Adler 3/6/2000).

The network's censorship role increased in control as the sponsors' role reduced. They took on more responsibility for the screening of material before and during production in an attempt to avoid problems with sponsors and advertisers later in the production process. On the Hitchcock shows, Adler recalls: 'In all instances, we had to get approval from the network (CBS or NBC) on shooting scripts' (Adler 3/6/2000). The networks could effectively boycott programmes which did not fit the remit of the series or contained themes

considered inappropriate for its viewing audience, the programme's sponsors, or programmes that might cause offence to interest or pressure groups.

The matter of self-censorship by the programme-makers is also important. Commenting generally on the Hitchcock series, Adler states:

It should be noted that the shows were produced consistent with Hitchcock's reputation for quality and good taste. [Joan] Harrison and company weren't out to prove anything nor push the envelope. (personal correspondence, 3/6/00)

When one views the programmes, Adler's view is accurate for the series as a whole. There is little in the way of contentious material. Hitchcock's shows do not seek to break social taboos, shape opinion, provide an outwardly political message or fight a particular cause. In terms of the depiction of violence, the shows are demure. Only one programme, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" was denied a network airing on censorship grounds (Grams Jr. et al 2001: 385-7).

However, there are some questions to be answered on a number of issues emanating from the Hitchcock-directed programmes and their stance on censorship. Some do contain material which might be deemed risqué or offensive. These programmes (or particular moments from these programmes) will be of prime consideration in the forthcoming discussion. In particular, there will be assessment of moments demonstrating creative responses to restrictions on form and content. It is in these moments that a programme can be seen to harness its production conditions in positive ways.

“Revenge”

Synopsis

A young recently-wed couple move to a California coastal trailer park. The wife Elsa (Vera Miles) has had a breakdown and has been prescribed sea-air and rest. The husband Carl (Ralph Meeker) has obtained a transfer to the local aircraft engineering plant.

Carl goes to his first day at his new place of work, leaving Elsa alone. Elsa is visited by a neighbour, Mrs. Ferguson (Frances Bavier), and they talk. Elsa sits outside to sunbathe and her neighbour leaves for town.

When Carl returns home, he finds Elsa on the bedroom floor in a shocked state. She reports an attack by a man posing as a salesman. The police are called but they cannot gain any leads. Elsa is still in shock and not stable enough to be questioned. A doctor (John Gallaudet) recommends that Carl should take Elsa away, as soon as possible, preferably the next morning. Later, Carl asks Elsa if she would recognise her assailant. She replies: ‘Yes, oh yes’.

The following day, they drive to the next coastal town. As they drive in silence, Elsa suddenly gasps ‘That’s him!’, convinced she has seen her attacker. Carl arms himself with a spanner and follows the man (Ray Montgomery) to his hotel room. He steals in and bludgeons him. Back in the car, Carl suggests to Elsa that they drive to the next town and she agrees.

A distraught hotel employee (Lillian O’Malley) reports her discovery of the victim to another member of staff (Herbert Lytton) and they go upstairs.

Meanwhile, Carl and Elsa continue to drive the coastal road in silence. Elsa looks out of the car window once again and hisses once again: ‘There he is!’

That's him! That's him!' Carl realises his mistake as a police siren is heard in the distance.

The contentious material of this short parable provided Hitchcock with an opportunity to create an exercise in story-telling which worked within *and* with the censorship restrictions. "Revenge" is one of Hitchcock's greatest accomplishments within television. One of the primary reasons for this judgement is Hitchcock's creative integration of the limitations of the television medium into his story-telling objectives. In particular, he is able to exploit the censorship codes to the full. He adheres to the resulting production conditions, yet simultaneously harnesses them to mould his presentation of the story, presenting incidents and images which remain intentionally ambiguous. On a first viewing, it seems we know the story of "Revenge". During subsequent viewings, gaps in our knowledge become apparent as we look more critically at the evidence Hitchcock *actually* provides and what he *seems* to provide.

In itself, ambiguity does not guarantee the different possibilities or speculations promoted or permitted by events are stimulating ones. "Revenge" provides the framework for interesting, conflicting interpretations of story events to be constructed by the viewer. Important incidents remain equivocal, allowing an open reading. Hitchcock's exploitation of the censorship of violence is central to the creation and maintenance of this non-committal narrative.

The major narrative event, Elsa's alleged violent attack, is completely elided. The decision to exclude even the merest hint of the assault reported by Elsa opens up the ambiguity surrounding Elsa's reported experience. In part, this

structural choice is a result of the half-hour drama's time restrictions and push for swift narrative development which limits the number of story events that can be shown. However, the narrative's equivocation is sustained and developed by the censorial presentation of the scene in which Carl discovers his stricken wife. He picks her up off the bedroom floor and settles her on the bed. As he does this, the camerawork censors Elsa's body from our view. We see only her head and a bare arm in the bottom of the frame. Her hair is unruffled and we cannot see whether she is fully or partially clothed, or if her clothing and skin have been damaged. The camera denies access to information needed to judge what has happened to her, and therefore what Carl is seeing.¹ His reactions to what he sees are our only indicators of Elsa's physical state, a fact which aligns us closely with Carl.

Level with the bed, the camera then shows Carl's hands folding Elsa's legs flat on the sheets. The image conveys contradictory meanings. The shot is a visual presentation of Carl's and Elsa's physical roles in their relationship: Elsa is passive, Carl is active. Ostensibly, it is an image of Carl's control but his subservient position in the marriage denies him any true control. He is Elsa's agent; his activity is on her behalf, culminating in his becoming an assassin to avenge her.

¹ An interesting production still from "Revenge" depicting this scene is reproduced in Mogg's The Alfred Hitchcock Story (1999: 136). It shows Vera Miles in Ralph Meeker's arms; she is wearing the same brief outfit she wore whilst sunbathing, evidence not made available to the viewer of the programme.

The shot of Elsa's legs here and Mrs. Ferguson's earlier POV of them in the scene where Elsa sunbathes, have one aspect in common which serves as a clue to what might have happened to Elsa. Hitchcock's special emphasis on her legs and the repetition of their appearance distracts attention from this clue. In this image of Elsa's legs, as she is laid out on the bed, her sandals (which have no heel strap) are once again clearly visible. The fact her sandals have stayed on is incompatible with her reported violent attack. The 'told-ness' of Hitchcock's images, the repetition of the legs as a charged visual motif, serves to obscure evidence as much as provide it.

The refusal to show the audience Elsa's physical state is an extension of the narrative's uncommunicativeness in relation to her trauma. The truth or lie of Elsa's attack is not the important matter. It is that Hitchcock's manner of filming and the narrative structure allows for different possibilities which enrich the narrative. If Elsa is lying about the attack, it could be for many reasons, all of which cast her character in an untrustworthy light. If we believe Elsa's version of events, we align ourselves closely with Carl's interpretation and response. Like him, we do not question her later behaviour; she remains a sympathetic character until the end (and depending on the depth or basis of that sympathy, even after the end). However, Carl's knowledge is limited and his automatic reactions are based on loyalty and servility.

Ambiguous dialogue adds to character and audience confusion surrounding Elsa's experiences. She describes the attack's culmination by saying: 'And then he killed me!' The phrase is dramatic, evocative of Elsa's trauma: she cannot speak the words specifying her experience. 'He killed me'

also implies her acknowledgement of a fundamental alteration in her outlook; she is mourning the death of her previously optimistic, positive self. In her breakfast conversation with Carl, she said she believed most people were ‘very nice’. After her trauma, she becomes withdrawn and distant.

The phrase ‘He killed me’ also sensitively outlines the situation for television. It allows the imagination to work on the event (as with the presentation of Carl discovering Elsa), avoiding specific descriptions which might cause discomfort to viewers and sponsors, and attracting censorship. Carl too is required to use his imagination to fill in the gaps in Elsa’s report. Her story is believable but never proven beyond doubt. In a medium which *shows* its stories, the high level of ambiguity maintained is a remarkable achievement.

We are encouraged to become aligned with Carl at several points in the narrative. Hitchcock achieves this alignment by using what I will call ‘narrative viewpoint’. This is a process by which an agent (e.g. a character) is aligned with the audience so we experience events from their perspective. It should not be confused with POV shots, where the camera’s image approximates character eyeline. POV shots contribute to narrative viewpoint by aligning audiences with a character’s visual perception, but they do not necessarily result in attachment with the character whose vision we share. Narrative viewpoint is the evocation of a character’s perceived mood or interpretation of an event through the programme’s images and sounds. It often results in audience attachment to characters because it involves sharing narrative knowledge.²

² See Chapter Five for further examples of this.

In Carl's case, Hitchcock expresses his viewpoint within the narrative at moments when a *lack* of audience knowledge is important to the maintenance of the narrative's ambiguous structure. Since we are aligned with Carl, to some extent we also share his ignorance, his unquestioning acceptance of his wife's story and his vengeful urges. The murder sequence best exemplifies the programme's presentation of Carl's narrative viewpoint. Hitchcock permits audience access to Carl's thought processes in the moments just before the murder. Carl follows Elsa's identified assailant down the hotel corridor in long-shot, walking towards the camera. He walks slightly behind the stranger who unlocks the door on his left and goes into his room. Carl walks past the doorway, ending on a mark illuminated with a facial light which draws attention to his eyes, a stylistic touch that heightens the tension of his circumstances. He is determined to execute the act of revenge. The lighting effect emphasises the psychological aspect of the situation, briefly diverting attention from the situation itself. When he turns his back to camera and opens the man's hotel room door, this physically confirms Carl's determination for revenge.

The choreography of the sequence visually expresses Carl's moment of decision. His movement towards the static camera deceives his victim. Conversely, our privileged vision of him in medium shot and the use of light on his eyes expose his thought process to us. The framing, with the door in the middle distance and Carl screen-left, permits the decision to be shown within one shot by Carl's turn to approach the door. He is then seen opening the door in a shot from waist-height, a framing expressing the move from mental to physical;

Carl's body is in shot, not his head. There are no more decisions, it is time for action.

Carl's viewpoint of the murder is evoked by detached and unemotional imagery and sound. Several formal aspects lend the sequence an eerie calmness, echoing Carl's strong personal sense that this act is directed by necessity, not appetite. Carl holds the spanner we saw him take from the car behind his back, exposing it to the camera. He creeps into the hotel room. Inside on the right-hand wall is a dressing table with a mirror. Carl slips behind the door frame-left but is reflected in the mirror, following the man into the bathroom. Shadows on the walls and sound-effects show Carl battering the man with four spanner blows. The timidity of television in showing violence again permits and requires viewers to imaginatively fill in visual ellipses. The reflected shadows move so quickly there is no doubting the attack's savagery.

Carl's coolness and emotional detachment is echoed in the depiction of his crime. Nothing in the scene is sensationalistic. The murder is depicted using shadows on walls reflected in a mirror, twice removed from three-dimensional representation. The camera stays outside the room, maintaining a distance from the violence. No edits or swift camera movements are used. The camera executes a slight tilt upwards as Carl approaches his victim, returning to its original position with a symmetrical tilt downwards as he leaves the room. The consonance of the camera's tilts echoes the symmetry of the pattern of shadows and reflections: the scene choreographs human forms, reflections, then reflected shadows, reversing the pattern as Carl backs out of the room. He is less than his

human self in this scene. The concentration on his body and use of shadow and reflections visually present this emotional detachment.

The shot involves the programme's most intricate choreography of actors and camera. The systematic, balanced movements of human forms and camera give the scene a sense of mechanisation, also evocative of Carl's viewpoint. The murder is the climax of his unquestioning, automated behaviour. Introducing the spanner as the weapon adds a significant and eloquent touch: it is a visual representation of the climax of Carl's mechanical revenge behaviour, linking the killing with both his working-class background and his subservient behaviour. It embodies and integrates both the style of his behaviour and its underlying causes.

Sonically, the murder is presented in a subdued manner. The spanner blows sound low and muffled (in keeping with the camera's position), not connotative of gore. They lack any harsh tones which might induce viewer revulsion. The victim does not scream in surprise or pain under the first strike. Dull thuds inform of his collapse to the floor. Throughout the sequence, diegetic music plays in the background. It is an easy-listening style of swing, the melody played on mellow brass and woodwind instruments. These elements combine to create a scene that mutes the horror of murder. It is one of the most serene and disengaged murder scenes in Hitchcock's career. Depicting the killing in this way, well within the limits of censorship, discourages sympathy for the victim. It becomes the slaughter of someone who deserved to die. If we had doubts about the truth of Elsa's dreadful experience at the hands of this man, Carl's determined revenge, presented to us as a clinical assassination, dispels many

concerns. Once again, Hitchcock's presentation manipulates the audience away from an unambiguous perception of events and characters.

There are two forces at work in "Revenge" which work with and against one another in the communication of its narrative. Firstly, Hitchcock's stylistic emphasis on close-ups guides the audience through the narrative, giving the impression we are shown the important elements of the situation. However, the presentation's straightforward informativeness is illusory, part of Hitchcock's plan for the (mis-) perception of the narrative. The presentation's 'told-ness' (the strong sense given by the visuals that we are being told all we need to know) is instructive as well as informative, persuading the audience to see the narrative as incontrovertible. Secondly, and conversely, Hitchcock's exploitation of the censorship codes creates an ambiguous narrative which never commits itself to one particular interpretation of events. The rhetorical power of the 'told' images obscures many of the narrative's equivocations. This effect is vital to the force of the ending, making "Revenge" one of Hitchcock's most satisfying examples of the integration of form, content, style and meaning.

It must be accepted that other programmes in the Hitchcock series effectively evade problems of censorship through elision and the control of information. The murder in "The Long Shot", with its fade to black eliding the gruesome prospect of Charlie reversing his car over English Jim for a second time, is such an example. But when one considers the depths of meaning added to the tale of "Revenge" by Hitchcock's response to censorship restrictions, there is little comparison. One reaches a similar conclusion with 'The Twilight Zone' episodes considered above. For example, the ambiguity of what happens to Paul

and Millicent in “Mirror Image” remains, but the programme acts to narrow down explanations, whilst never settling upon one.

“The Case of Mr. Pelham”

Synopsis

[The first half is presented through flashbacks. This synopsis *italicises* the main events told in flashback. The remainder is told in the story’s present].

Albert Pelham (Tom Ewell) is a mild-mannered investor in New York. He speaks to Dr. Harley (Raymond Bailey) at his club about his problem.

Pelham tells the doctor there have been various incidents of mistaken identity, but recently, matters have become more serious. The doctor suggests his experiences can be explained by a double, but Pelham dismisses this. *During one incident, he had to call home and confused his butler, Peterson (Justice Watson), who thought Pelham was already there. Pelham rushed home to confront the double, but he was not there. Certain signs indicate something was awry: he finds his spare key in the usual place and a spare collar and tie on the desk, identical to his, as if he had come in earlier, changed, then left.*

Pelham goes late to his office the next day, after having his locks changed and only one key made for it. Pelham discovers someone had been in his office that morning and done all his work for him. He writes to his bank to change his signature, adding his middle initial 'M', to trick his tormentor.

Last night, Pelham came home late. He had called Peterson to ask him to leave some supper for him. Pelham finds his supper is nowhere to be seen. He calls for Peterson, angry at this error. Peterson reports he (Pelham) ate his

supper earlier and shows him the dirty dishes. He also says Pelham let himself into the apartment.

Pelham is convinced his double is hoping to take over his life. He decides to change his clothes and the doctor agrees this is a good idea. Pelham goes to a store and buys a unique, loud tie.

He goes to the office and Miss Clement is surprised to see him, as she says he produced such a large amount of work over the lunch hour. The work includes a cheque, signed by 'Albert M. Pelham'.

Panicked, he calls home. He hears his own voice answering the telephone. He goes home to confront this double. When faced with the two Pelhams, Peterson is convinced by the Pelham-double that the real Pelham is the impostor, giving the real Pelham's loud tie as conclusive evidence. The reserved Pelham would never wear such a vulgar item. Peterson then leaves, telling the Pelham-double to ring if he needs assistance.

The Pelham-double says he wants the real Pelham to stop harassing him. The real Pelham is unable to comprehend what has happened. The Pelham-double states: 'You're mad, you know'.

Some time later, the Pelham-double and Tom Mason (Kirby Smith), a fellow club member, play billiards and discuss the Pelham-double's recent financial success. He is almost a millionaire. Tom wonders if it was the sight of that impostor, going mad right in front of his eyes, which helped him get a grip. The Pelham-double reports the madman has been locked up since then and it is unlikely he 'will ever be right again'.

“The Case Of Mr. Pelham”’s use of insanity is not a clear-cut matter of external censorship. There seems to be evidence to suggest the treatment of madness in the programme is partly influenced by other factors. The narrative ends with its main character going insane, and yet the tone of this ending seems compromised. The programme spends a great deal of its time setting up the question of who is tormenting Pelham. However, the narrative only provides an answer to the question which is raised much later in the story, whether Pelham’s plan to slightly alter his style of dress, to differentiate himself from the fake Pelham, will work or not. During their confrontation scene near the end of the story, the real Pelham asks the Pelham-double why this had to happen to him and he replies: ‘No reason. It just did, you see’. The effect of this line is to shatter Pelham’s hopes for an explanation. Alongside his hopes, the audience’s expectation of a solution to the main narrative question also hits a dead end. To some extent then, the story puts us in a similarly directionless state to the hapless Pelham. We have gone through his search for an answer and a plan with the doctor but to no avail. We have witnessed Pelham’s gradually increasing sense of panic and unease.

And yet the narrative remains unsatisfactory. There is little in the way of a release of the tension built up during the story and no real twist or true climax. The programme is dealing with an horrific and disturbing tale but the conclusion does not suit the narrative’s tone. The programme elides the horror of the real Pelham’s insanity by ending his presence in the story at the moment he begins to lose his mind.

The tone of this insanity is also comical. Held in close-up, Ewell's performance of 'insane' consists of staring into middle-distance as a fixed smile spreads across his mouth, but not echoed by 'smiling eyes'. Tom Ewell's own star persona at the time of the production of "The Case Of Mr. Pelham" is the crucial factor.³ Ewell had recently become a star following his performance in The Seven Year Itch (1955, Billy Wilder, Twentieth Century-Fox, U.S.A.). He followed this role with The Girl Can't Help It (1956, Frank Tashlin, Twentieth Century-Fox, U.S.A.) and The Great American Pastime (1956, Herman Hoffman, M.G.M., U.S.A.). All three films required Ewell to play in light-hearted, comic roles, a persona he was to reinforce after his appearance as Mr. Pelham, in The Lieutenant Wore Skirts (1956, Frank Tashlin, Twentieth Century-Fox, U.S.A.). The influence and selling-power of Ewell's name at this point in his career is in evidence in the final credits of "The Case Of Mr. Pelham". The credits include an advertisement for this last film which reads:

Starring

TOM EWELL

Tom Ewell, appearing through the
courtesy of Twentieth Century-Fox
will soon be seen in the starring
role of the CinemaScope production

**"THE LIEUTENANT
WORE SKIRTS"**

³ Grams Jr. and Wikstrom's brief discussion of the effect of Ewell's casting (2001: 122) was prompted by my suggestion during the completion of that book.

There are no similar examples in the credits of other Hitchcock programmes seen by this writer.

Considering Ewell's massive popularity and contemporaneous success as a comic actor, the elision of an overly disturbing conclusion to "The Case Of Mr. Pelham" becomes more understandable (but no less of a compromise). His star persona at this point was more conducive to a comic insanity to be briefly conveyed just before the narrative epilogue featuring the Pelham-double; it could not withstand the pressure which might come if he had been shown to go insane in a more serious manner. As Hitchcock said: 'the minute you put a star into a role you've already compromised' (in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 27. See note 4, p.17).

It is certainly likely that sponsor and broadcaster pressure would have dissuaded any more earnest a presentation of mental illness. With "The Case Of Mr. Pelham", it is unlikely the programme-makers ever intended to present such a serious case of insanity in the first place. As soon as Ewell was considered for the title role, an earnest approach to the issue was effectively ruled out.

"Wet Saturday"

Synopsis

Mr. Princey's (Sir Cedric Hardwicke) daughter Millicent (Tita Purdom) has committed murder and he must conceal the crime from the community, to protect the Princey family reputation.

Mr. Princey obtains the facts of the situation from Millicent. She had a crush on the local schoolmaster Mr. Withers, but her love was unrequited.

Withers had gone for a walk, to hunt butterflies, but it had started to rain. He

took shelter in the Princeys' stable, where Millicent met him. He announced to Millicent he had plans to marry another woman - Ella Branwyn-Davis. In a fit of jealous rage, Millicent struck him dead with a croquet mallet.

Princey's thoughts turn to who might have a motive to kill Withers. Captain Smollet (John Williams) enters the room, and overhears Princey's question. Unaware of its context, Smollet says he would certainly do the deed, 'with pleasure'. Smollet explains Withers' prospective wife, Ella Branwyn-Davis, had once almost accepted Smollet's proposal of marriage. Smollet is aware Withers' marriage to Ella will make him a laughing-stock.

Princey makes his excuses and leaves, taking his dim son George (Jerry Barclay) with him. They go to the stable where Withers' corpse lies. Princey starts to formulate a fake version of events.

Princey orders Smollet to implicate himself in Withers' murder, as a guarantee of Smollet's silence on the matter. Smollet puts his fingerprints on the mallet handle and drops Withers' body into the sewer. Princey orders George to punch Smollet in the face, as evidence of a struggle with Withers. George also plucks hairs from Smollet's head and plants them on Withers' corpse. Princey explains how Smollet's self-confessed hatred of Withers provides motive.

Princey assures Smollet nobody will know, unless Smollet chooses to tell. Back in the lounge Princey says Smollet knows all about the murder, but they have his word he will not tell. Millicent is still concerned Smollet will tell, but Princey orders her to her room.

Smollet leaves the house. Princey sends George to get his sister; he must speak to them all together. He explains they cannot be sure their connection with

Withers' death will not be discovered. They must be ready to tell this *fabricated* story. Princey says this should be the first part of their version: Princey and George went to the stable to shoot a rat that Millicent had reported earlier. In the stable, they met Smollet sheltering from the rain. They invited him in for tea. After tea, Smollet left. Princey and George returned to the stable to shoot the rat. They noticed the sewer grating was ajar. As George replaced the cover, Princey glanced down and discovered Withers.

Princey picks up the telephone and reports the matter to the police. The family are stunned. Princey's plan was not simply intended to ensure Smollet's silence but to frame him for the murder. He could not take the risk of leaving any 'loose ends dangling'.

"Wet Saturday" is an interesting example within the Hitchcock television canon, particularly in its relationship to censorable matters. From the above synopsis the programme comes across as far more violent than it is, at least in terms of fatal violence. Hitchcock thrusts his audience into the middle of the story of the Princey family. The programme details the aftermath of a murder; the killing itself is elided.

Instead of fatal violence, the programme contains subtler elements which, if handled more explicitly, might well have been drawn to the attention of the censors. They mostly relate to sex. The narrative concerns a crime of passion, committed by a disturbed teenage girl whose love fantasies about her victim precipitate the jealous rage which spurs her to kill. Although not specified as gay, George Princey is coded as effeminate, especially through his sibilant

voice.⁴ Due to the various sexual traits of the children, the implication for the family is that its name will die out. This sexually charged context is the backdrop for this story of Mr. Princey attempting to save the 'family name' from scandal.

During the first sequence in the stable, one moment is depicted in a manner which presents evidence of the programme's broader interest in sexuality. Princey has ordered George to drag Withers' corpse out of sight. Meanwhile, Princey takes the murder weapon, the croquet mallet, and wipes Millicent's fingerprints from the handle. Hitchcock chooses to depict this action in what is best described as a masturbatory fashion. In medium shot, Princey takes his handkerchief from his jacket pocket. He holds the end of the mallet handle with his left hand. He puts the bottom of his jacket between his hand and the handle which makes him hunch over. The mallet extends diagonally upwards and to frame-right as Princey begins to wipe away the incriminating fingerprints.

There is a cut into a close-up of the action. Princey's dark suit takes up about a third of the image on the left; the mallet handle extends from the black outline of his suit and out of frame-right. Princey's right hand, protected by the handkerchief, wipes the handle up and down. His wiping movement is quite short and quick; his hand does not leave the frame, despite the fact the handle is twice as long as the section which is held in vision.

There is a further cut to another medium shot of Princey from the front. He continues the wiping for a brief moment and then bends down to place the mallet on the stable floor. The camera tilts down with him as he bends, resting on

⁴ See also the previous chapter on Arthur Williams and his more complex coding as homosexual.

a shot of the mallet, and then tilting back up Princey's body as he rises back to his full height.

The question of directorial choice is at issue here. One can easily conceive of different ways Princey might achieve his goal of ridding the mallet handle of fingerprints. Hitchcock's decision to present the mallet handle as a phallic masturbatory object tallies with the other echoes of the programme's implicit interest in sexuality.

After setting the mallet on the floor, Princey turns around to look over his right shoulder and we are given his optical POV shot of the stable floor. The shot is dominated by the sewer grating in the lower frame-left; beyond this drain is a small stool. To frame-right, we briefly see the head and shoulders of Withers' body (which is in the process of being dragged away by George). The corpse disappears behind a wooden partition wall or door.

By following Princey's suggestive cleaning of the mallet with this striking POV image, Hitchcock is making the connection between sex, death (the body) and waste (the drain). Onanistic sex is wasteful sex (and a Catholic sin); the nature of that waste is associated with life. To masturbate is to thwart the process of procreation, the generation of new life. Whilst not the direct opposite of death, Onanism nonetheless raises the matter of the dissipation of potential human life. This brief moment from one sequence helps associate the Princey household with death and lack of progress. Mr. Princey's oppressive regime has stymied the personal growth of his children. His frustrations at their inadequacies

are made all the more ironic by the implication that his behaviour is the main cause of their failings.⁵

“Dip In The Pool”

The finale of “Dip In The Pool” involves the main character William Botibol (Keenan Wynn) jumping into the sea in order to slow down the ocean liner on which he is travelling. He is hoping to win the ship’s pool, a lottery in which passengers bet on the distance travelled by the ship in a day. However, his plan goes awry when the witness he has chosen for his plunge is unable to be sufficiently convincing of the situation when she reports it to her friend. The programme ends with the horror of Botibol’s drowning, but this is done in a manner sensitive to the censorship requirements of television.

Botibol’s plunge into the ocean is extraordinarily realistic. In a single take, we see Botibol dive gracefully into the water. The camera tilts down to follow his fall and what seems to be part of the ship’s railing comes briefly into view in the frame’s bottom left-hand corner. He momentarily disappears under

⁵ J. Lary Kuhns’ (1999) article on the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ series includes a production still of Sir Cedric Hardwicke receiving Hitchcock’s direction during the shooting of “Wet Saturday”. They both stand, facing one another. Hardwicke is holding a shotgun, its stock resting on the floor, its barrel pointing vertically. He firmly holds the barrel of the shotgun in both hands; Hitchcock touches the weapon near the end of the barrel. Sometimes a gun is just a gun, and yet within the context of Hitchcock’s direction of Hardwicke in the sequence discussed above, the gun in this picture takes on phallic connotations. One might imagine the conversation between the two men as they discuss the croquet mallet sequence; how Hitchcock would like Hardwicke to grasp the mallet and move his hand up and down the handle just like that.

the bubbling wake. The camera tilts back up as he reappears in the top of the frame, facing the ship and waving his arm above his head as he shouts 'Help!' As the ship pulls away from the tiny figure in the water, the camera tilts up further to show the endless horizon of the ocean. Botibol begins to swim after the ship, and this is the last we see of him as we now cut to the confused Emily (Doreen Lang), his witness, watching the figure disappear into the distance.

The programme elides the horrors of drowning. By showing Botibol disappearing into the distance, the programme avoids the dreadful implications of his situation. His plight is unarticulated. Instead, the image conveys a strong sense of Botibol's insignificance and the absurd futility of his actions in the face of such odds. The presentation of his implied death articulates how he fades to nothingness. Such an evocation is fitting for both the requirements of the story and of television. It is unlikely television sponsors or executives would have considered the struggle of a drowning man to be suitable home viewing material.

The ending as it exists is arguably stronger and more disturbing than if we had been presented with a single interpretation of Botibol's drowning. The elision of this event allows the viewer's mind to work through the situation. The difference in "Dip In The Pool" is that an horrific thinking through of Botibol's death is actively worked against by the ensuing conversation between the addled Emily and her bossy companion (Doris Lloyd). The need to grasp the implications of the conversation, to understand the curious motivations of the characters involved (particularly Emily - why did she not scream or call for help straight away?), and to ultimately grasp how this story has ended this way; these responsibilities crowd in on the viewer, giving little time to consider Botibol.

The final close-up of Emily as she says: ‘Such a nice man, he waved to me’ fades to black and is accompanied by a brief sting of jaunty sailor-style music, played in a light-hearted arrangement. The final musical touch within the story further discourages an horrific interpretation of events. It is with hindsight we wonder what dreadful fate befell Botibol; the programme does its best to dispel such concerns for the casual viewer.

“Wet Saturday” & “Four O’Clock”

Not all of Hitchcock’s violent scenes on television end in death. Some simply end in bruised knuckles and faces and loss of dignity. With the need for sanitised killings on television, many deaths are the result of a single decisive blow (see “One More Mile To Go”, “Back For Christmas”⁶, “Lamb To The Slaughter”). In the case of these programmes, violence is administered to restrain the victim or as part of a plot to frame someone for murder.

“Wet Saturday”

“Wet Saturday” contains one of the most violent scenes in the Hitchcock television canon, the moment when George punches Captain Smollet. Not only is the violence itself quite brutal, its context, with Smollet unable to retaliate since he is at the wrong end of a shotgun, gives the scene a deeper sense of injustice. As has been noted, the murder in the narrative of “Wet Saturday” is completely

⁶ The Hitchcock programme further ‘de-emphasise[d] the more gruesome aspects of’ [John Collier’s] story by ‘changing the occupation of Herbert from doctor to metallurgist. Thus we are spared reference to him dismembering poor Hermione’ (Mogg 2004: internet article).

elided. It has been committed before we join the drama. And yet this depiction of violence is probably the most gratuitous of all in a Hitchcock-directed programme.

Also, in the second garage scene, once Smollet has been roughed up, he is forced to drop Withers' corpse into the sewer. Again, in comparison to other shows in which dead bodies are seen on-screen (cf. "One More Mile To Go", "Lamb To The Slaughter", "The Crystal Trench"), "Wet Saturday" borders on prurience. The murder may not have been shown, but the results of that murder are presented in a series of close shots as Smollet drops the corpse down the drain. Withers' face is not concealed from us; the fact of his death is conveyed with little feeling of the presence of a self-censoring influence.

"Four O'Clock"

There are a number of key instances where the programme elides violent acts. When Paul Steppe (E.G. Marshall) is attacked by the young burglars (Harry Dean Stanton and Tom Pittman), the prolonged struggle between the characters is shown on-screen. The thieves grapple with Paul and drag him back down to the cellar. Paul manages to break free and he runs out of the cellar door and outside. However, we do not follow the fight. Instead, over a shot of the door, on the soundtrack we hear the punch which knocks Paul out. The youths return carrying Paul's unconscious body.

Unlike the violence of "Wet Saturday", "Four O'Clock" pulls its punches. The television censorship authorities had passed such violent action before without any particular problems and 'Suspicion' aired at 10 to 11 p.m.

EST each Monday on NBC, half an hour later than Hitchcock's own series at the time.⁷ The decision to show Paul receiving his knockout blow off-screen means we do not learn which of the two young burglars delivered the punch. However, there is little reason to believe the blow was elided in an attempt to equalise our reactions to the two youths. The rest of the scene shows them as different characters; one is far more mercenary and cool than the other. Bill (Tom Pittman) is the leader of the pair, suggesting they continue to rob the house even after their confrontation with Paul, and giving Harry orders to find suitable materials to bind Paul. Harry (Harry Dean Stanton) is eager to leave but is persuaded to see the job through by Bill.

A further example of the programme's queasiness in relation to on-screen violence comes after the clock has reached four without the expected explosion. Fran (Nancy Kelly), Paul's wife asks the doctor (Vernon Rich) if it is necessary for Paul to wear a strait-jacket:

Fran: Doctor, does he have to be put in that?

Doctor: There's no choice Mrs. Steppe. It's as much for his own safety as ours. He can injure himself as well as someone else. You saw what he did a moment ago and we can't tell when he might do it again.

⁷ Perhaps these differences may be linked to the networks on which each programme was broadcast. It is possible they had different policies or in-house rules relating to the amounts of permitted violence.

The doctor alludes to another violent episode not shown on-screen, this time because we have joined this scene in the cellar ‘a moment’ too late.

The second elision of violence, supposedly perpetrated by Paul off-camera, is also related to the representation of insanity. With Paul’s outburst elided, his insanity, conveyed by his slightly addled take on recent events, is rendered passive. As with Tom Ewell as Pelham, insanity is acceptable as long as it is not associated with violent or irrational behaviour. One might perceive a similar censorship of insane behaviour in the fade to black as the real Pelham smiles his mad smile.

The elisions of Paul’s violent fit and his fight enable us to conjure up in our own minds the images the programme withholds. As with all kinds of censorship, it can be harnessed as an aesthetic approach, to sketch events in broad strokes and allow the viewers to provide their own details. There is less at stake in Hitchcock’s implication of violence in “Four O’Clock” than in “Revenge”. In the series debut, Hitchcock integrates his elisions into the larger narrative structure so we can never be sure what happened to Elsa Spann. In “Four O’Clock”, what we cannot see does not have such central bearing on our experience and interpretation of the narrative.

There seems to be no explanation to account for the squeamishness of “Four O’Clock” compared with the brutality of “Wet Saturday”, since they share their main creative personnel. Therefore, the most likely explanation must take into account that different external sensibilities were at work during the two productions. ‘Suspicion’ had a different sponsor and was shown on a different network to ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’. These distinct outside influences are the

most likely explanation for the programmes' variable presentation of violence. Furthermore, "Four O'Clock" was the series debut for 'Suspicion'. Perhaps it was felt the violence should be inhibited so as to withhold some sensational ammunition (or goodwill with censors) for later programmes.

Censorship is only one production issue affecting the form and content of the Hitchcock shows. The elision of story events is also influenced by the form of the short anthology drama - events go undramatised through lack of screen time. Considerations of time restrictions lend themselves to particular story-telling strategies including voice-over narration, in order to present information in a time-efficient way. The following chapter will explore Hitchcock's varied use of voice-over on television.

CHAPTER FOUR

Voice-over - Address, Audience & Context

Voice-over is one aspect of Hitchcock's programmes rarely discussed in any detail. The reasons for this general omission are difficult to conceive since Hitchcock's use of voice-over is one of the most interesting elements of his television work. Hitchcock used voice-over narration in a small but significant number of his theatrical films. Within television, he employed the device frequently.

Voice-over generally refers to the post-production addition of a human voice track to the images of the film or programme. A number of different types of voice-overs occur in Hitchcock's programmes. Hitchcock chose a mode which was an effective form for the narrative in question. This chapter will be an analysis of the implications of Hitchcock's use of voice-over for the creation of meaning and its roles within the programmes' narratives. The integration of

Table 1: Voice-Over Use in Hitchcock's Television Work

	Temporal status of the voice-over	What is on-screen as we hear the voice-over?	Voice-over source	Programme examples	Voice-over address
1	In 'real-time', grounded in the present	The character whose 'voice' we hear, also in 'real-time'	The mind of the diegetic character we see on-screen	1 "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" 2 "Four O'Clock" 3 "Dip In The Pool" 4 "Breakdown"	1 The audience 2 The audience 3 Internal thought process to explain story to audience, but with no obvious elements making the audience aware it is being addressed 4 Internal thought process to convey character to audience, but with no obvious elements making the audience aware it is being addressed
1a	In 'real-time', grounded in the present	Once pattern 1 has been established, particular examples occur where it continues on the soundtrack even though its 'owner' has disappeared from view	The mind of a diegetic character	"Breakdown"	Internal thought process to convey character to audience, but with no obvious elements making the audience aware it is being addressed
2	The voice-over introduces the tale as one from the past with no scenes depicting characters in the present	Images referred to by the voice-over.	The mind of a diegetic character	"The Crystal Trench"	Strangely disembodied address due to temporal status of the voice-over remaining unspecified
3	The voice-over is grounded in the present but also flows over and introduces scenes from the past	Transitional moments from present to past (traditional flashback formulation) Move from character on-screen to memory sequence in which said character is present	The speech of a diegetic character (which becomes their commentary on their projected memory)	1 "Arthur" 2 "The Case Of Mr. Pelham"	1 Direct address to camera and audience becomes explanatory commentary on past events 2 Another character (the doctor) in the story's present; becomes explanatory commentary on past events
3a	The voice-over is grounded in the present and introduces scenes from the past	Scenes from the past involving the character whose projected memory we are seeing <i>The voice-over is the only spoken sound over these images - it stands in for dialogue between the characters in the scenes</i>	The speech of the diegetic character in charge of the memory on-screen	"The Perfect Crime"	Another character in the story's present

voice-over into Hitchcock's overall narration scheme will be of prime interest but discussion of the programmes will become broader when necessary.

The variations in voice-over may be organised depending on factors related to address and context. 'Table 1' on the previous page schematises the voice-over approaches, commenting upon the various associations between the dismembered voice, story space and time, and mode of address.

Hitchcock did not include voice-overs to bolster failing narrative structures or plots. They are integral to the functioning of each programme. Some uses are more successful than others, but general criticism of the use of voice-over in Hitchcock's television work from some quarters (see Kuhns in Mogg 1999: 138-40) misses the point. We should seek to discover the implications of the choices made by Hitchcock in the production of his television shows and consider how they impact upon style and meaning. We must consider the programmes on their own terms, rather than express disdain if they fail to be the programmes we wish them to be. The voice-over is an important and useful device for many narratives. When the tale requires large movements across space and through time (c.f. "The Crystal Trench"), one might consider it essential. To discount Hitchcock's use of voice-over because he uses it infrequently in his movies is unproductive. With this approach, the programmes are denigrated for simply being distinct from the movies. They are television; we must expect them to be different from film. Within these differences of form, content, style and meaning is where the major interests in these programmes reside.

There are a number of issues underpinning the discussion of the programmes in this chapter. These include: the voice-over source (who is

speaking, when and why); the assumptions voice-over makes about the audience; the temporal and spatial codes of voice-over, how they are used and to what effects; how voice-over sets tone and theme. Table 1 maps out certain patterns for all of Hitchcock's programmes which use different formulations of voice-over. The following chapter will flesh this out for the most interesting examples. For reasons of space, some voice-over examples will not be discussed at length.

“Mr. Blanchard's Secret”

Synopsis

Babs Fenton (Mary Scott), a short-story crime writer, finishes writing a tale. She retires to bed where her husband John (Robert Horton) seems to be sleeping. Despite this, Babs talks to him about their new neighbours, the Blanchards, and weaves a story around them. She concludes that Mr. Blanchard (Dayton Lummis), a University Professor, might have killed Mrs. Blanchard (Meg Mundy) having ‘discovered that she had some secret vice’, to save his academic career.

After being discovered by Mr Blanchard snooping around their house, Babs writes a story based on her idea he has killed his wife. A dramatisation of her plot is shown in a scene projected as if from Babs' thoughts, a play-within-a-play. The melodramatic sequence ends as the fictional alcoholic Mrs. Blanchard is strangled by her husband. Back in the real world, Babs turns to see Mrs. Blanchard. Babs talks with her and is about to get coffee when they are interrupted by Mr. Blanchard who unceremoniously packs his wife off home.

Later in the bedroom, Babs reports the Blanchards' behaviour to John. She looks out the window and sees Mr. Blanchard carrying a sack, putting it into his car and driving away. Off-screen, Babs goes to the Blanchard house but can get no answer. She is convinced the sack contained Mrs. Blanchard and calls the police. Babs is about to reconstruct the 'murder' in a story when the doorbell rings. Again, Mrs. Blanchard appears.

Babs confesses she was worried about Mrs. Blanchard's safety. Mrs. Blanchard explains they quarrelled, he stormed off after grabbing a few things, and then she took a sleeping pill to rest. During their conversation, Mrs. Blanchard tries to use a broken silver cigarette lighter. She admires the gadget despite its state. Babs' stew boils over in the kitchen so the women bid one another farewell and Mrs. Blanchard sees herself out. She takes the lighter, glancing frequently towards the kitchen, but Babs does not see her.

Babs returns from the kitchen and realises the lighter has disappeared. She declares to herself she now knows 'what Mr. Blanchard's secret is'. She writes another story with Mrs. Blanchard as a kleptomaniac whose urges have ruined her husband's academic career.

Later, the telephone rings and Babs answers. It is the police, asking her to come to the morgue to identify a body fitting Mrs. Blanchard's description. As Babs leaves for the morgue, the Blanchards stand outside. Mrs. Blanchard holds out the silver lighter, explaining she had her husband fix it, because 'he's awfully good at that sort of thing'.

“Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” does not involve voice-over for most of its length. The exposition uses the device to provide its audience with information about its protagonists, their roles and their character traits. More intriguingly, Hitchcock uses it to imply links between his role as director and the fictional role of Babs Fenton, who is a short-story writer. Hitchcock is not solely using the device to convey character information; he develops it into a self-reflexive commentary on storytelling, latent violence and his directorial control.

In their rush to denounce “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” as a ‘rehash’ of the plot of Hitchcock’s movie Rear Window,¹ critics have side-stepped any serious consideration of the programme. Although not one of Hitchcock’s masterpieces, “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” does contain subtleties of meaning. These achievements are particularly associated with the programme’s exposition and voice-over.

The programme takes the realm of fiction as its subject and is an exercise in considering the effects of Babs’ imagination. Her job as a writer defines her as a person with imagination. However, the beginning of the narrative is presented to also foreground Hitchcock’s work, his agency in the story. The presentation links Babs’ role (and her job) with that of Hitchcock as real-life storyteller.

The first image of the narrative is a printed page, the final sheet of a murder-mystery which Babs proof-reads. Babs’ hand, holding a pencil, moves along the text. The fully visible lines of manuscript are reproduced below in the *exact* form they appear on-screen:

¹ See Chapter Five for further discussion of this critical tendency.

drawn tightly across the windows.
Now she was sleeping so soundly
that she did not hear the stealthy
step on the stairs or the sound of
the door handle being quietly turned.
Suddenly she awoke with a start --
She tried to scream but no sound
would come. Numb with fear, she
stared at the advancing figure.
As his hands went around her throat,
too late she realised the terrible
mistake she had made.

The ending of Babs' story is told in the third person, but is replete with references to the female victim's mental events. Babs' narrative story voice has access to the thoughts of the woman. For example, the reader is told 'she did not hear' the attacker's approach and 'she realised' her mistake too late. The story's form introduces the idea of projection, that Babs can create then probe characters' minds. This echoes Babs' projection of imagined mental events on to the Blanchards. She spends the programme putting thoughts, opinions and motivations into the minds of others, and is always wrong.

In the first moments of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret", as we watch the hand trace the words on the page, Hitchcock's presentation draws our attention to his own presence. These moments instantly set up Babs as Hitchcock's proxy story narrator, creating a link between the two so the voice-over narration may be

considered applicable to both Babs and Hitchcock. Babs' hand tracks along the sentences; she reaches 'realised' on the penultimate line, which reads:

too late she realised the terrible

Her pencil stops and she scores through the 's'. She places a 'z' above the crossing-out. An instant after this is complete, the image cuts to Babs sitting at a desk, lit by the single desk-lamp. She writes briefly and then sets her things down as if finished with her task.

There are two aspects of this first image and Babs' corrections evident to sharp-eyed readers. Babs replaces the 's' in 'realised' with a 'z'. Although the use of either 'z' or 's' is acceptable in UK-published books, those printed in America strongly favour the 'z' form.²

Hitchcock presents a visual analogy of one particular aspect of his own life. Babs' correction of 'realised' to the American form could be seen as Hitchcock's acknowledgement of his recently altered nationality, from English subject to American citizen. Hitchcock officially became an American on 20th April, 1955 (Spoto 1983: 362), only five months before the first broadcast of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' in the same year, and seventeen months before the filming of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" (18th, 19th and 22nd October 1956).

² This impression is based on an informal study of the "-ise" or "-ize" form used in various books printed in the UK and USA. The "-ize" form will be referred to as the "American" form from this point onwards.

The possibility that Hitchcock's gesture towards the American authorities and people might be heart-felt and unguarded is swiftly negated if one considers the corrected line once more, noting the incontestable error in the final word:

Z
too late she realised the terrible

The spelling of terrible as 'terible' is wrong on both sides of the Atlantic. But Babs, distracted by the alteration of 'realised' to 'realized', the spelling of which is contentious and mostly dependent on nationality, misses the more obvious error. This second, incorrect spelling, tempers what might be viewed as Hitchcock's gesture of gratitude for his Americanisation. Babs is distracted from a real error by her compulsion to use the American 'realized', asserting her nation's preferred form of spelling. The American form of English is shown to be misguided (if not wrong). Hitchcock is acknowledging his own altered nationality, but also tempering what might be construed as total enthusiasm for his new citizenship, by showing Babs, an American, to be fallible because she misses the true error in 'terible'. Nationality inhibits rationality.

The two different spelling mistakes also introduce the concept of different levels of 'right-ness', especially in relation to Babs' character. One error in the sentence is certainly an error; the other is a matter for debate. Spelling corrections and language rules are frequently ambiguous. Babs' behaviour consists of testing her imaginative and sensational hypotheses in the light of facts as she sees them. By her alteration of 'realised' and her failure to spot 'terible', Babs' judgement of what is right is immediately called into

question. This first image is a warning not to trust our narrator's judgement. She cannot proof-read a sentence from her own short story correctly; what hope does she have of interpreting the events surrounding the mysterious Blanchards?

Hitchcock has asserted his presence within the teleplay's narrative in the first image. He also creates a connection between his own biography and the actions of Babs on screen correcting her manuscript. The association between Babs and Hitchcock prepares a context for Babs' voice-over to become the next means by which Hitchcock reinforces their shared attributes and further declare his directorial presence.

The voice-over begins during the first image of the manuscript. Babs scans the lines with her pencil and she reaches the end of the line which reads:

stared at the advancing figure.

At this point, the voice-over begins:

Babs: [off-screen voice-over] Poor woman. It's a shame I had to kill her off that way. A psychiatrist would probably say that I had some [pause] hidden homicidal tendencies [cut to Babs on-screen, sat at her desk] or something.

On the pause, Babs replaces the 's' in 'realised' with the American 'z'. It is a psychological pause, as if her words temporarily freeze in her mind as the task of writing interferes with her thoughts. This places the voice-over firmly within the

present. We are cued to assume the voice-over is emanating from Babs as she proof-reads.

Babs is reflecting on her psychology as a teller of murderous stories. Her monologue continues as she puts the finishing touches to the piece:

Babs: [Voice-over] Who knows? If I didn't get it off my chest by writing mystery stories, I might end up by committing a few murders myself.

Writing, or story-telling, is an outlet for latent violent tendencies, urges which might otherwise prove murderous. The monologue continues:

Babs: [Voice-over] Phew! [Babs is seen to shrug her shoulders at this moment, but her lips do not move.] I'm glad it worked out this way, of course. It's so much healthier! [She straightens her papers into a neat pile and places the script back on the desk. She looks satisfied. The camera tracks back slightly to keep Babs in frame as she stands.] Also pays better!

[She switches off the lamp and pushes the chair under the desk.]

At the beginning of this extract, Babs expresses her relief that she only imagines murders rather than committing them. Her 'Phew!', heard as her thoughts, is mirrored on-screen by her shoulder shrug. The release of bodily tension echoes the voice-over's relief. The monologue is thus further reinforced as the manifestation of Babs' thoughts in real-time; we are meant to consider her words

as being thought and conveyed to us at the moment we hear them. The monologue is both thought and narration, an unspoken soliloquy. The earlier pause in the monologue, as Babs corrected the word 'realised', hinted at this interpretation. The timing of the shrug with the audible 'Phew!' confirms it.

With this point in mind, the visual elision of time which occurs next has a curious effect on the narrative presentation. Babs' monologue continues unbroken during the dissolve [described in brackets] below:

Babs: Otherwise I would say I was pretty normal, even though my husband... [A dissolve begins, as Babs exits the room, from this shot to a right-panning shot of Babs entering the bedroom] ...John doesn't always agree with me.

Babs is seen to walk across the bedroom to her seemingly sleeping husband.

The dissolve elides screen-time but the supposedly real-time thoughts are not similarly interrupted. There is a flexibility in narrative presentation via Babs' thought processes. Hitchcock does not abide by strict rules of time and space. Earlier (with the pause and the shrug), image coincides with corresponding thoughts. Here, Hitchcock jettisons this logic and elides time and space. Sound and vision fall out of synchronisation.

The effect of this temporal elision is to bring the figures of Babs and Hitchcock closer together. The ellipsis foregrounds Hitchcock's agency, yet it also blurs the real-time thought/narration of Babs. Hitchcock melds his agency as

the programme's director with Babs' agency as intimate narrator. The moment binds them together in the seconds of the dissolve.

As has been noted, the voice-over is supposed to be Babs' thoughts. However, it is used to convey to us information about her life Babs should know: it is aimed at an audience, even though it is meant to be the interior workings of Babs' brain. For example, she says: '...even though my husband, John...'. She is telling us his name, something which she knows. Later on, she also explains that John is 'a lawyer, corporations mostly'. The detail of this information gives the impression this voice-over is emanating from Babs' mind with a conception of an audience.

The manner in which Babs 'thinks' facts in order to present them to us is another way in which the narration is complicated. Babs' narrating duties are partially usurped by Hitchcock's background presence as the *uber* story-teller. The tale Hitchcock plans to tell requires Babs to give information she should possess (her husband's name, his job, the fact he is her husband). It is placed there to facilitate his role as the production's author, to give us a brief, efficient, informative exposition.

The context for the narration is unclear. There is no particular occasion for this voice-over to occur when it does. This makes the narration more intimate. Babs is addressing us directly through her thoughts as we watch her on-screen. We have no other context within which to react to her address so we feel privileged to hear her inner voice.

Babs' monologue echoes Hitchcock's own situation. They share the vocation of storyteller and as Babs reflects on her job and her personality, the

presentation of these thoughts is such that Hitchcock is encouraging us to perceive in them aspects of himself. Babs ends her monologue with the following:

Babs: Right now I'm beginning to think some pretty strange things about the people next door. If I thought about it enough, I could really build it up into a production. Knowing me, I probably will.

Babs begins to talk on-screen, in real-time. Her thought/narration ends, never to return, and she asks John if he is awake. The story (or production) begins.

Babs is a writer, she produces stories, but these tales are usually described as 'productions' only once they move into the realms of television, film or theatre (once adapted for another medium). The use of 'production' to describe the train of wild thoughts which ensues, is important. It is another connection between Babs and the real producer of this story, the person who is adapting the tale for television: Hitchcock. Just as Babs is about to weave a story around the facts of the Blanchards' odd behaviour, so Hitchcock is producing the story of Babs Fenton and her obsession.

A later comment upon this self-reflexivity occurs when Babs snoops in the Blanchard's house. As she steps into the bedroom, she comments: 'Looks like a set! Ready for the lady to enter on cue'. Within the context of Babs' story, she believes Mrs. Blanchard to be dead and Mr. Blanchard to be covering up this fact. However, Babs' comments also refer to her own movements within the

bedroom, actions directed by Hitchcock. She is the lady who has ‘entered’ this bedroom, which is indeed a set, ‘on cue’ for Hitchcock’s ongoing production.

In the presentation of this self-reflexive ‘re-hash’ of Rear Window, Hitchcock is able to make subtle commentary on his storyteller role and contemplate the boundaries of truth and fiction. The overall narrative of “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret”, to this viewer at least, is flawed in a number of ways and the dénouement of its irritating cautionary tale is flat and lacking flair. However, its first few minutes provide an example of Hitchcock’s skill in creating an effective and philosophical introductory passage, rich in meaning and interest and integrating style and theme, from an exposition sequence. It is unfortunate the rest of the programme is disappointing in comparison but this should not detract from Hitchcock’s achievement.

Hitchcock was not alone in his series in using voice-over to integrate theme and form. “The Long Shot”, discussed earlier, achieves this in its opening moments. Its initial creation of uncertainty surrounding its narrator links neatly with the programme’s concern with certain characters’ true identities. Hitchcock in “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” is able to extend his integration of theme and form further into the drama and broaden its contemplation to abstract ideas (truth and fiction) and link it to his personal concerns. Conrad (2000) describes ‘The uxurious [sic], domesticated Hitchcock’: ‘Restless, rankling imagination made him an artist, and it also made him an imaginary murderer’. The richness of Hitchcock’s use of voice-over in this programme comes partly from an acknowledgement that it speaks to us about one of his intimate traits. His

sympathies with Babs Fenton emanate from his personal interest in tales of crime and murder (see Donald Spoto 1994: 32-4).

“Breakdown”

Synopsis

Mr. Callew (Joseph Cotten) is a ruthless businessman. He demonstrates this by sacking a distraught employee over the telephone from Florida. He intends to travel back to his New York office by car.

Next day, Callew is on the highway, driving to New York. Through a sun-hazed windscreen, he sees a detour caused by a prison ‘chain-gang’. Noticing Callew, one of the guards beckons him past. Callew begins to drive forwards but a digger appears from behind trees on his left. The digger hits his car which in turn hits the rear of the truck. The prison guards between the truck and Callew’s car are crushed.

After he wakes up, Callew remains incapacitated but aware of what happens around him. He is unable to draw attention to the fact he is still alive.

Callew is finally taken to the morgue. Callew bangs with a finger he can move but the rescuers are making too much noise. He decides to start tapping his finger again when they take him through on a gurney, but it is drowned out by its squeaky wheels. Callew is left to contemplate a night alone in the morgue.

Callew wakes the next day. He hears voices and prepares to tap to attract attention again. The coroner (Harry Shannon) and his assistant Jessie (Marvin Press) uncover his face. Callew realises he is lying on his left hand. He has been moved while unconscious and cannot move his finger.

Callew is distraught. He begs the men not to go, to take his pulse, anything that will prove he is alive. The coroner notices that Callew, in his emotional state, is crying. Callew's emotion saves his life.

The use of voice-over narration in "Breakdown" seems inevitable. The subject-matter of the paralysed but conscious Callew would be virtually impossible to convey on-screen without the use of an interior monologue from that character being presented to us at some point. One might invent alternative scenes for the programme to dramatise the situation, for example a scene in Callew's New York office where colleagues question his whereabouts. However, the decision to stay with Callew necessitates the use of voice-over, at least at the risk of presenting an extremely dull programme. "Breakdown" is frequently accompanied by the real-time voice-over of Callew. Perhaps one of the strangest of all the Hitchcock shows, "Breakdown" is an extended experiment in paring the presentation of a television narrative to the bone.

Hitchcock's experiments within the cinema are well-known: spatially restricted settings in Rear Window and Lifeboat; long takes in Rope (1948, Transatlantic, U.S.A.) and Under Capricorn (1949, Transatlantic, U.S.A.); rapid montage in the shower murder in Psycho. In "Breakdown", Hitchcock turns to investigate the veracity of Lev Kuleshov's famous experiments in editing. Joseph Cotten is Hitchcock's 'blank' actor placed against various images.

The majority of the programme is reliant on voice-over since it delivers crucial pieces of narrative information and is our main means of experiencing the

thoughts and feelings of Callew. The paralysed businessman makes his thoughts known to us through voice-over.

After the car accident, Callew is set adrift in a cruel world, a world full of ‘ghouls’ and ‘criminals’ as he puts it. All he has left is his perception of his predicament. He is unable to affect the world; he is an element in it that must take direction from others who have the capacities to act within the world. Steve Mamber (1971: 3) notes how the crash in “Breakdown” has a similar narrative function to the majority of the events of North By Northwest. The film’s incidents slowly strip away the assumptions made by Thornhill about the nature of his world. Callew’s ability to act within the world is taken away by the more immediate (and television-friendly) incident of the crash.

The blackout at the end of the crash sequence represents Callew’s loss of consciousness. The first image after the crash fades up from black and it is perhaps surprising that it is not a straightforward point-of-view (POV) shot, also from Callew’s position within the scene. The image is a blurred vision of the top of the driver’s side door of Callew’s convertible car and we are strongly cued to consider it as Callew’s visual POV at first. The image becomes focused, then blurs again as Callew’s echoing voice-over narration is heard for the first time on the soundtrack:

Callew: [Voice-over] Why is everything so fuzzy? It’s like ... dust on my eyes. How could that be?

The image blurs and sharpens several times and the link is made between these images and Callew's perception. Although not a particularly convincing presentation of the vision of a person with dusty eyeballs (whatever that might look like), the image is strongly tied to Callew's visual perception.

Furthermore, since we hear the voice-over with the blurring and sharpening image of the car door, before we even see Callew, a strong link is made between Callew's consciousness and the camera's image. We are not simply witnessing Callew's vision; instead, the whole sequence of his paralysis seems to be influenced by Callew's thought processes, delivered to us through the ethereal voice-over technique.

When we finally see Callew and the position he is in, pinned back on to the car seat by the steering column, looking upwards and straight ahead, we realise the images of the side door are not a faithful presentation of his spatial position or the direction of his static gaze. We seem to be experiencing the scene from his peripheral vision, as if the image of the side door is what he can see out of the corner of his eye. The presentation of Callew's POV is not restricted to showing the objects which are placed right in front of him. The ability for Callew's vision to be rendered in this flexible manner is important for the rest of the scenes in the car. When the locals arrive to loot the car, Callew sees them as they stand to his left, while the characters look directly to camera (so directly at Callew). Hitchcock's use of the side-door image to present Callew's POV in the first instance after the accident sets up this adaptable sense of POV for the rest of the sequence. The POV does not merely relate to Callew's vision, but his broader perception. Tied as it is to the vision of a paralysed man, Hitchcock's flexible

approach to Callew's vision is a wise choice. The advantages of Hitchcock's choice can be seen in the very first image of the scene (the blurring and sharpening image of the car door and the woods beyond). Callew is actually facing the sky; hardly the most interesting image for viewers to watch for some time before the release of the edit. Also, the focusing and blurring effect would have been difficult to convey effectively with a view of distant clouds.

Callew begins his voice-over by questioning all of his senses one by one. He begins with his sight, then his ability to move and feel, then his hearing. His voice-over also sets the scene for the flexible depiction of his POV and perception. It is worth noting the pattern of image and voice in some detail here as an example of Hitchcock's approach:

[1. The first image is that described above, the side of the car door which becomes unfocused three times. The image, as with all the following shots, is rendered with a static camera. In fact, it is likely a number of shots of Callew in close-up are freeze-frames - 22 seconds]

Callew: Why is everything so fuzzy? It's like, like dust on my eyes. How can that be? Hey, I can't

[2. cut to first image of Callew pinned behind the wheel - a close-up, Callew facing up and screen-left - 21 seconds]

close them! I can't, I can't move! Anything! I can't feel, I'm, I'm paralysed. But maybe, maybe if I concentrate I'll... No. No it won't work I can't move.

[3. cut to next image of Callew behind the steering wheel - a medium close-up taken frontally, looking down on him in the car - 19 seconds]

I'm a... I'm... Wait a minute. Wait a minute now. It won't do any good to get in a sweat. I'm alive at least, and I'm not in pain. There's the little feeling of pressure on my chest or in it

[4. jump-cut to closer framing from same position as last shot. Callew's head fills approximately 60% of the screen - 18 seconds]

or something. My head feels kind of tilted back a little too, somehow, but nothing hurts. And there's no use worrying about what's wrong with me now, I'll find out when they get me out of here. It won't be long, somebody will come soon.

[5. jump-cut to extreme frontal close-up of Callew's face, which completely fills the frame - 9 seconds]

I'll just lie and wait; that's all I can do. At least I can see.

[6. cut to first image of the car door (image 1.), out of focus - 5 seconds]

It's lucky I'm not looking right at the sun.

[7. cut to extreme close-up, as shot 5. - 9 seconds]

It's so quiet. Am I deaf? [Slow fade-up of birdsong.] No. No, I can hear.

[8. cut to extreme close-up of Callew's nose and mouth - 6 seconds]

Those are birds. It's just quiet,

[9. cut to image from behind and right of bulldozer blade. Past the blade in the middle and right side of the frame is Callew's car. Callew is still visible frame-right. Frame-left is the rear of the prison truck. The background shows trees and landscape - 4 seconds]

very quiet. Where is everybody?

[10. cut to another image of crash scene with bulldozer frame-left, the car frame-right and the truck beyond Callew's car - 5 seconds]

It must have killed the guards but not the prisoners, all of them.

[11. cut to Callew in close-up, facing up and frame-left, as shot 2. - 7 seconds]

Maybe they went for help; probably just escaped. Well,

[12. jump-cut to closer framing of Callew in semi-profile, facing up and frame-left - 7 seconds]

somebody will come before long. After all, it's a detour on a main highway. But what if they

[13. cut to as shot 9. of crash scene - 5 seconds]

opened the highway right after I passed? What if I was the last one on this detour? Then

[14. cut to medium shot level with Callew's head. He is seen through a jagged hole in car windscreen - 4 seconds]

it might be... No, that's, that's too fantastic.

[15. cut to as shot 10., the crash scene from behind Callew's car. Three figures emerge from behind the bulldozer. The voice-over has stopped and one of the three men speaks.]

It is clear Hitchcock uses the pattern of editing and voice primarily to convey Callew's thought process and perception of his situation. In the first section of the scene, the cuts are less frequent - approximately twenty seconds per shot for

the first four images, as Callew is most occupied with a sense of self-awareness and what he can perceive in the exterior world. As Callew first expresses a sense of helplessness in the situation ('I'll just lie and wait; that's all I can do'), the editing pattern changes. The fifth shot lasts only nine seconds.

Once Callew's voice-over ponders on why he has not been discovered, the editing pattern is quickened again. He is thinking about matters beyond his control and this anxiety is reflected in the shortening of shot durations. We are given briefly-held shots of the crash scene which Callew cannot see, but are instead reflections of his knowledge of the crash. He is aware he must have killed the guards who were at the back of the truck. The crash scenes underscore his perception, contained not within POV, but in the information contained in the voice-over.

Callew's voice-over is coming from his consciousness in real-time. His thoughts are emanating from his mind and finding their way on to the soundtrack as a spoken monologue as he thinks. His self-perception is partly for the audience's benefit. The fact he feels no pain explains why he cries no tears of agony. Sound is used to present his viewpoint by the occurrence of the birdsong on the soundtrack as his perceptual attention shifts to his hearing. We are thus informed he will hear the speech of other characters and the tapping noise he makes later with his finger.

Ironically, at this stage (and later) Callew is still convinced 'It won't do any good to get in a sweat'. Sufficient emotion for him to cry is only wrung from him when he realises his survival will otherwise go undiscovered. Joseph Cotten's face is fundamental to the believable portrayal of the unemotional and

rational Callew. Hitchcock employed Cotten (in Shadow of a Doubt and Under Capricorn) to play characters that must deceive and keep secrets, concealing aspects of themselves from the outside world, to control the information presented to others. Cotten's unconventionally handsome, weather-worn, leathery face conveys an inscrutability of character. His eyes enhance this effect, since they are often tiny slits, closed against the light by thick skin above and below. His is a closed face. Cotten also has an air of dignity and formality, an aspect of his persona which further inhibits the presentation of spontaneous emotional responses.

Cotten's voice is also crucial to the programme. It is no surprise he had been chosen to star in the radio version of the story (Charles Huck in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 16). His vocal performance for Hitchcock's television version is an outstanding example of control and evocative intonation. Cotten's voice is given the responsibility of maintaining audience interest in Callew and the narrative. Cotten is required to convey the psychological dilemma in which Callew is trapped. Unable to communicate effectively with those around him, he worries about his fate at the hands of undertakers or medical staff, or whether he will ever be discovered. At these moments, Cotten's voice breaks into a querulous, gravelly sob but it is never unintelligible through total lack of control. At these moments of internal crisis when his narration confesses these fears, Cotten's voice never loses its potential to recover, at least not until the end of the narrative, when Callew's final attack of 'weak' emotion strikes. Cotten's voice-over monologue is a masterful performance. Some credit for the success of the

programme must be given to Cotten. Of all Hitchcock's television programmes, "Breakdown" is the most reliant on a vocal performance by its main star.

The anger Callew shows earlier in the programme, particularly when stripped, is of no use in conveying his continued existence. In Callew's paralysed state, anger cannot elicit an alteration in his face which would be readily discernible by the people around him. He has no control over his face (he cannot close his eyes or mouth). The tear is the only emotional function requiring no movement of muscle or bone to show itself and invoke a response from others. He must accept his passivity and, in so doing, express a sign of his weak personal position. The tear is something from within Callew that escapes him, something he cannot help but release into the world. Ironically, it is this act of uncharacteristic abandon that saves him.

"The Crystal Trench"

Synopsis

[The story is told through the voice-over of Mark Cavendish (James Donald), a mountaineering Englishman. His reminiscences about his first visit to the Swiss Alps in September 1907 trigger the story.]

On his arrival at an Austrian hotel, Cavendish sees his friends, Frederick (Harald O. Dyrenforth) and Hans Blauer (Otto Reichow), arguing with another man (Oscar Beregi). The man insists he has seen two climbers on the Schwartzhorn's south side.

Later, the hotelier (Ben Astar) gives Mr. Cavendish bad news: the man who saw men on the Schwartzhorn was right. A party of three went to climb the

mountain four days ago, carrying provisions for only three days. The guide, Herr Ranks (Werner Klemperer), and one of the young Englishmen, George Liston, have survived, but the other man, Michael Ballister, died and they left his body on the peak. The hotel manager requests Cavendish, as a fellow English person, break the news to Stella Ballister (Patricia Owens), Michael's wife of only six months.

Cavendish plucks up the courage to tell her the news. He offers to bring Ballister's body down. However, as the Blauers and Cavendish attempt to retrieve it, it slides into the top of a glacier.

Cavendish feels guilty, unable to grant Mrs. Ballister her wish. He is also falling in love with her. But Mrs. Ballister cannot let go. She vows to remember Michael in expanded, intricate detail; to live her future through the past, thus keeping her husband alive.

Cavendish and Stella return to London where he courts her. He proposes to her, but she refuses, telling him their visit to an academic that afternoon will explain why she cannot accept. They visit Professor Kersley (Patrick Macnee) who answers a question posed by Stella. He tells them the exact date when Michael Ballister will emerge from the lower end of the glacier: June 21st, 1947. Stella vows to wait for him.

Forty years later, now old people, Mark and Stella return to retrieve Michael. He is perfectly preserved in ice, as young and handsome as the day he died. Mark takes a silver locket from around Michael's neck and offers it to Stella. She does not take it so Mark opens it, revealing a portrait of a woman who is not Stella.

Despite his voice-over, Mark's status within the programme is undermined by his powerless position within the narrative. Stella makes all the decisions. Mark's is a lamenting voice, pondering on what could have been as well as what actually happened. As a result, his opening voice-over is sombre and resigned as well as informative and engaging. Mark's is a voice that, in its tone, conveys its prior knowledge of the story's bleakness and his impotence within the story world.

The voice-over is echoed, implying it is from or related to the past. Mark's voice-over is not explained by his telling the tale to anyone in the present. As with Babs in "Mr. Blanchard's Secret", his voice emanates from his mind to be registered on the soundtrack. Unlike Babs, we do not see Mark as his narration begins. This creates an eeriness, a disconcerting mode of address which raises questions: Who is this person whose foreboding reminiscences we hear? What is his relation to the story events?

The beginning of Mark's narration emphasises personal particulars, as well as giving us information:

Mark: [Voice-over] [Low-angle shot of an arched bridge cutting through mountains. A train crosses the bridge left-to-right]

I had come from London that Wednesday on my first visit to the Alps. Strange after so many years I should remember it was a Wednesday, a Wednesday in September, nineteen-hundred and seven.

[Slow lap dissolve to another low-angle image of the train passing in front of mountains]

I came up the valley by train.

We learn the action will begin in the Alps, that our narrator has travelled from London, and that the train we see is meant to be the one he took that day. We also learn this is a tale of the past, set in 1907. The slight echo on the narrating voice is further justified by this historical setting.

However, we also hear Mark remembering the day as a Wednesday, a fact that, through its double repetition, seems to be impressed on our minds as we listen. It is not the fact the day was Wednesday which seems to be of importance, rather it is the kind of memory it represents which is emphasised. In terms of exposition or later developments, the memory is inconsequential (the plot does not turn on the Wednesday fact). Mark's remembrance that he travelled there on that weekday is a personal and human one, a fragment of knowledge lodged in his mind. It offers an opportunity for Mark to reflect on the nature of his own mind ('Strange after so many years I should remember it was a Wednesday'), how certain memories remain vivid as others fade and die. Mark's Wednesday memory is also the first example of freezing in the narrative. Just as Mark remembers the day and that memory remains fixed, so does Stella's idealised view of her unfaithful husband, and so does Michael's corpse, intact for years in the glacier.

The invocation of seemingly trivial memory helps define Mark as befuddled and lost in the power of memories and the weight of the past, a sense

consonant with his impotent narrative role. And yet Mark's personalised memory also sets a lamenting, elegiac tone for the story. As Mark says '...I should remember it was a Wednesday', the inflections of his voice are reminiscent of a vicar's sermon. Both 'remember' and 'was' are sustained and 'sung' before a lyrical descent through the words 'a Wednesday'. The end of the phrase is elongated then swallowed before he moves on. Mark's mildly religious intonation conveys his philosophical knowledge. His voice gives him an air of dejected awareness as he sets up the story.

"The Crystal Trench" is one of the least involving entries in the Hitchcock television canon. J. Lary Kuhns describes it as 'one of the weaker episodes' and states that 'Heavy narration and music are used to carry the plot forward' (in Mogg 1999: 140). This is to misunderstand the tonal role of the narration, as has been discussed.

The dialogue in the rest of the programme is also often leaden and monotonous. The visuals are similarly uninspiring for large segments: several conversations are rendered in repetitious shot-reverse-shot which does little to heighten dramatic and emotional content. The tale of lost love, self-delusion and blind devotion is presented in an unaffecting manner. Another important factor in this impersonal address is the lack of POV or interiorising visual structures. Despite the story being related by Mark, this discourse of personal recollection is not echoed or expressed through the tale's visual presentation.

However, this leaden effect is intentional, important to its mode of address and pertinent presentation of 'frozen' characters whose lives are stymied or repressed. Hitchcock's uninvolved style echoes the tale's themes of

emotional limbo and melancholy. Patricia Owens, who plays Stella Ballister, recalls Hitchcock gave her only one piece of direction: ‘Patricia, your voice is too high - lower it’ (quoted in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 276. See note 4, p.17).

Hitchcock’s single instruction to her relates to the reduction in scale or volume of her voice. Hitchcock clearly intended the programme to feel heavy and portentous. Mark’s echoed voice-over, emanating from nowhere in the present and somewhere in the past, is the first indication of this intention.

There are examples of functional uses of voice-over strategies in Hitchcock’s television work. These programmes have been omitted from this chapter’s extended discussion. “The Case of Mr. Pelham” is structured to use voice-over in the first half of the narration (as Pelham explains his situation to a doctor in flashback) but not in the second half. As a result, whenever we need to know Pelham’s thoughts in the latter half, voice-over is not used, to avoid confusion, and is replaced by Pelham speaking to himself out loud on-screen.

“The Case of Mr. Pelham”’s use of voice-over is largely functional. That cannot be said of the examples discussed above. They show Hitchcock was able to use voice-over to effectively set tone, link to narrative themes, build and enhance characterisation, propel narrative or to comment in a self-reflexive manner on his own directorial role or personal concerns.

In the next chapter, another formal element in Hitchcock’s artistry is discussed - his implementation of point-of-view. As with voice-over, Hitchcock uses this device in numerous ways and with differing levels of success in terms of its integration with narrative and theme.

CHAPTER FIVE

Point-Of-View, Viewpoint and the Twist

As Douglas Pye states in 'Movies and Point of View', the concept of POV 'remains very confused' (2000: 2). In broad terms, Pye takes George M. Wilson's 'core concept' on POV as a starting point: [the concept of POV] covers the different ways in which a form of narration can systematically structure an audience's overall epistemic access to narrative' (1986: 3). Close textual analysis throws up many questions on how useful POV is as a critical tool. As Pye notes 'Almost anything and everything [in a film sequence] can be seen in its context as contributing to point of view' (2000: 34). In considering POV, the following analyses concentrate on the programme's various different strategies of controlling narrative information. This may be through POV shots (images which are to be taken as the vision of a narrative character) which are emphasised, 'narrative viewpoint' (see the chapter on censorship above),

ellipses, etc. These elements are obviously not mutually exclusive and are used with varying levels of emphasis in each analysis, depending on their perceived importance. It is felt that the matter of POV should be considered in the broader context of the overall programme, hence the resistance to isolate and prioritise specific shots. This chapter will ask: how successful in the integration of fragment and whole is Hitchcock in television? Are certain programmes more successful than others in terms of this integration? A particular question will be asked about what ways this ‘organic-ness’ is necessary in delivering the kinds of narrative conveyed by the short-form anthology drama format. How does the use of POV relate to the narrative twist?¹

The reason for the title of this chapter might not be immediately apparent. On closer scrutiny of Hitchcock’s programmes, it is evident that a common element in many of the more successful ones is the effective use of POV structures and evocation of narrative viewpoint. Often, these programmes achieve their efficacy largely (but certainly not completely) by presenting characters whose POV and viewpoint we are invited to share at crucial narrative moments. It is not simply a matter of the presence of POV or viewpoint; it is also a matter of timing and the integration of these techniques within the programme as a whole.

The programmes in this chapter have varying levels of success in relation to use of POV, hierarchies of knowledge and viewpoint in the formulation of a narrative with a twist. Where “Revenge” represents the heights of Hitchcock’s

¹ POV has already crept into earlier chapters on censorship and voice-over. This is some indication of the centrality and importance of POV to Hitchcock’s television work.

achievements in television in this regard, “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” is, although interesting, less sustained in its accomplishments. With the possible exception of “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret”, these are all compelling examples of Hitchcock’s television work at its best.

“Revenge”

As has already been noted in relation to censorship, the presentation of “Revenge” raises more questions than it answers. In many ways, “Revenge” is an object-lesson in the rich possibilities of television narrative. Some of the programme’s greatness lies in its structuring of audience knowledge, its mobilisation of character viewpoint and its use of aspects of the television medium in the creation of a deeply ambiguous narrative. It serves as the lead-in programme for this chapter for all of these reasons and more.

“Revenge” refuses to provide answers to the factual, event-centred questions it raises. Does Elsa really get attacked? What is the true nature of her experience while the camera and Carl are away? Does Mrs. Ferguson have any connection with Elsa’s trauma? These questions remain unanswered. As a result, the primary interest in “Revenge” is not to guess the single ‘true’ explanation of the events it presents. Instead, attention becomes diverted to the multiplicity of interpretations opened up by Hitchcock’s design and direction. The ambiguity of the programme is staggering and well in excess of that created by other shows from similarly brief anthology drama series. From a simple tale, Hitchcock makes an enigmatic narrative with economical and evocative images and dialogue. “Revenge” exploits the short drama format and denies audience access

to story information. It uses an imbalance between character and audience knowledge to make its narrative interesting. Wilson's 'core concept' of POV above insists on the centrality of narrative information control and access to any form of story-telling.

Hitchcock's reputation as a narrative artist who deals in stories with a twist is often erroneously credited to his feature films. It is through his television programmes that this reputation was primarily created (McCarty et al 1985: 3). Norman Lloyd, Associate Producer of the series, as well as occasional director of various episodes, emphasised the importance of such endings in his description of the directorial requirements of 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents':

It required a sense of suspense and irony. We did not do a mystery show; nor a detective show. We did a suspense show. In directing them, one had to know how to deliver the twists visually. (Lloyd 1993: 175)

The Hitchcock anthology show shares the narrative twist with many concise narrative forms such as the short story. But how does "Revenge" create and use this characteristic?

The final moments provide the quintessential ending for a Hitchcock programme, turning the viewer's and Carl's perceptions on their heads with a sequence of forceful images. An external pan, following the travelling car, dissolves slowly to a frontal interior shot of Carl and Elsa. They do not talk. Carl looks ahead at the road, Elsa looks out of her side window, and there is a cut to a view of the streets rushing by. The shot is a clue to the twist to come since there

should no longer be a reason for Elsa to be eyeing the streets or for the camera to be interested in her search; her attacker is dead.

The style of the POV shot also helps prepare for the surprise ending. The view from the window gives an image charged with unnatural energy as cars and shops stream past. From Carl's earlier POV, the street scene was much easier on the eye, a less frenetic, calmer representation of the street. Hitchcock's camera placement conveys Elsa's unnatural vision, suggesting her unbalanced mind.

Unlike the earlier POV shot, when Elsa identified her attacker, this shot does not concentrate attention on one particular person on the street. Several blurred figures are seen fleetingly amongst cars and buildings, but the camera does not present any individual as the focus of Elsa's vision.

Elsa appears in close-up again, her face drawn and shadowed. Vera Miles' performance conveys Elsa's blank detachment and hint of inhumanity; her wide, cold eyes barely move. The background is blurred; the sharp back-projection of the street behind the car from earlier close-ups has gone. The lens concentrates attention upon Elsa's face and her character's psychology, preparing us for the revelation.

Elsa looks outside again; unease spreads across her drawn face. She hisses: 'There he is! That's him! That's him!' The performance is multi-layered, not a simplistic depiction of madness. Unlike the previous identification, Elsa's reactions are less human. Her intonation is deranged but overlaid with a sense of automation; it is the second time she has reported seeing her attacker and this identification of him is a near-repetition of the first. Her second 'That's him!' is less forceful than the first, tailing off to a sibilant whisper. Her facial expression

evokes detachment from the situation. During the moments after she speaks, she turns to face forwards and any sense of urgency to act upon her sighting seems to have passed. She is ready to see another man she can identify as her assailant. The camera holds on Elsa and we become aware of her instability. There is malice in her narrowed eyes and slow, smooth, tilted head movement. Deep down, is a part of Elsa conscious of her actions? If so, this part shows in her expression.

The twist marks a significant alteration in Miles' performance. During the programme, her acting has encompassed fear, shock and sensuality, but no malice. Earlier on, she is attractive but not spectacularly. A key element of Miles' appearance is her short, wavy hair that lies close to her head. She is beautiful, but believably so; an attractive woman rather than a stunning film star, an appropriate image for a role involving trailer-park living and marriage to an aircraft engineer.² The hairstyle also helps her to convey the regressive insanity in a role anticipating her similar characterisation as Rose Balestrero in The Wrong Man (1956, Warner Bros., U.S.A.). By emphasising the shortness of her hair, Elsa's earlier glamorous image is altered. Her slightly boyish look now conveys a naïve child-like quality.

After Elsa's chilling words, Carl is shown in close-up, looking frame-left in Elsa's direction. From his POV, the next shot shows her in profile, staring forwards. The blurred street outside rushes past her head, evocative of the

² Kim Newman in The BFI Companion To The Western (Buscombe 1996: 369) describes Miles as an 'ordinarily pretty actress, whose down-to-earth practicality and toughness made her ideally suited to the role of frontier woman in Westerns'.

madness Carl can now perceive in Elsa, and also of his exclusive focus on her, obscuring his surroundings. Elsa's framing in profile is an important aspect of the shot. The profile conveys Elsa's detachment from the world, as she stares off-screen into nothingness. Outwardly, she is passive, while the blurred, racing images around her head express her contrasting inner confusion and mental instability. She is finally seen through Carl's eyes as out of her mind.

Elsa's accusations against an unseen man are the narrative's final words. The shock this line conveys for both audience and Carl is powerfully expressed by the silence. Carl's consternation is so profound he is speechless. He does not question Elsa's utterance; he understands the dreadful implications of her words.

The image returns to Carl in close-up for the final shot. An approaching siren pierces the road noise hum. He looks slightly to the right of the camera, a contemplative gaze, which conveys his sense of doom. He realises he has most likely murdered an innocent man, and he has done so to avenge an insane woman. Carl's face gives no indication he is questioning his vigilantism, or that he now comprehends the repulsiveness of his crime. His is a selfish sense of doom, a fear for his own future rather than a moral sense of remorse.

Ralph Meeker is also an inspired choice for the role of Carl. His face is quite squat and round, but his jaw is well-defined; he is a hybrid of a square-jawed handsome leading man and a slightly overweight man-in-the-street. His face also conveys a dullness of mind due to his prominent brow. Meeker increases this effect by furrowing his brow and leaving his mouth slightly agape.

This lack in intelligence is a factor in Carl's subservience to his wife. However, his servility is primarily a product of their different class backgrounds.

Elsa was a ballet dancer, Carl is an engineer in an aircraft factory. Although these facts are not emphasised as a source of conflict in their relationship, they are key in interpreting these characters. It explains Carl's willing servility as he maintains every aspect of the marital household. After the alleged attack, Carl's deference creates the basis of his unquestioning, loyal, vengeful actions. Once Carl is seen as subservient, it is clear he thinks of his wife as a prize, won despite the rules of social class, and he is determined to keep her.

Carl's unquestioning, automatic responses to the attack set him on an unstoppable, linear pattern of behaviour. He is unable to swerve from the act of revenge. For her part, Elsa need not encourage Carl. She never suggests revenge to him; she reinforces his vengeful behaviour. Her role in the crime is as identifier of her assailant. However, the roots of Carl's actions are in his subservient relationship with Elsa, making her an implicit agent of murder.

The final image of "Revenge" shows Carl in transition from the 'rule' of his wife to the rule of law. He has reached the end of his mechanical behaviour pattern, broken by the realisation of his wife's madness. The siren indicates the beginning of the legal process which will be as rigidly defined and mapped out as his misguided quest for vengeance.³

The narrative has not been presented as a mystery to be solved; the journey is more important than the final goal. On subsequent viewings, we can identify clues to the twist. There are ambiguities in the earlier scenes which create a feeling of unease with the characters, their world and the reliability of

³ This is echoed by Hitchcock in his epilogue appearance in which he lists the separate stages of law in full, from arrest to 'paid his debt to society'.

the image. The first scenes between Carl and Elsa may come across as affectionate interactions presenting a caring and devoted couple. The narrative requires this impression; Carl must be sufficiently dedicated to his wife to kill for her. However, the ambiguous aspects of their relationship call into question the nature of this commitment.

Near the beginning, Carl is woken by an alarm clock at 6 a.m.; he rises from bed and looks down at Elsa admiringly. His look motivates a POV shot of his wife, lying peacefully. In the next shot, he bends down and the camera follows bringing Elsa into frame and he kisses her cheek. The kiss is not passionate or intended to rouse her; rather it has an air of proud ownership about it, consonant with the interpretation of his seeing her as a 'prize'. Elsa stirs contentedly but shows no sign of waking.

On first viewing, this moment seems expressive of Carl's fondness for Elsa. However, even though the kiss is his most convincing display of love for her, it comes when she is sleepily unresponsive. When Elsa is awake, his manner is restrained. He spends his morning avoiding physical contact with her.

The set design, lighting and costume all convey the couple's uneasy relationship. Both characters are in single beds positioned some distance apart. Censorship might have prohibited showing them in a double bed, but their sleeping arrangements need not have been specified at all. The decision to depict the couple sleeping apart opens up the possibility of sexual recoil or hesitancy and a desire to maintain a physical distance. Elsa is glamorously illuminated with back-lighting and shot in soft focus. Her night-gown is decent yet provocative and alluring, exposing arm and shoulder flesh. Carl, conversely, wears pin-stripe

pyjamas completely buttoned, and is starkly lit; shadow, not backlighting, separates him from the trailer walls.

Action and image prepare a context for our response to dialogue, providing further hints at a troubled relationship. Carl speaks first:

Carl: Hey worthless! [Waking and turning to him, Elsa makes a contented, questioning noise]. Breakfast's ready.

Judging from Carl's enunciation, this could be loving banter. He neither emphasises the word 'worthless' nor allows it to pass unnoticed, yet its presence is striking. At this point, we know neither characters' names. Carl says 'worthless' where we expect Elsa's name to be spoken. The word carries both economic and moral connotations. Economically, Elsa is worthless, unemployed and too ill to work. She brings no earnings to the marriage and is not expected to perform housework. In moral terms, 'worthless' is further evidence of Carl's insecurity in his marriage. It is a degrading label, suggesting he thinks she is cheapened by her sexuality. What seems to be lovers' teasing could have its roots deeper in the couple's relationship.

The conversation continues as Elsa lies in bed. She embraces Carl as they talk. They kiss, then Carl makes an issue of his having to get to work on time, justifying his escape from Elsa. He struggles but she maintains her hold. The clock has shown he has spent twenty minutes cooking breakfast for his wife while she slept, but when she shows the desire to have sex, he claims that 'time's a-wastin''. Carl assumes a stereotypical 50s female role by cooking their

breakfast and it seems his interest in making breakfast is stronger than his interest in making love.

The scene shows Carl moving out of view to escape his wife's embrace, ending on her alone, abandoned on her single bed. If the camera had followed Carl to the kitchen, this would have endorsed his needs, aligning us with his urgent desire to escape. Remaining with Elsa emphasises her experience of the situation. We see her good-natured acceptance of Carl's leaving, but the smile is wry, expressing a comprehension of their awkward relationship Carl never exhibits.

Just before Carl leaves the trailer, Elsa coyly refers to her possible 'hidden talents'. Carl's reply is his strongest demonstration of appreciation for his wife while she is awake: 'And some not so hidden'. Elsa seems overly flattered, as if she is not used to compliments from Carl: 'That's a very nice thing for a husband to say, even a somewhat new husband' she replies. 'Well', Carl responds, 'it was never said with better reason'. Striking here is Carl's lack of warmth and spontaneity. 'It was never said' makes him sound as if he is disassociating himself from his own words, even negating them ('never said'). He also implies the compliment is not based on feeling, but unemotional, rational 'reason'. He chooses these cold words over a more sincere, personally committing and simple 'I mean it'. The stilted dialogue exposes their gaucheness within the roles of 'happily married' people.

These examples of Carl and Elsa's flawed relationship have implications for interpretations of character motive. If the couple had been unambiguously presented as untroubled, Carl's desire for vengeance would not be questioned.

Since closer scrutiny reveals their uneasy relationship, Carl's revenge motives fall under suspicion. Is he protecting his 'property' rather than seeking vengeance on Elsa's behalf? The ambiguity present in the characterisation is echoed throughout the narrative, in Hitchcock's visual style and his use of the conditions specific to television production.

To contextualise "Revenge"'s deftness with dialogue and image, we might compare it to the problematic relationship between Dave and Cindy presented in the first moments of "No Pain" (see p35-9 above).

"Banquo's Chair"

Synopsis

Three consecutive titles appear: 'Blackheath, near London'; 'October 23, 1903'; '7:20 PM'.

Inspector Brent (John Williams) visits Major Cooke-Finch (Reginald Gardiner), where the retired policeman has plans to trap a killer.

Shakespearean actor Mr. Stone (Max Adrian) arrives. Brent announces they are all here to investigate a murder. In this house, two years ago to the night, a murder was committed. The victim was an old woman called Miss Ferguson; she had been strangled as she ate supper in the dining room. Her Pekinese dog had also been killed. Stone recalls the police believed the murderer to be someone she knew, since the dog had not been heard to bark. The prime suspect, John Bedford (Kenneth Haigh), had a strong alibi for the time of the murder. Brent intends to scare Bedford into a confession. He has recruited an actress, Miss Thorpe (Hilda Plowright) to play the ghost of Miss Ferguson during their

dinner with Bedford. When she appears, the other men must all pretend not to see her, thus Bedford will believe he is being haunted.

Bedford arrives and the men sit down at dinner. As they talk, the growling and barking of a small dog can be heard. Bedford reacts to the noise but the others keep talking. Various other troubling events occur at dinner. The gas lights suddenly dim, a trick engineered by Brent fitting a gas limiter valve to the supply. Also a loud noise is heard from outside the room and Cooke-Finch asks the butler Lein (George Pelling) to investigate. The butler discovers the front door had blown open in the storm and reports this to Cooke-Finch.

Bedford sees something in the doorway. A woman clad in black with a white face and hands appears as from Bedford's POV. Bedford blinks hard but the image of the woman lingers. She then walks backwards, returning to the shadows. Bedford glances around his fellow diners but they do not react. They do not seem to have seen the figure. Her appearance and disappearance happens several times until the agitated Bedford cracks. He suddenly stands, yelling at the 'ghost': 'Go away! ... Get out whoever you are or I'll kill you again!' The ghost retreats and Brent stands up. Bedford realises the trick and Brent summons Sergeant Balter (Thomas P. Dillon) who arrests Bedford.

Brent, Stone and Cooke-Finch watch the Sergeant and Bedford leave. Brent closes the door, turns and sees Miss Thorpe emerging from another room. He congratulates her on her ghostly performance, but she apologises for being delayed. Miss Thorpe explains she has 'only just this second arrived'; she asks if she is too late to act her part.

“Banquo’s Chair” has thematic links with many of Hitchcock films. Perhaps the most pertinent for the following analysis is to note its ‘central ploy to trap a murderer, reminiscent of Hamlet’s use of “The Mousetrap”’ which has ‘echoes of Murder! (1930) and Stage Fright (1950) (Mogg 2003).

In “Banquo’s Chair”, as with all ‘twisted’ narratives, audience and character knowledge are crucial to the functioning of the story. Brent, Cooke-Finch, Stone and Bedford have differing levels of knowledge of the ruse planned by Brent. Bedford is not meant to know of the plan; he is meant to be the character being tricked. The other three men are ‘in on it’ together.

Audience knowledge is slightly different. We know of the plan, as we have been at the house since Brent arrived to put the finishing touches in place. We learn the details as Cooke-Finch and Stone learn them from Brent. Where audience knowledge and experience and character knowledge most importantly diverge is on the first (and all subsequent) appearances of the ghost. Here there is a split, based on experience of and reactions to the ghost.

The sightings of the ghost are from Bedford’s POV. He is seeing the ghost, even though he is not meant to be seeing it just yet (the actress hired by Brent to play the role has not arrived at the house). His knowledge of the situation is total except for the fact the other trio believe they are laying a trap for him; he is incredulous but ultimately correct. Bedford sees a ghost and believes what he sees, until the three men close in on him after he confesses to murdering his aunt.

Once the ghost appears, the audience believe it to be part of the plan arranged by Brent. However, this turns out not to be the case. Instead, when the

viewers see the ghost, they are seeing something which seems to remain invisible to the other three men at the table. In this way, audience knowledge and experience is slightly ahead of Stone, Cooke-Finch and Brent.

But this situation also results in a slip in audience knowledge concerning these three characters. The issue concerns whether the three men are play-acting when the real ghost appears. Do they see the ghost and believe it to be the actress? Do they continue the ruse in the false belief that the apparition is not the real ghost? Or, do they not see the ghost at all? Is it an exclusively haunting experience for Bedford (and the audience)? Are the three men's reactions to Bedford's extreme agitation simply honest responses? In other words, do they not see the ghost and act accordingly?

The programme meticulously conceals the answers to these questions through a careful use of structures of POV. The individual shots of the ghost are certainly important in the sequence. However, the timings of edits between shots also become crucial to the maintenance of the presentation's ambiguous effect. Any series of shots from the 'haunting sequence' exemplifies the intentionally opaque visual presentation of the scene.

Hitchcock's filming of the sequence demonstrates precision in a number of areas: the selection of what is seen and when; whose POV is being approximated at any given time; and the duration of each take before the next edit. This precision is crucial to the sequence's achievements.

Bedford asks Stone about his feelings for acting, when the audience will not let him leave the stage, wanting him to come back for 'one curtain call after another'. Bedford then looks at the doorway and sees his Aunt's ghost. In the

foreground, part of an elaborate candelabrum intrudes upon the image in the top left corner. The shot is an approximate POV shot and is an identical framing to the previous visions of the ghost which have also been motivated by Bedford's glances. The image cuts to a medium close-up shot of Bedford as he glares at the apparition. Another part of the candelabra extends from mid-frame right across the top of Bedford's head. The shot is held for approximately three seconds before a cut to a medium shot of Stone, looking to frame-right. He stops his answer to Bedford and his countenance changes to one of concern. 'I say, is something the matter?' Stone enquires of Bedford. The previous image of Bedford returns and he says 'No. Nothing, only...' A briefly held two-shot of Brent and Cooke-Finch follows; Brent, frame-left, turns in his seat to follow the gaze of Bedford. Brent's look motivates another POV shot of the space where the ghost has been appearing. The shot which is ostensibly from Brent's POV is exactly the same framing as the image as from Bedford's POV. However, the doorway is now empty; the ghost has once again retreated into the shadows.

From the image of the ghost, as from Bedford's POV to the same shot of the empty doorway without a ghost, supposedly from Brent's POV, this whole sequence lasts approximately eighteen seconds. The timing of the sequence is crucial in sustaining the ambiguous ghost. The time-span between the two POV shots permits a rational explanation as to why Bedford sees the figure and Brent does not: the time between the two shots has been sufficient for the actress supposedly playing the ghost to retreat. The other alternative explanation (that Bedford is the only one to see the ghost) is also possible. But the structure of this moment, exemplary of the sequence as a whole, leaves the way open for the

rational explanation we are being encouraged to accept (that the actress appeared, then left).

The programme has invested so much time in the exposition of the narrative and Inspector Brent's scheme to ensnare Bedford that the audience is encouraged to accept the rational account, rather than assuming it is being duped. Obviously, the audience would also be aware they were watching 'A Hitchcock Programme', wherein there frequently lies a twist, but the programme does its best to sustain the element of surprise, and does so in a manner which, in hindsight and with close textual scrutiny, is honest in its sleight of hand.

The prelude to the appearance of the ghost strongly reinforces a non-supernatural reading of the situation. From what we can see, the plan is continuing perfectly. The lights have been dimmed on command, an event we were cued to expect by Brent and Lein's earlier conversation about the gas valve.

The strongest indication of the plan's success is the barking dog. We first hear the dog as we study Bedford in a medium shot. His face changes from placid attention to Brent's comments on bird-watching, to mild confusion at the sound of the barking dog. From this image, suddenly we are shifted to a shot of Balter teasing a dog with food in the small ante-room next to the dining room. The dog barks and growls with frustration.

The insertion of this image provides us with a new level of understanding of the situation. No dog had been mentioned when we had been shown this room before. It had been referred to as 'the little fellow'. We were certainly aware this room and its occupants would take some role in the plan; this shot of the dog and Balter reveals this role. The moment has a rhetorical power, reinforcing our

perception of the plan's success. We are invited to relate the accurate timing of the barking to the sense that the rest of the plan is also going without a hitch.

Furthermore, Stone, Cooke-Finch and Brent's reactions to the dog tell us they all have an undoubted natural acting ability (despite Cooke-Finch's earlier reservations). They are extremely adept at pretending the barking has not occurred. Their performances at this point cue us to expect a similar ability to lie about the ghost/actress later in the plan.

Hitchcock's insertion of the shot of Balter and the dog in the ante-room might have also served as a warning to us not to take this sequence of events at face-value. Prior to this shot, the dinner scene is presented in a complicated, but transparently edited, pattern of images of the men around the table. Each shot follows the dynamics of the conversation. We are given a sense of being present at the meal because the camera does not simply show the character who is speaking. Instead, our visual attention is shifted between speakers and the reactions of the listeners, similar to perception patterns in a social situation. There is particular emphasis on the reactions of Bedford since us - and the other characters - have been cued to be most interested in his ignorant responses to the situation. The shot of the dog thus draws attention to itself; it drags us away from the situation at the table and is a strong declaration of the camera's presence. In turn, the image is also a notification of Hitchcock's guiding presence. The shot is required to answer possible narrative questions (who is 'the little fellow' referred to earlier? What is his part in the plan?) and it would be difficult to provide

answers without this inserted moment depicting the dog.⁴ But Hitchcock chose to set the question in the first place, by earlier withholding the nature and identity of 'the little fellow'. Balter might have been shown with the dog in that earlier sequence when Brent asks him if he knows the plan. Hitchcock's declaration of his 'presence' during the dinner sequence is intentional.

There is another interruption of the dining room scene, similar to the insertion of the barking dog. However, this move away from the table does not respond to a question previously set by the narrative, it is a 'supernatural' touch which remains unexplained. The dog has barked and then the lights go dim. Lein, the butler, approaches Cooke-Finch to ask if the diners would like more candles since the gas supply to the lights has diminished. His suggestion is refused, but as the butler and Cooke-Finch talk, a loud slam is heard. Cooke-Finch asks Lein to investigate. We cut to the hallway where Lein realises the front door is open and the storm outside is blowing into the house. He closes it and returns to inform his employer that 'The front door had blown open, sir'.

Unlike the barking dog and the gas supply, no previous mention has been made that the front door would be involved in the plan to spook Bedford. The incident is a puzzle, a piece of business which seems to have little bearing upon the situation. After all, the programme has cued its viewers to perceive the plan as proceeding without problems. It is a sceptical and supernaturally aware viewer

⁴ Hitchcock might have left the answer to the end of the narrative, showing Balter and the dog appearing once Bedford had been arrested, but this might have confused the audience whose answers would then come all at once. This would have also taken audience concentration away from the central question of the tardy actress and the ghost.

who, on a first viewing, links the front door blowing open and the first appearance of the ghost.

In retrospect, there is such an association, but it is not strongly underscored. Approximately fifty-five seconds elapses between the sound of the door and the first manifestation of the ghost, a time in which we are asked to listen to Stone's soliloquy on the joys of audience adoration and Bedford's amused yet edgy countenance. The door might well stay in our minds, but the elapsed time and the conversational distractions weaken the possibility of our connecting the door with the ghost. Once again, Hitchcock's timing of shots and the events they depict plays a guiding role in our interpretation.

Of course, we might also consider the possibility that the door has been opened by the actress Miss Thorpe. She might have been aware of the need to enter the house unseen by Bedford (an issue Brent raised with Lein) and thought it best to not make her presence known. Such a rationalisation does not account for why she should make such a commotion by leaving the door open. It is important to raise this possibility, however, since a decision has been made to have the door blow open and not an upstairs window. The normal route of human entry into a house has been chosen to create and sustain uncertainty.

It is also important that Lein is depicted closing the door. It is an example of Hitchcock's even-handedness in his presentation of the disturbances of the dining scene. As with the cut away to the barking dog, Hitchcock declares his camera to us. But in contrast to that previous move from the table, he does so to raise questions rather than answer some. By showing Lein closing the door, we also see he does not collude with another while he is out of Bedford's sight. He

does not usher Miss Thorpe into the house. We are cued to take the incident as important: since Hitchcock takes the trouble to present it to us visually this gives it rhetorical force. Hitchcock might have kept his camera in the dining room to capture more conversation and have Lein simply report about the door.

Other important elements of the dining scene, before the finale, are the topics of conversation. There are two main strands of discussion, Brent's new retirement hobby, bird watching, and Stone's thoughts on the life of the actor. The topics raise matters of perception of others and are in turn connected to the sequence's various POV shots. To take bird watching first, the dialogue on this topic is used, once again, to emphasise that everything is going to plan. The script acts as ironic commentary on Brent's detective abilities and the present circumstances. The following dialogue occurs as the sound of the barking and growling dog is heard for the first time:

Brent: It [bird watching] isn't half as easy as it appears. [The dog growls off-screen. On-screen is Bedford, intrigued and confused by the sound of the dog] You'd be surprised at the number of people who become intrigued by it. [Cut to the dog and Balter in the ante-room, on the end of Brent's statement. Return to Bedford as in previous shot]. So a great many worthwhile qualities are called into play: planning based on knowledge and experience, a considerable amount of care and stealth, and the most acute observation and attention to detail of course.

Ostensibly a description of the skills of bird watching, Brent's statements also define the qualities of a good detective, skills he is using as he speaks. His comments come at the moment we are shown the 'little fellow' performing in the next room, an event which strongly reinforces the planned-ness of the situation. The sight of the dog and Bedford's confused response testify to Brent's detective abilities. One might also consider this moment as Hitchcock's commentary on his own skills. 'Planning based on knowledge and experience, a considerable amount of care and stealth, and the most acute observation and attention to detail' serves as an accurate description of the dining sequence with its thoroughly logical yet equivocal presentation of events.

The second major topic of conversation is acting. It is introduced early in the conversation when Bedford expresses regret at not having seen Stone in his current role in 'Macbeth'. However, the subject only becomes a sustained topic once the ghost begins to appear. As with bird watching, the dialogue relating to acting is used as ironic commentary on the events at dinner. Bedford is shown in a medium shot at table. The camera tracks towards him to a close-up as he sees something off-screen right. Sinister music emerges loudly and obtrusively on the soundtrack, just a few notches away from drowning Stone out:

Brent: Do you think the calibre of your public reflects the player or [Cut to Bedford's POV of the ghost as it emerges from shadows] would you just say it's the nature of the brute?

Stone: *Laughs* Well, that's an underhanded [Cut back to Bedford in close-up as before] question, inspector, and I shan't answer it!

The first appearance of the ghost is linked with the discussion of acting, an implicit commentary on what seems to be the situation at hand. The ghost is, we are led to believe, being played by an actress. In contrast, Bedford is unaware of the irony perpetrated by the interplay of image and dialogue at this point.

However, a little later in the conversation, Bedford's own words tally with the return of the ghost, and Kenneth Haigh's vocal inflection implies his character is aware of the irony. Bedford has just seen the ghost disappear again; he is shown in close-up. He looks off frame-left in the direction of Stone and addresses him with a question:

Bedford: What about those first nights when the audience stands and cheers you, when they won't let you go at all and keep you coming back for one curtain call after another?

A hint of angry exasperation slips into Bedford's voice on his final words. He has turned his head back towards the doorway, only to see the ghost again and this causes this sense of despair to register in his voice. Bedford's first presentation of controlled temper is nerve-wracking. Has Bedford connected the theme of acting and pretence to what is happening? Does he realise it is a trick, or does he only perceive the more localised irony produced by the clash of his talk of 'one curtain call after another' and the recurrence of the ghost?

"Banquo's Chair" offers another example of Hitchcock's deft touch in presenting a narrative which is truthful yet truly slippery. The dining sequence

stands up to close analysis because it deceives whilst not seeming to be doing so as its construction is meticulous. In “Revenge”, Hitchcock was able to sustain a similar level of ambiguity and integration of theme and form for virtually the whole duration of the programme. In contrast, the interesting aspects of “Banquo’s Chair” emerge later in the narrative once the exposition has been completed. A sense of continuity and integration of theme between the two halves is given by their common elements of theatricality (the asides before the advertisement break, the conversation about acting afterwards), but most of the first half of the programme is setting up the interest to come. “Banquo’s Chair”, although not as sustained in its achievements, is a remarkable televisual presentation.

“Mr. Blanchard’s Secret”

Of all the shows directed by Hitchcock, the critical reception given to “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” is one of the least enthusiastic. There is consistent emphasis on plot similarities to Rear Window. Most criticism centres on this one aspect of the programme. Once this supposed flaw has been identified, most writers believe there to be no more to say. Gene D. Phillips (1984) calls it ‘the weakest television play Hitchcock ever made [because it is] in fact, a warmed-over rehash of [Rear Window’s] basic situation’ (p. 154). Steve Mamber (1971) describes it as ‘a weak offspring of the 1954 feature Rear Window’ (p. 4) and continues:

The show is entirely without distinction, worth noting only for its connection with the earlier feature [film]. This is fortunately the only case of a banal reworking of an old plot device in any of the Hitchcock-directed shows. (Ibid: 4)

Considering the lack of attention paid to Hitchcock's television work, these brief, extremely negative and dismissive comments are the equivalent of a critical mauling for the programme, a condemnation which is not fully justified.

Both Mamber and Phillips seem most aggrieved by Hitchcock's recycling of the Rear Window plot-line of suspicion over the possible murder of a neighbour's wife. Yet they seem content with Hitchcock's 'rehashing' of other situations from his previous film work. As one example of this critical double-standard, Mamber (1971) describes "Bang! You're Dead" as 'essentially the same exercise' (p. 5) in suspense as the bomb sequence in Sabotage. But his famous 'mistake' in the movie, having the bomb explode and kill a boy, a puppy and other passengers, is corrected in the teleplay. The boy with the loaded gun does not kill or harm anyone at the finale, a conclusion Mamber describes as 'much more satisfactory' (Ibid: 5). Mamber seems able to forgive Hitchcock's recycling here because there has been some level of abstraction: the situation is essentially the same, but not exactly. Also, the bomb on the bus in Sabotage is one part of a broader narrative.

There are other past works one could see as precursors to "Mr. Blanchard's Secret". Rather than being a straightforward re-working of one specific movie, the teleplay also has a movie ancestor in Suspicion, another

Hitchcock work to involve the over-active imagination of an impressionable female protagonist. Both Babs' and Lina's (Joan Fontaine) suppositions ultimately prove false and misguided. Both narratives also share a thematic concern: they present characters who construct a subjective view of the world. They apply a formalised opinion of 'how the world is/should be' to the 'real' world. Each narrative then shows the results of this philosophy. Lina, Jeff, Carl Spann (from "Revenge") and Babs Fenton all interact in this way with their environment.

When considered with these other Hitchcock works, the description of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" as a simple re-working of one film becomes absurd. How many commonalities with previous productions must a programme manifest before it moves from a 'rehash' to an example of a director's artistic concerns? The tale is not a re-telling of Rear Window or any other previous Hitchcock narrative. In a way, it can be viewed as an antidote to Rear Window. In Rear Window, a murder is committed and discovered. In this programme, no such murder occurs, only in the mind of one character. The dramatic expositions and situations might be similar, the stories are not. "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" subsequently becomes a story about the problematic consequences of exercising an over-active imagination.

A close reading of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" reveals subtleties and self-reflexive irony which requires a shift in the critical approach taken to the show. It would be foolish and incorrect not to accept that the story of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" bears marked similarities to that of Rear Window, but to leave any consideration at such a simplistic level is to provide severely underdeveloped

discussion. Mamber and Phillips tell us nothing of how the story is conveyed; in explaining the similarities, surely some analysis of differences is due.

Far from being ‘entirely without distinction’, the teleplay provides Hitchcock with an opportunity to contemplate the nature of his story-telling craft. The fact the plot is a ‘rehash’ can be considered as part of this project. He is re-using Rear Window’s situation, but the differences in presentation between the film and the teleplay are crucial to an understanding of Hitchcock’s project. Of particular importance is Hitchcock’s denial of POV and how this is important in the programme’s maintenance of the narrative and its twist.

Both “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” and Rear Window are concerned with truth, fiction and knowledge. In Rear Window, the relationship between these concepts and the characters in the film is complex. We are told a number of facts of the situation, often before L. B. Jeffries (James Stewart) is told of them. As well as fact, Lisa and Jeffries’ minds are crucial to the solving of the murder. The production of “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” consciously shifts the emphasis away from fact towards imagination. We are shown none of the evidence on which Babs Fenton (Mary Scott) bases her assumptions of murder via POV. We mostly obtain information second-hand, through Babs’ words. We are frequently at the mercy of her interpretation of events, yet her behaviour tells us at the beginning of the narrative that her judgement is not worthy of our trust. Nevertheless, we are forced to consider the narrative through the erratic filtering mechanism of Babs’ imagination.⁵

⁵ See the discussion of Babs’ untrustworthy perception in Chapter Four.

There are two major instances when Babs witnesses events for us and reports on them. Just after Mrs. Blanchard's first visit, when she is dragged away by her angry husband, Babs stands at the bedroom window, spying on the Blanchard residence. As she bores her husband into submission, she sees Mr. Blanchard leave the house carrying 'a large sack'. He puts it in his car and drives away. We hear the car door closing and the engine as it roars into the night. The sounds precede Babs' description of the events.

Shocked by what she has seen, Babs rushes out of the bedroom to investigate. The camera pans right to follow her exit from the bedroom door. As the door closes, the image dissolves into another, almost identical framing of the same door, indicating the passage of time. During this elision, another event (Babs' failed attempt to contact Mrs. Blanchard) has occurred off-screen. Babs rushes back to her husband and tells him and us what has happened:

Babs: I've been pounding on [the Blanchard's] door... Mrs. Blanchard's light is still on but Mrs. Blanchard doesn't answer... suppose that what Mr. Blanchard had in that sack ... was the body of Ellen Blanchard!

It is possible the first of these moments has not been presented due to budgetary constraints. A car sound-effect is far cheaper than a crane shot mimicking Babs' view from the window, down on to a real car in front of a set of the Blanchard's house. However, the second event, Babs knocking on the Blanchard's front door, must only have been elided due to constraints of screen time or artistic choice. A

set of the Blanchard's front door was already available from an earlier scene, when Babs stole into the house.

The two events which occur off-screen supply Babs' motivation to call the police. These occurrences are withheld from us. The elision increases our reliance on Babs Fenton's untrustworthy interpretation but we are unable to query her conclusions.

The pattern of knowledge shifts at the end of the scene in which Mrs. Blanchard takes the broken silver cigarette lighter, near the end of the tale. By this point, Babs has been proven wrong on two occasions. Hitchcock at last seems to privilege us over Babs, showing us an event Babs does not witness, reversing the pattern of the rest of the narrative. Hitchcock's flattery has an ulterior motive. He is challenging us into an interpretation of the event. He is placing us in Babs' position, one of exclusive access to a 'crime'. From the information he provides, the taking of the lighter and Mrs. Blanchard's nervous behaviour as she does this, Hitchcock invites us to conclude that Mrs. Blanchard is a thief.

Babs concludes the same thing, but she assumes the theft to be a symptom of greater psychological disorder. We are invited to believe Mrs. Blanchard has committed an opportunistic crime, but Babs embellishes the facts to the extent of assuming she is a kleptomaniac whose actions enrage her husband and damage his career.

The finale, with Mrs. Blanchard returning the lighter, tricks both Babs and us this time. Hitchcock has duped us into assumptions about Mrs. Blanchard

similar to Babs'. He shows us that to see something is not necessarily to understand it, a lesson which Babs must also learn.

A consideration of Babs' marriage to John is crucial to an understanding of the motivations behind Babs' behaviour, and how she never does seem to learn her lesson until the end of the tale. She expresses sympathy for John: 'Sometimes I don't know how you put up with me!' In the introductory voice-over she comments: 'It's my vivid imagination that gives John the most trouble. Poor John!' However, she does not change her behaviour to accommodate 'poor' John, because she cannot: '... [Thinking about crime] is like eating peanuts. Once I start thinking about it I can't stop'. She wishes John could change his outlook and be more imaginative himself.

Babs is aware of the problems John has enduring her wild imagination and projects this awareness on to the Blanchards. Since she knows the trouble she causes John, she believes all marriages to be similarly constituted. She is not only imagining Mrs. Blanchard's personal problems (alcoholism, kleptomania), but also Mr. Blanchard's reactions to them. Babs causes trouble for John but she cannot help herself. She believes the same to be the case in the Blanchard household. She assumes it is natural for a husband to want to kill his troublesome wife.

Although frequently intelligent and interesting in its presentation, the dissatisfaction felt at certain moments of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" is sometimes the result of critics not seeing what is actually there because they are looking for what they feel should be present. The programme is criticised for its lack of suspense, and yet this criticism is also not fully justified. Kuhns (in Mogg 1999:

138) notes that Hitchcock makes little of events to create suspense. He singles out the scene in the Blanchard's house when Babs is discovered by Mr. Blanchard as she searches the bedroom for clues to Mrs. Blanchard's existence. Kuhns is correct in his assessment: Hitchcock does not seek to create suspense. However, it seems obvious this was never Hitchcock's intention. If he had wanted to make the event suspenseful, he could have done so. The flat presentation is intentional and is part of the programme's tone and theme. The moment when Mr. Blanchard appears behind the door of the open wardrobe is not marked by any rhetorical device to heighten tension, such as the introduction of music or a dramatic edit to close-up. He simply wanders into view; any tension is produced by the fact we see Mr. Blanchard a few moments before Babs.

The unsensational presentation of Babs' discovery by Mr. Blanchard emphasises the mundanity of her real life, as opposed to the fanciful tales she dreams up and imposes on her long-suffering husband. If one considers a broadly comparable sequence from Rear Window, the programme's intention becomes apparent. The parallel scene from Rear Window is Lisa's (Grace Kelly) infiltration of Lars Thorwald's (Raymond Burr) apartment. Lisa and Stella (Thelma Ritter) have not discovered the clues they hoped to find in the garden and Lisa takes it upon herself to search for further clues while Thorwald is out. Watched by the immobile Jeff (James Stewart), Lisa climbs through an open window. Hitchcock squeezes every drop of suspense from the situation. Miss Lonelyhearts (Judith Evelyn), another tenant visible from the window, is about to commit suicide so Jeff calls the police. Meanwhile, we see Thorwald arrive at his

front door as Lisa searches his apartment. Our extra knowledge immediately raises the level of suspense, an anxiety sustained during Thorwald and Lisa's conversation which ends in violence and Lisa's anguished cries of 'Jeff!' across the courtyard.

In comparison, of course the equivalent scene in "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" seems bland and unsuspenseful - that is its point. People in the 'real world' are not like people in Babs' imagination. Mr. Blanchard is level-headed and does not scream his displeasure, nor does he wrestle with her until the police arrive as Lisa must with Thorwald. He has nothing to hide. Unlike Thorwald, he is no murderer.

One cannot argue that all scenes in "Mr. Blanchard's Secret" are fully integrated with the programme's themes of imagination, reality and fiction. The narrative structure is erratic. It is a series of revelations contradicting Babs' fanciful interpretations of everyday events. In her discussion of Rear Window, Susan Smith observes that this film's:

mounting tension is punctuated and deflated by a series of 'disappointments' (mainly arising from detective Doyle's provision of various pieces of evidence to discount Jeffries' theory). Yet, arguably, these ultimately serve to heighten the tension even further by creating both frustration at the delay in solving the crime and unease over whether Jeffries' suspicions are to be trusted (effectively a suspicion about his suspicions) (2000: 26)

Accurate as comment upon Rear Window, these observations on plot structure are broadly applicable to “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret”; not as a means to unfairly compare the film with the programme, but to highlight some key differences which result in the programme’s least satisfying characteristics. “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” has no Doyle character to deliver the ‘disappointments’. Babs realises from evidence in front of her own eyes that her theories are wrong, and yet she does not learn from her mistakes, a frustrating trait to witness. Since we are aligned with her so frequently, reliant on her knowledge to interpret this world, her inability to decipher the events around her work against our alignment with her viewpoint. We rely on her for information, as POV shots are not used, but are let down by her interpretation. Babs has the erratic energy of a refugee screwball comedy character in the wrong story world.⁶

Unlike with Jeffries’ thoughts on Thorwald, we are not encouraged to maintain our faith in Babs’ beliefs about the ‘murderous’ Mr. Blanchard. The series of frustrations in “Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” also have no cathartic release; they are not building up to one momentous climax. The programme is a series of artificial climaxes, all related to a false belief in Mrs. Blanchard’s violent demise. We are enduring delays not to reach a climax, but to reach yet another ‘disappointment’. How can we feel anything other than let down by the programme’s conclusion? Tantalisingly billed as a tale about “Mr. Blanchard’s

⁶ Smith notes how Hitchcock’s ‘off-beat attempts at comedy ... fail to work very well (as in the case of Mr. And Mrs. Smith, his sole venture into screwball)’ (2000: 49). Babs’ screwball tendencies are certainly problematic for the overall effect of the programme, coming over as neither endearing nor comedic.

Secret”, is such deflation not inevitable when we discover this secret is a hidden skill for mending broken cigarette lighters?

“Mrs. Bixby And The Colonel’s Coat”

Synopsis

Mrs. Bixby (Audrey Meadows) is married to Fred (Les Tremayne), a dental surgeon. One weekend a month, she leaves New York for Baltimore. She tells Fred she visits her Aunt Maude. In fact, Mrs. Bixby has been carrying on an affair with a wealthy Colonel (Stephen Chase) for years.

Mrs. Bixby takes the train to Baltimore, is met at the station by a limousine and taken to the Colonel’s country house. They talk for a while and then a car pulls up. The Colonel says a neighbour has just died and his widowed wife has decided to sell her their horses. He is going to look over the livestock before tomorrow’s auction. Mrs. Bixby is not pleased, but waves him off.

The next day, the Colonel and Mrs. Bixby sit outside and talk. The Colonel is leaving again to attend the auction. The Colonel goes into the house alone and tells the maid (Maidie Norman) to give Mrs. Bixby a large white box and a letter, but only once he has left.

Back outside, the Colonel says goodbye to Mrs. Bixby and she sees him off. The maid appears with the box and letter. Excited, Mrs. Bixby opens the box to find a fur coat made from wild Labrador mink. She and the maid estimate the cost to be between \$5,000 and \$8,000. Mrs. Bixby breaks from admiring her coat to read the letter. The Colonel writes that ‘due to personal reasons’, he cannot see

her anymore. In a PS, he suggests she pretends the coat is a present from her loving Aunt.

Back in New York, Mrs. Bixby contemplates how she can allay her husband's suspicions about the coat. It is worth far more than either she or her Aunt could afford. She decides to take a taxi to a pawn shop. She borrows \$50 on it and tells the pawnbroker (Howard Caine) to state this amount on both portions of the ticket, not to include address or item details.

Back home, she mentions to her husband she found a ticket 'of some sort' in a taxi. He identifies it as a pawn ticket and takes it from her, which alarms her. She says she could collect the item on Monday. Fred rejects this, saying she might be duped by the pawnbroker. Fred then suggests they go together. Not wanting to be recognised by the pawnbroker, Mrs. Bixby resolves to wait at home while Fred goes alone.

Next day, Mrs. Bixby calls her husband at work. He has forgotten to call and tell what the item was. He says he will bring it home after work. Around lunchtime, Mrs. Bixby calls into the dental surgery.

Fred sends Miss Pulteney (Sally Hughes) his dental hygienist to lunch while he presents Mrs. Bixby with the item. Instead of the mink coat, he hands her a mink fur piece. Mrs. Bixby can do nothing but accept the fur. She leaves her husband's surgery room and sits outside, wondering what has happened to her fur coat.

Mrs. Bixby then sees her husband's young, attractive dental nurse leave for lunch, wrapped in the Colonel's luxurious mink coat.

The structure of “Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel’s Coat” (Tx. 27/9/60) requires that we spend the majority of the tale in the company of the character whose perception of events is to be twisted at the same time as ours (at the end). It is clear that in order for the audience to be taken aback by the twist, we must be aligned with the character who is similarly shocked by the final turn of events. So we spend the majority of narrative time with Mrs. Bixby.

However, the teleplay does not begin by presenting her to us; it withholds her for a while. Instead, we are introduced to the working world of Fred Bixby, dental surgeon. Secondly, we are given insight into the state of the Bixby marriage and relationship. Thirdly, we are invited to compare and contrast the Bixbys’ marriage with Mrs. Bixby’s and the Colonel’s affair, and in the process reassess Mrs. Bixby. The beginning of the programme is similar to the structure of “Revenge” (excepting the section dealing with the affair). First of all, we are set on edge by frightening close-up views of cars or extended shots of obviously painful and intrusive dental work. Secondly, we witness the dynamics of the married couples’ relationships. The manner in which we interpret the twist in “Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel’s Coat” is dependent upon our reactions to the characterisations presented to us during the exposition, therefore, this will be discussed before an assessment of the twist is offered.

“Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel’s Coat”’s first image is a close-up shot of an anxious woman in the dentist’s chair. The camera is positioned above and to her right and is tilted down to show the procedure of filling her tooth. A drill and a suction tube protrude from her awkwardly gaping mouth. These images create instant discomfort. It seems Hitchcock is seeking to exploit and arouse fears of

dental treatment likely to be held by a fair percentage of his audience. The scene does not present horrific pain and suffering. The sequence is maintained within the realms of the believable, whilst obviously having the intention to depict pain. The truth of these moments is what makes them so uncomfortable.

The dental sequence emphasises the situation and perception of the patient, rather than Fred. The framings of the patient and of Fred (and sometimes his nurse Miss Pulteney in the background) are not POV shots, but are equally weighted in terms of their proximity to a true visual POV of patient and doctor. It is the closer framing of the patient and the emotive content of these images which influence identification. Her face is also held in a static framing, stressing her passivity and inability to move. In contrast, the camera continually re-frames Fred with pans and tilts as he works. Fred's professional impassivity, despite the distress of his patient, is also striking when contrasted with the patient's anxiety. He registers no alterations of mood on his face, nor does he offer verbal insight into his thoughts. The scene is devoid of dialogue until the surgery 'bell' (an electronic chime) heralds Mrs. Bixby's arrival. All these elements characterise Fred as professional yet slightly cold and removed during social interaction, at least with his clients.

A further dimension is added to the dental sequence by Peter Conrad's consideration of teeth in Hitchcock's films (2000: 242-4). The Hitchcockian view of teeth equates them with, amongst other things, human frailty, as they 'predecease' us (242), falling out, causing us pain. The tooth theme, then, sits well with the narrative's concerns with human fallibility in relationships, Mrs.

Bixby's weakness for material goods and her severe errors of judgement concerning her husband.

When Mrs. Bixby appears, she carries with her the troubles of the Bixby household. These problems are fundamentally financial. She tells Fred their broken washing machine is not worth fixing and a tax bill has arrived demanding more of their tight budget. Her complaints about money obviously establish that Mrs. Bixby could not possibly explain away the purchase of a mink coat later in the tale, but they also raise the issue of each character's financial contributions to the household. Mrs. Bixby does not work (though she is a trained nurse) and yet they are struggling to live on Fred's dentist income. For some time, dentistry has not had the reputation of a poorly paid career choice, but it seems the Bixbys are finding it difficult to live off its proceeds. There is no particular answer to where all of their money is going, but there are a number of possibilities indicated in the narrative. Mrs. Bixby might be spending it on her shopping trips; Fred might be spending it on secret gifts for his mistress Miss Pulteney; Miss Pulteney may be spending cash gifts from Fred. On a first viewing, the two latter explanations only occur to us as distinct possibilities once the twist has been delivered; we are far more likely to believe Mrs. Bixby to be the profligate party.

The couple's conversation moves to the topic of Mrs. Bixby's outfit and presents an ambiguous portrait of Fred as a husband. Depending upon one's sensibilities, one could take his mentioning his wife's clothing as evidence of attentiveness or inattentiveness. He compliments her on her attire by saying 'Well it's very becoming'. Taken with the fact of his noticing her suit in the first place, his comments might be considered proof of a benign but general

observation of his wife. Conversely, he fails to identify that the suit is old, evincing a lack of detailed attention to his wife's appearance.

The ambiguity of Fred's relationship with his wife is intentional. There is sufficient evidence to support a wary perception of his character, and yet this is neutralised by the amount of contrary evidence.⁷ The couple then discuss Mrs. Bixby's monthly visits to her Aunt. Fred seems disgruntled by his wife's leaving, framing his main contention in sexual terms:

Mrs. Bixby: ...two days a month, that's not much.

Fred Bixby: But two days, [he grasps her shoulders] that's one night, and that's one night I don't have you.

Fred's response carries strong ironic resonances in hindsight, especially related to his sexual use of the word 'have'. He does not say 'that's one night I *can't be with you*', for example. 'Have', in the context of his reply, carries sexual connotations. Fred is saying that on Friday nights when she goes away he *does not* have sex with Mrs. Bixby. Once we discover his infidelity with his dental nurse, his use of 'don't' instead of 'can't' makes perfect sense. He doesn't have sex with his wife, because he can't, but also because he *is* having sex with

⁷ As Hitchcock commented on the casting of Mr. Bixby: 'We had to have an actor who in the beginning was sufficiently conservative, but who in the end you could believe might have been playing around. Les Tremayne played the part admirably' (quoted in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 318. See note 4, p.17).

someone else, Miss Pulteney (or at the very least we might assume he wishes he was).

Despite his words, a sense of sincerity on Fred's part is maintained during the sequence because we lack knowledge of his infidelity. The clues are not sufficiently strong for us to be convinced of any deception on his part. However, the moment of his grasping his wife's shoulders provides a light-hearted hint to his sincerity being less than absolute. Fred has complained in a jaunty manner that his wife should not have brought the crisps/potato chips with his lunch: he can't stop eating them. As he holds her shoulder, in his right hand he also holds a large crisp. Once his wife has finished reminding him he is fortunate to only have one in-law, he goes to eat the crisp but she intercepts him on the way and they kiss. She turns his lunge for the crisp, an act motivated partly by hunger, but mostly by habit, into an embrace. Without the crisp, the kiss is actually passionate in its lingering quality. But the crisp provides Fred's primary motivation for moving his face closer to his wife's, which tempers the passion of their clinch. Fred's relationship with his wife could also be described as partly hunger, but mostly habit and the moment might also hint that Fred's desires and urges are directed at things in the world other than his wife.

The Bixbys' embrace is rather passionate for television. Their kiss is full-on, lingering and juicy. The seemingly genuine desire expressed by both in this kiss makes the two revelations of adultery in the programme more shocking and surprising. We are left to wonder why these two people, with a passion for one another, have sought comfort in the arms of others.

The passionate kiss is in one respect an expression of what the Bixbys have in common. They are both concerned, but in different ways, with the body. Fred, through his dental occupation is interested in the uncloaked body, the skeletal mechanics of the human form. Later, he is shown with a set of dental impressions made into a moving jaw with complicated clamps, bosses and other metal attachments. He has a whole chorus line of such sets of teeth on display in his surgery. An extension of his interest in human mechanics and metallic mechanics is his measuring cup for Vermouth, an object he proudly demonstrates to his wife (which she ignores in her concern for the coat).

Conversely, Mrs. Bixby's interest in the body comes from her obsession with sensual pleasures; the mink coat represents her ultimate clothing for the body and one which provides many sensual stimuli. When she is given the coat, the dialogue between herself and Eloise, the maid, is concerned with the senses:

Mrs. Bixby: [About to open the box containing the fur] I don't think I'll look, I'll just feel first ... I've never seen anything like it in my life! ... Ohh! [Stroking the coat] Just *feel* it, it's so deep and so soft! Smell it, what a wonderful smell!

Eloise: Aren't you gonna try it on? Heaven's sakes Mrs. Bixby, it's to wear, you'd think it was to eat!

Mrs. Bixby's association with the body is related to its surface and its ability to interact with external stimuli - the drawing in of smells, sights, tastes and tactile pleasures. Audrey Meadows is the ideal casting choice in this context. She has a

fleshiness about her face and body, without being overweight or totally lacking glamour. She presents an 'open' face, with wide eyes and smiling mouth. These natural facial traits imply her amenability to sensations from the outside world.

Irrespective of audience perception of the Bixbys' relationship, the programme swiftly shifts our attention so as to thwart much consideration of that issue. The programme takes just over one minute of screen time to show Mrs. Bixby moving from the embrace with Fred to an embrace with the Colonel. The revelation of her infidelity and deception arrives so quickly we must radically alter our opinion of her with equal rapidity. The notion of her adultery places her in the position of the deceiver; any perception of Fred as a dishonest character is eclipsed by the actions of his wife.

The brief transitional sequence as Mrs. Bixby travels from New York to Baltimore provides evidence of her deceit before we even see the Colonel. She is met at the station by a chauffeur-driven limousine, an unlikely occurrence if she were visiting her 'poor' aunt. The chauffeured car is also the earliest indication of the character of Mrs. Bixby's and the Colonel's affair. They are not overly urgent to be in one another's company - the colonel sends a car to collect her; she does not complain at his doing so. The lack of any eager desire between Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel is further expressed in the final shot of the journey sequence. The camera pans left as the car pulls up to the front of the house. As the car stops, in profile at the foot of the front steps, the camera stops panning too. Mrs. Bixby gets out of the car and trots towards the Colonel. The fact the Colonel does not descend to greet her is expressive of a surprising degree of patience, completely consonant with the bland affair they are conducting.

There seems to be little fire in this affair and this is further endorsed by the camera's reticence to show their kiss. Most of the greeting kiss is shown at the end of the shot which saw the car pull up in front of the house. The couple are shown in long-shot on the steps. The image then cuts to a profile two-shot of them in medium close-up, at the moment their lips part. A close presentation of their intimacy is withheld. The kiss in this scene is the most tender moment we are permitted to see, and the presentation of the majority of it in long-shot keeps us unenlightened as to their levels of desire for one another.

The Colonel's relationship with Mrs. Bixby is characterised more as a parallel marriage than an affair. During their conversation, there is emphasis on mundanity and habit, attributes more often associated with marriages than extra-marital liaisons. For example, the Colonel's first words in the narrative, spoken to Mrs. Bixby, are: 'What will you have [to drink]? The same?' She ignores his question and continues to admire the growth of the garden through the French windows. The dialogue shows their ability to communicate with one another on a subliminal level as well as with words.

Their affair might have been given a frisson of excitement or edge of social unacceptability if their ages had been different. The Colonel certainly seems older than Mrs. Bixby, and yet could hardly be described as a Sugar Daddy - she is too close in age to him for that interpretation. Their ages place them, once again, within the realms of the everyday married couple.

The conversation turns to mutual appreciation, primarily based upon their deep familiarity and comfort with one another, like a couple:

Mrs. Bixby: The leaves are turning.

Colonel: You know the wonderful thing about you?

Mrs. Bixby: Oh, I see you cut the golden maple!

Colonel: You've never come down here in eight years, summer or winter, you've never come down here without stopping in exactly that same spot and admiring the view.

Mrs. Bixby: You know something wonderful about you? You always notice that I notice the view.

The scene leaves us with the undeniable sense that this visit is no different from many previous ones. They are comfortable with one another to the extent they are able to ignore one another ('You know the wonderful thing about you?', 'Oh, I see you cut the golden maple!') without fear of misunderstanding or offence.

One interruption to the normality of the visit occurs when the Colonel's car pulls up and interrupts their conversation. He makes his excuses and leaves for an auction preview, but promises to be back later for their cocktail together. The auction is a livestock sale being conducted by a local widow who hated both her late husband and his horses. It is an addition to the original Roald Dahl story. The auction provides a plausible pretext for the Colonel to leave, but it is also harnessed to the cause of presenting the affair as uninspiring and monotonous. The Colonel's leaving shocks Mrs. Bixby. In hindsight, his reason for going away and the way it is sprung on her, might be seen as the first indication to Mrs. Bixby, and to the audience, that this visit may not be like previous ones.

The next day, we rejoin the pair lunching in the garden. If this were truly an affair, we can assume their having sex has been elided by the programme. However, the Colonel is not whispering sweet nothings. He is lecturing Mrs. Bixby on wild horses of the Gobi Desert. His equine interests remind us of his abandoning Mrs. Bixby the previous day for the auction and also supply a preoccupation for the Colonel's character - his mind is filled with thoughts of horses it seems, certainly not ones of Mrs. Bixby. She interrupts him to tell him one of his servants has arrived, an indication she was less than enthralled by the one-sided conversation.

The framing of the conversation, in a static two-shot of the pair at the table, is also informative of Mrs. Bixby's general boredom. She is sat in profile frame-right but must conceal her face if she wishes to look at the Colonel. He sits frame-left, his body facing the camera, his face turned a quarter to the right to engage Mrs. Bixby. The static, uninteresting composition is evocative of Mrs. Bixby's ennui and encourages us to perceive the Colonel as a horse bore.⁸

Mrs. Bixby's posture is also informative in the scene. She is sat upright but slouches at the shoulder; for the most part, she looks at the Colonel but with little sense of engagement. She does not sit forward and revel in his equestrian knowledge. Hers is a posture seeking to convey polite neutrality but which nonetheless, conveys boredom. This is not the kind of sensual stimulation Mrs. Bixby relishes.

⁸ It is also a parallel example to the dinner scene between the Carpenters in "Back For Christmas" discussed in Chapter Seven.

“Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel’s Coat” is unable to present the twist ending in a manner completely in line with the formulation in the printed tale. In Dahl’s original story, through third-person access to Mrs. Bixby’s consciousness, the author is able to tell us her thoughts at this point in the story. Hitchcock chooses not to use voice-over in other parts of the programme, meaning any such insertion of the device where most useful would be incongruous. As a result of these decisions, Hitchcock must use other means to convey as much depth of meaning within the twist as possible. He does not attempt to provide the unambiguous interpretation of Mrs. Bixby’s thought processes as this option is not open to him. Instead, Hitchcock creates an open-ended and thought-provoking twist.

For purposes of comparison, Dahl’s tale ends like this:

But there was no coat. There was only a ridiculous fur neckpiece dangling from her husband’s hand.

‘Feast your eyes on that!’ he said, waving it in front of her face.

Mrs. Bixby put a hand up to her mouth and started backing away. I’m going to scream, she told herself. I just know it. I’m going to scream....

I’m going to kill that pawnbroker, she told herself. I’m going right back there to that shop this very minute and I’m going to throw this filthy neckpiece right in his face and if he refuses to give me back my coat I’m going to kill him.

...

Miss Pulteney, the secretary-assistant, came sailing past her down the corridor on her way to lunch.

‘Isn’t it a gorgeous day?’ Miss Pulteney said as she went by, flashing a smile. There was a lilt in her walk, a little whiff of perfume attending her, and she looked like a queen, just exactly like a queen in the beautiful black mink coat that the Colonel had given to Mrs. Bixby.

(Dahl 1992: 83-4).

Dahl is able to describe Mrs. Bixby’s horrified emotional response to the sight of the mangy fur piece. He goes on to explain that Mrs. Bixby does not suspect her husband has switched the fur piece for the coat: she assumes the pawnbroker has cheated her husband. Finally, Dahl withholds Mrs. Bixby’s full reaction to the sight of Miss Pulteney in her coat. Some of her feelings are hinted at by the clever structure of the sentence and the description of Miss Pulteney, particularly her jealousy at the younger woman’s grace and style. But, as in Hitchcock’s screen version, Mrs. Bixby’s full response is not recorded.

Hitchcock is able to provide us with Mrs. Bixby’s horrified reaction. Audrey Meadows conveys this admirably, her frozen smile and wide-eyed incredulity masking her bitter surprise. What Hitchcock significantly chooses not to convey is Mrs. Bixby’s suspicions about the pawnbroker, doubts that over-ride any belief in her husband’s guilt. As has been noted, voice-over is not a neat option at this moment. But Hitchcock might have inserted a few muttered words for Mrs. Bixby to convey her opinion that the pawnbroker had duped her

husband. He chooses not to, a decision that increases the number of meanings and implications of the ending.

If Hitchcock had chosen to convey Mrs. Bixby's belief that the pawnbroker was to blame, then it would have detracted from the openness of the twist. The moment in the book shows this ending is about the complacent perception of others. Mrs. Bixby has been unfaithful to her husband for many years and has not been found out. As a result, she considers him easily fooled. Her first reaction when she realises her coat is lost is to believe he has been similarly duped by the pawnbroker: she assumes Fred's gullibility to extend further than the realms of their marriage and into other social interactions. Once she realises this is not the case, when she sees the coat on Miss Pulteney, the ironic reversal of the situation is deepened through our knowledge of her flippant, derogatory expectation of her husband's gullibility.

Hitchcock's version of the tale is unwilling to fasten down the meaning. Admittedly, this has the negative result of providing us with less insight into the characterisation of Mrs. Bixby. She remains considerably less 'known' to us since we do not discover her exact thoughts when she realises her husband's deception. However, one may consider this a fair exchange since Hitchcock's ending emphasises other interpretations, centring on how much we believe Fred Bixby knows about his wife's guilt in having an affair. If we assume Fred does *not* know about it, then his decision to give the mink coat to his dental nurse is an action which simply exposes his own affair with Miss Pulteney. He does not know the coat has any connection with his wife's extra-marital relationship. The irony for Mrs. Bixby is she cannot express her rage at Fred's action, nor his

infidelity, without the risk of exposing her own cheating. The ending effectively gags her from acting on her shock, unless she wishes to end her marriage, but she is financially dependent on Fred.

If on the other hand we consider the possibility that Fred *does* know of his wife's affair, and that the coat is linked with this relationship, his decision to bestow the coat upon his nurse indicates his awareness that he has trapped his wife in a situation where she cannot speak for fear of breaking up their marriage. Fred's awareness of his actions becomes total. He is then knowingly exposing his own affair with Miss Pulteney in order to ensnare his wife. Either way, Mrs. Bixby is stymied by Fred's actions. Their marriage becomes a trap, one in which Fred has the upper hand (whether by luck or judgement).

Hitchcock conveys Mrs. Bixby's entrapment in the final moments of the story as her face, frozen with the shock of seeing Miss Pulteney in the coat, is held in close-up. The image is the last we see of the hamstrung Mrs. Bixby. Unable to move forwards in her marriage, she is also trapped by Hitchcock's camera. Off-screen, over this image of Mrs. Bixby, we hear Mr. Bixby dealing with his customer:

Mr. Bixby: Come in now, Mr. Gorman. Well, it's nice to see you. And how is the world treating you?

Unlike his wife, Mr. Bixby gets on with life, unencumbered by guilt or fear of being discovered. His question, ostensibly aimed at Mr. Gorman (Harry

Cheshire), comments on his wife's current state of shock. Mrs. Bixby's world has been turned upside down by the actions of her husband.

"Mrs. Bixby and the Colonel's Coat" is perhaps the clearest example in Hitchcock's television work where characterisation is partially sacrificed to provide a more interesting narrative twist. But this is a minor sacrifice to create yet another intriguingly ambiguous presentation of an entertaining tale.

Hitchcock's use of POV and viewpoint is central to the success of some of his greatest television achievements. His organisation and manipulation of audience and character knowledge patterns is strongly related to his deft handling of these presentational devices and, in turn, the delivery of effective and interesting twists in the tale.

The contextual programmes from both 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' and 'The Twilight Zone' also need to vary patterns of audience and character knowledge, particularly those which rely on the twist. Many provide subtle clues to forthcoming twists, but none reach the complexities of Hitchcock's presentations in the above examples. "No Pain" might be considered the best of the non-Hitchcock examples but its ability to plant clues without revealing its ending comes mainly from its scripting.

Mrs. Bixby is not alone in the Hitchcock television canon as a character trapped or restricted by her situation. Although this programme moves her towards a final state of metaphorical paralysis, a number of programmes take physical or mental paralysis as their main theme or central premise. The next

chapter will consider Hitchcock's interest in the psychology of his characters with particular emphasis on his depiction of different kinds of paralysis and detachment from the external world.

CHAPTER SIX

Paralysis & Detachment

Hitchcock's cinema canon includes many examples of experiments in paralysis. He undertook several formally constricting narratives involving claustrophobic, self-inflicted limitations on narrative space and time: Lifeboat, Rope, Rear Window. These projects testify to Hitchcock's readiness to contemplate and experiment with the relationships between film content and form. None of the stories involved *had* to be filmed in the spatially and temporally confined manner in which they were produced. A case in point is the shot filmed in Ivar Gunnison's office cut from the final version of Rear Window: the decision to drop the scene means the film is set entirely in and around Jeff's Greenwich Village apartment (see Curtis in Belton 2000: 38-9).

Furthermore, many Hitchcock films are concerned with paralysis of characters in some way. They present us with people trapped by their circumstances, their escape prevented at every turn. Sometimes this blockage is caused by physical restrictions on a character. Most obvious examples are the protagonists in any of Hitchcock's 'falsely accused man' films (see Wood 1989: 241). Films such as I Confess, Shadow Of A Doubt, Strangers On A Train and Notorious manifest the paralysis element of Hitchcock's work on a psychological level. Characters are trapped as much by their beliefs, opinions, thoughts, goals, desires and feelings than physically by external force. In Notorious, Devlin (Cary Grant) and Alicia (Ingrid Bergman) must decide between devotion to one another or to duty. In I Confess, Father Logan (Montgomery Clift) is thwarted in his actions by deep-seated belief in the inviolable trust of the Catholic confessional. In Shadow of a Doubt, once she has realised the truth about her Uncle Charlie (Joseph Cotten), young Charlie (Teresa Wright) is unable to fully expose his criminality to the community that has embraced him, prevented primarily by love and pity for her devoted mother.

An aspect of Hitchcock's work (and a description used to describe the man himself), related to the concept of physical and psychological paralysis, is detachment. There are moments, or sometimes whole performances, where the character is disengaged from the external reality of the narrative. An extreme example is Rose Balestrero (Vera Miles) in The Wrong Man, whose frustration at the case against her husband sends her spiralling into depression. Hitchcock shows Rose's gradual descent, presenting numerous levels of psychological detachment as her feelings of doom increase. Moments of detachment are

conveyed cinematically in the later scenes at Frank O'Connor's (Anthony Quayle) office as Hitchcock presents Rose in a series of static profile shots, similar to Hitchcock's use of such shots of Miles at the end of "Revenge".¹ Characters who gaze into space are passive to the level of detachment because they do not make connections with others within the scene through the act of looking. In Hitchcock's world, to look is to assert your life; to refuse to look is to convey psychological, emotional or mental death. All these television tales, to some extent, concentrate on figures whose movement is either partially or completely restricted. Their predicaments have implications for the style of the story presentation. They provide little in the way of action. Instead, suspense is expressed in tiny movements, gestures or noises, and through the selection, ordering and juxtaposition of images and sounds.

The key contextual programme on this theme is "No Pain" from 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents'. Dave Rainey's plight, encased in his iron lung, is another example of *physical* paralysis at least. Unlike the similarly condemned Callew in Hitchcock's "Breakdown", Dave can speak. He is not completely unable to interact with his world. This is his only means to save himself, but it is enough. As a result, Dave is quite the opposite of *psychologically* detached. The programme's twist relies on our erroneously equating his physical paralysis with a more general helplessness concerning his situation. His apparent resignation to an imminent death at the hands of his bored and selfish wife conceals his true

¹ For a discussion of Carl's detachment and narrative viewpoint in "Revenge" see Chapter Three.

resourcefulness. To a large extent, then, Dave's physical paralysis is a fact of the narrative in "No Pain", a fact central to its deception of its audience.

A number of programmes which include physically paralysed characters have been excluded from the following analyses on the basis of their less developed use of the device (similar to "No Pain", in fact). "Breakdown" and "Four O'Clock" contain physically restricted characters whose struggles to make their mark on the world form the narrative thrust of the programmes. However, they do little to develop the theme in relation to detachment or psychological paralysis, whereas "Lamb To The Slaughter" and "Poison" are less straightforward and provide compelling examples and explorations of the theme.

"Lamb To The Slaughter"

Synopsis

Mary Maloney (Barbara Bel Geddes) is a pregnant housewife, awaiting the return of her troubled policeman husband, Patrick (Allan Lane). Patrick announces he is leaving Mary; he wants a divorce and loves another woman. He tells Mary she can keep their child when it arrives and he will support them financially as best he can.

The news takes Mary by surprise. She is in a state of half denial when she insists Patrick should have the supper. Distractedly, she goes to the freezer and takes out a large frozen leg of lamb. On her return to the kitchen, next to the lounge, she sees Patrick planning to leave. She begs him not to go, but he is determined and challenges her: 'Try and stop me'. She approaches Patrick from

behind, holding the frozen leg of lamb like a club, and brings it down on Patrick's head. He is killed instantly.

Mary puts the lamb in the oven to roast and begins to conceal her crime. She checks Patrick is dead, then calls her friend Molly, telling her Patrick has come home exhausted and they won't be over for dinner as planned. She then goes to the shops to get the vegetables she needed for her husband's supper. On her return, she fakes the crime scene, dropping her shopping at the doorway, overturning furniture and disturbing the room. She then calls the police.

Their investigation centres on the search for the weapon. Mary contrives to stay in the house as the police investigate. At one point, Jack talks with one of his officers about their ex-colleague's philandering, wondering if it might have provided the murder motive. Jack notices the oven is still on and is surprised to find the roast lamb is not ruined. Mary offers the meat to the investigating officers. They accept and eat the lamb as Mary listens in from the lounge. They discuss the murder weapon and Jack states: 'Well, for all we know it might be right under our very noses'. Mary cannot help but chuckle out loud.

"Lamb To The Slaughter" is an example of Hitchcock's fascination with levels of disconnection from the external world. The programme explores this through the character of Mary Maloney as she murders her husband then hides her guilt, and the evidence of her guilt. Mary is a character who plays a number of roles, a precondition of which is pretence, secrecy and performance. Through this persistently deceptive role-playing, she becomes increasingly cut off from reality. The following analysis will discuss the stages of her disconnection.

“Lamb To The Slaughter” opens by showing Mary Maloney’s last-minute fussing around the house before her husband Patrick arrives home from work. She empties a carton of cigarettes into a china cigarette holder, crumples up the package and throws it off-screen left. The presentation of her actions is characterised by the musical soundtrack which features an archetypal 1950s happy-household tune. The music is light, bright and happy with a lilting flute and violin melody backed by harmonious strings. It is the music of Mary’s mind, not the music of the household. Her belief in the happiness of her marriage is soon to be shattered, but before this happens, the music is reflective of her contentment with the way things are. As soon as Patrick comes into the house and Mary perceives his mood, the music peters out on a single vibrato violin note and disappears. Mary then asks the brooding Patrick: ‘Darling? Is something the matter?’.

Despite Mary first being shown replenishing the house’s supply of cigarettes, neither Mary nor Patrick is shown as a smoker. Patrick’s first action on arriving home is to pour some whiskey, Dutch courage for his announcement that he wants to leave his pregnant wife. All through her night of questioning, Mary does not smoke, or eat or drink. Therefore, the supply of cigarettes must be for socialising purposes. That they are contained in an unwieldy and impractical china box would also indicate their infrequent and sociable use.

The decision to show Mary replenishing the cigarettes becomes quite informative of her character. Her first act in the narrative shows her thinking of others, in the role of a hostess, which is developed as she eagerly greets her husband on his return. The cigarettes also demonstrate her deep immersion in

and commitment to her roles as housekeeper and wife, performing a mundane task with a smile as she awaits Patrick's return.

The Maloneys' first interactions are extremely telling after attention to performance details and actor-camera choreography. Hitchcock maintains his strong record in succinctly and effectively describing the state of a marriage. On opening the door, Patrick turns away from his wife, ostensibly to close the door. He is unable to maintain eye-contact. When he turns back, he does not look at her; his eyes are drawn to the off-screen desk where his whiskey bottle and glass are situated. Patrick decides to get a drink without removing his coat. The coat conveys his intention to leave; he will be away so quickly it is not worth removing it. Mary asks him to take it off later but he ignores her.

On Patrick's entrance, as he turns back towards her, Mary holds his head and kisses him; Patrick keeps his hands in his coat pockets. Mary's intimate, possessive but tender use of her hands, to hold Patrick's head during the kiss, stands in contrast to Patrick's withholding of his own hands. In those brief moments, Mary and the audience are aware that Patrick is not just tired. His unresponsiveness and stern-faced demeanour are also in contrast to Mary's contented mood and considerate actions just before Patrick appeared.

From the shot of their failed embrace, we cut to an approximation of Mary's POV. It is an image which underscores and strengthens our first impressions of Patrick as a troubled and cold individual. He walks into the image from frame-left and tosses his hat on a nearby chair, all with his back to the camera. He is a dark mass against the light set. He does not respond to Mary's question: 'Something the matter?'. Her voice is caring, questioning; it is Barbara

Bel Geddes' voice. She has a rich but bright tone which suits the optimism of Mary. It is this optimistic tone, in the face of Patrick's distracted mood which is the first indication of her character's denial and withdrawal from reality through performance.

She continues to question Patrick about the reason for his mood:

Mary: Are they badgering you about that Minotti case again? Is that what's the trouble?

We see Mary in a medium shot as she asks this question to Patrick. Bel Geddes' performance effortlessly informs us Mary knows work is not the problem. She is aware of her questions' redundancy. Bel Geddes achieves this through minor movements in her face, a slight furrowing of her brow which conveys an unconvincing confusion. Mary's desire for Patrick to confirm that it is indeed 'the Minotti case' which troubles him is expressed as she asks her final question: 'Is that what's the trouble?' Her voice rises towards the end of the sentence, as usual with a question, but the rise is exaggerated. Bel Geddes also blinks as she asks the question, a movement which weakens her position, as if she realises she will not be able to guess the true issue. The only way she will discover Patrick's problem is if he tells her.

Patrick's impenetrable façade is shown again with a return to Mary's POV shot of his dark form, still with back to camera, pouring whiskey. The recurrence of this image acts to underscore Patrick's inaccessibility, to us and Mary.

The couple's separation in these two framings is maintained for another two edits, then Mary walks up behind her husband. The camera tracks across the room to follow her walk. She stands behind Patrick, pressing her hands to his back in a tender gesture of concern. They both face frame-right. Patrick looks down at his whiskey while Mary continues to coo at him. She lets him know they don't have to go out for dinner if he's too tired. It is not too late for her to cook.

As Mary decides she'll cook Patrick 'some nice supper here at home', he breaks up the two-shot. He turns and walks away from Mary. As he does so he faces away from the camera. Patrick refuses the camera's presence in as marked a manner as he refuses Mary. He stands in front of the curtains which Mary closed just as he arrived home.

Mary closed the curtains as soon as she heard Patrick's car pulling up near the house. It is the suburban equivalent of raising the drawbridge: the curtains form a barrier between the Maloney household and the world, but only once her man has arrived. Even though it is dark outside, she did not draw the curtains before Patrick appeared. The drawn curtains are a rejection of the outside and an enclosure of the inside. The curtains are part of Mary's attempt to contain, delineate and control the household so when Patrick stands in front of them, his position conveys his feelings of entrapment. His desire to place distance between himself and Mary has been expressed through his movements away from her, wrecking their two shared framings.

Throughout their conversation, Mary has shown a desire to discover the truth behind Patrick's behaviour. However, she does not want the problem to be connected to their relationship. She hopes his troubles are work-related, not

domestic. Once he has confirmed her fears in the worst way possible by saying he wants to leave, Mary goes deeper into withdrawal. She insists that Patrick still has his supper. She makes every effort to maintain the pretence of normality.

Mary is not presented as a cold and calculating murderer. The disposal method for her edible weapon is a plan which is shown to hatch itself. It is not the culmination of a scheme which Mary had in mind all along. Her decision to murder is also not clear-cut and is linked to her deepening but ambiguous withdrawal.

Mary goes to the freezer to fetch a joint of meat for Patrick's supper. And yet she is also arming herself with the murder weapon. Hitchcock is careful to film the sequence so as to blur the moment when meal becomes weapon. Mary goes to the utility room, adjacent to the kitchen. She is in a trance-like state after Patrick has given her his dreadful news. She has insisted he has dinner, despite his news; she is in a state of denial and confusion. She opens the door but does not turn on the light. She walks slowly, distractedly, to the chest freezer and lifts the lid. The light comes on in the freezer, briefly illuminating her. She holds the joint of meat awkwardly. It is heavy and a tricky shape to handle. She carries it to the kitchen in her right hand, holding it like a club, down by her side.

In the kitchen, she lays the meat on the table to remove the wrapping. The lamb is visible in the lower part of the frame as she does this. She looks past the right of the camera, into the lounge, and frowns. There is a cut to Patrick, his back towards the camera again, stooping over the desk in front of the drawn curtains. Mary asks softly, off-screen: 'What are you doing?'. Patrick's distant voice intones, in a matter-of-fact manner: 'I'm leaving'.

The next shot of Mary is a medium shot. Her figure is only visible from the elbows upwards. The meat is now out of frame and it is unclear if she is holding it or not. The following dialogue marks the moment when Mary decides to wield the lamb in anger, and Hitchcock intentionally elides it from our vision. Mary desperately implores:

Mary: [In medium close-up] Patrick you can't; you can't go, you can't you can't!

Patrick: [Off-screen] No.

Mary: Patrick I won't let you; I won't, I won't, I WON'T!

Patrick: There's no sense getting hysterical about this whole thing.

Mary: Patrick I MEAN it!

Patrick: [Cut to Mary's POV shot of Patrick stood over the lounge desk. He pauses before responding and turns his body halfway towards the camera] Try and stop me.

Patrick's defiance is made more provocative by his sneering tone and cursory half-turn towards Mary (and us, since we share her vision). Hitchcock's presentation of Patrick does all it can to make his murder into a justifiable homicide. We cut back to Mary in the same medium close-up; she begins to walk from kitchen to lounge. The camera tracks to keep her in shot, and when she is a few feet behind Patrick, we realise she is carrying something. She holds it in both hands, in front of her. Her face shows determination and effort as she swings the

object up, over her head to rest between her shoulder blades, then brings it down with force on to the head of the unsuspecting Patrick.

The scene is careful to balance Mary's intention to kill/hurt Patrick with her obvious disconnection from the event. That is to say, Mary shows the will to commit an act of violence against Patrick, mainly through her dialogue ('You can't!', 'I WON'T!', 'I MEAN it!'). And yet she is also in the disconnected state of someone watching the event from a distance. She is simultaneously in the positions of the guilty party and of the innocent bystander.

Mary's words may express a forceful intention, but her tone is never less than pitiful and desperate. We are never fully convinced she may take control of the situation. Her vocal intonations, if not her words, mark her as a victim.

The rest of the narrative contrasts strongly with Mary's mild case of hysteria just before the murder. In comparison, all subsequent events are presented calmly. The scene after the killing shows Mary's transition to the next stage of her performance: she must concoct a scenario and perform it believably to her husband's colleagues from the police station. Hitchcock marks this alteration in Mary entirely through gesture. He does not use voice-over to explain her thoughts. Just before Mary calls her friend Molly to innocently cancel their dinner-date, the first action Mary must take to avoid detection, Mary sits at the kitchen table and distractedly eats a grape. It is a seeded grape; she takes the seeds from her mouth, walks to the sink and flicks them from her hand. She then turns up the oven, where she has previously placed the frozen lamb.

The eating of the grape and the turning up of the oven as she thinks, these two actions link murder, as in "Arthur", with consumption and waste. The grape

is a fleshy fruit with 'bones' in the form of seeds, part of the food to be discarded rather than eaten. Mary's eating of the grape foreshadows the police's consumption of the lamb. Later in the show, Hitchcock's camera emphasises the waste product of their meal, the bones they leave in a pile on a plate. Through insinuation, we conclude Mary has already decided what will happen to her murder weapon, and therefore she increases the oven's heat.

Mary's thoughts are told to us in gesture and performance. Therefore, we might rightly assume she has not perceived the link between her own eating of the grape and the fate of the lamb. One does not always know the journey of one's own train of thought. However, this scene contains Mary's decision to conceal her crime. In making this decision, she opts to become a performer.

Throughout the night-long investigation, Mary places herself in physical positions so she can spy on the police officers and overhear discussions. She is careful to give the impression she cannot see or hear. She insists on staying as the police doctor examines her husband's body and resists suggestions to remove her.

Hitchcock's final expression of Mary's performance of detachment from reality comes in the last scene as the policemen devour the leg of lamb used to kill Patrick. In a shot that has been discussed in relation to the last cell scene in Psycho (e.g. Rüdell in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 104), Mary is spatially isolated in the lounge. She sits on a dining chair which makes her posture upright and alert as she listens in to the men's conversation in the kitchen. The chair is against a wall. The camera slowly tracks in towards Mary, ending on a medium close-up

as Jack is heard to say: ‘Well, for all we know it might be right under our very noses’, a statement that makes Mary laugh out loud.

The shot is the culmination of her performance, a triumphant moment. She has deceived these men. Unlike in Psycho, we are not informed of her thoughts and intentions through voice-over, but it is clear her performance has aimed to show she would not even ‘harm a fly’, let alone her husband. The ending is a victory for her performance of innocence and detachment.

Although Hitchcock is required to condemn Mary for her crime in his epilogue he avoids giving an opinion about her guilt or innocence within the drama itself. Through his framing and editing, and the performance of Bel Geddes, the level of her guilt is never pinned down. It is up to the audience to assess how much of her culpability is down to mechanistic detachment and how much to cold calculation. We can make up our own minds about what we feel when we see her laughing in those final moments.

“Poison”

Synopsis

The story is set in ‘present-day’ (1950s) Malaya. Harry Pope (James Donald) and Timber Woods (Wendell Corey) are antagonistic business partners who live together in an isolated house.

One night, Timber arrives home to find Harry in bed, afraid to move. He explains that a krait, a small, deadly snake is under the sheets and settled on his stomach. Timber is sceptical; Harry has a history of alcoholism so Timber suggests he has been drinking. Harry is adamant he is telling the truth.

After some discussion, Harry says Timber must call Doctor Ganderbai (Arnold Moss). Timber calls the wrong number but manages to reach the doctor before he leaves on holiday. The doctor says he will be over straight away.

While they wait for the doctor, Timber talks to Harry. He admits he probably drove his partner to drink, but still plans to disclose Harry's alcohol problem to Julie, a woman who has come from Paris to be with Harry. Timber hopes he will be able to ruin their relationship so he can have Julie. Harry becomes riled by Timber's malicious provocation.

Doctor Ganderbai arrives and gives Harry an injection of krait venom antidote but he admits to Timber that the serum is unlikely to be effective if Harry is bitten. Harry is still in danger. They must anaesthetise the snake with chloroform. The doctor sends Timber to his house for the chloroform. In the meantime, he feeds a rubber tube under the bed sheet and attaches a funnel to it.

After some time, Timber returns. He reports he had a flat tyre on the journey. The doctor pours the chloroform into the funnel and they wait for it to drug the snake.

Later, Timber and the doctor slowly pull back the sheet. No snake can be seen. Harry suddenly stands up on the bed and jumps around, as if to shake the krait from his pyjamas, but there is no snake. Timber and the doctor question Harry and he is angered by the insinuation he made up the whole thing. The doctor goes to his car, suggesting to Timber his friend should take a holiday. Timber jokily apologises to the doctor. Harry watches them from the bedroom. As he sits on the bed, he does not notice the snake slithering under the pillow.

Timber returns to the house to tease Harry who is maddened even further by Timber. Harry is about to leave as Timber lies down on the bed, still laughing at Harry. Suddenly, Timber sits up clutching his neck - the snake has bitten him. He implores Harry to fetch the doctor, but Harry says the doctor has gone.

“Poison” presents a situation in which a character’s paralysis and restriction of movement is central. The tale’s concentration on a static figure, the character of Harry Pope, has implications for the style of presentation. “Poison” provides little in the way of action. Instead, most of the energy of suspense is expressed in tiny movements, gestures or sounds. However, although one character is paralysed physically, it is another who is presented as emotionally detached.

In terms of camera movement, Hitchcock is somewhat restricted by the main situation of “Poison”. In many scenes with Harry Pope, he chooses only to move the camera when the motions of less restricted characters can be used to contrast with Harry’s stillness. However, Hitchcock renders some sequences immobile when he might have moved his camera: the use of static set-ups has frequently been a matter of aesthetic purpose as well as narrative and/or budgetary imperatives. The inertia of the image is used to express the paralysis of Harry. As a result, when Hitchcock does move his camera with Harry in the frame, the visual effect is startling. Within the context of “Poison”’s inertia, the brief camera movements involving Harry draw attention to themselves, their content, and their difference from the programme’s static images.

As one example, Hitchcock draws us into the drama with a track back, pan right and slight crane downwards just after Timber opens the door to Harry's room near the beginning. He stands illuminated in the doorway frame-left as Harry's snake-like hand thrusts upwards into the bottom of the frame on the right. The appearance of the hand is heralded by an ominous blast of music, then the camera begins its brief movement. The moment lasts only a second, then the camera comes to rest. It immediately encourages curiosity, drawing us into the drama, and gives us a clear establishing shot of the space in which most of the drama will occur.

The situation is immediately conveyed - for some reason, Harry cannot move. With the exception of his hand, his stillness is total. His hand is stiff and pained as it strikes its serpent shape. He lies corpse-like on the bed, shrouded with a white sheet. His motionless state is incongruous: it seems as if he would be more at home in a morgue than a bed. The programme then settles into a pattern of static framings and shot-reverse shots, placing this opening movement in a context which makes it even more striking.

Hitchcock maintains engaging visuals through variations in the shot-reverse-shot conventions. During the first interaction between Timber and Harry, the characters are presented in repetitive but effective framings. Timber is shown in a medium close-up from a camera position which tilts up to frame his face and shoulders. He looks down and frame-right as he enquires about Harry's plight. Harry, lying on the bed, is framed in another medium close-up. The static camera is tilted down, placing his head to the top-left corner of the composition. His hands and his book appear in the bottom and right. Harry moves his eyes up and

left as he addresses Timber; he is careful not to move his head for fear of disturbing the snake. Harry's eye movements draw attention to his bodily paralysis.

Both of these set-ups approximate (but do not exactly convey) the POVs of Timber and Harry. The images of Harry frequently include physical encroachment by Timber, reducing their possible POV effect and emphasising Timber's mobility (compared to Harry's enforced paralysis). Harry does not appear in the shots of Timber, however, so no such reduction occurs in those images from Harry's approximate POV. Also, the images of Timber include minor pans and tilts, reframings which further emphasise Harry's paralysis.

During this first piece of dialogue, Timber is unconvinced by Harry's story of the krait on his stomach: 'You been hittin' the booze'; 'Who are you kidding! You were seeing things, now you're feeling them!'. These outbursts are an echo of the audience's position at this point, a general disbelief which triggers alternative explanations which seem credible. Like Timber, we must take Harry's story on trust.

Once Timber realises Harry is serious, he asks how it happened. Wendell Corey's performance as he asks this question is the only aspect of the drama which can be used to gain the audience's faith. Timber's visible and audible reduction in cynicism is convincing enough to demonstrate his change of mind; whether it is sufficient to alter audience belief is another matter. Timber though is in a transitional moment. He is becoming convinced by Harry's story, but has not yet decided how he will react to this change of opinion.

Timber's shift from disbelief to a request for information about the snake ('How'd it get there?'), is an implicit acceptance of Harry's account, and is marked by an alteration in the framing of Harry. As he tells how the snake slid over his shoulder as he read, he is shown from a viewpoint looking along his prone body. The camera is placed at the foot of the bed, level with Harry's head. He holds his book open, the pages down on his chest. His head is visible above the book, propped on a pillow. Only his eyes move, glancing up at Timber. The framing is the closest we get to a snake's eye view.

The alteration of the image of Harry gives his story a rhetorical authority. By approximating the snake's POV, the image reinforces the possibility that Harry is indeed telling the truth. However, this is far from conclusive proof of Harry's snake story. The altered view of Harry might also be read as emphasising *his* belief in *his* story.

Once Timber has begun to act upon what Harry has told him, the programme further implies their antagonistic relationship and convey *Timber's* detachment. The snake scenario would normally induce reactions of frantic, active panic. Timber does not act like that. He goes to the kitchen to fetch a knife, one of many actions that show his relationship with Harry is somewhat different. He has realised in order to hinder the release of Harry from his predicament, and torture him in the process, he does not have to do anything. He simply needs to have a level of disengagement from the situation.

Timber's strident but casual manner of speaking also conveys his disengagement. He is not in awe of the situation - he may not even believe it. What matters to Timber's plan to torture Harry is that Harry believes his own

story. Timber's rich American bass voice contrasts sharply with Harry's urgent, clipped English whisper. Harry is so nervous he dares not speak louder than in a sibilant, hissing manner which makes him sound snake-like.

Timber maintains an amused distance from Harry's plight, sufficient for him to be perceived as callous and sadistic in Harry's and the audience's perception. He goes through the motions, doing just enough to ostensibly help Harry but in as uninvolved a manner as possible.

To take an example of Timber's behaviour, his desire to tease Harry before he calls Doctor Ganderbai is evident from his words: 'It's no good; he's on his vacation'. Timber feigns disappointment at the prospect that the doctor is unattainable. Wendell Corey's performance falls short of delivering unequivocal malice into the role of Timber Woods. He is not seen delighting malevolently in Harry's fear. Rather, Timber's behaviour conveys his amused detachment. Only when Harry has pleaded does he try to contact the doctor.

The programme underscores Timber's state of mind through visual means. As Timber looks up the doctor's telephone number, he is pictured in a framing approximating Harry's POV. The camera is at a similar height to Harry on the bed and is tilted slightly upwards. Timber leans on the left-hand side of the door jamb, with his back to camera. The image conveys lack of concern, his detachment from the situation. By turning his back on Harry and the audience, his lack of sincere engagement is clearly conveyed.

The image of Timber in the doorway is interspersed with close-up profile shots of Harry. He conveys his helpless concern, grimacing at Timber's (probably intentional) inept and slow handling of the telephone call. Hitchcock

uses the profile image of Harry to convey his powerlessness. In previous programmes, and in many of his films, Hitchcock shows characters in evocative profile shots. However, they usually express that character's detachment from reality. Hitchcock's use of the profile image underlines detachment; visual inattention on the part of the person on-screen (the fact they look away and are unaware they are being looked at) evokes their mental inattention. However, the profile shots also express the character's move into a passive role. Without the ability or desire to influence events, Hitchcock's subjects of his profile shots become static and trapped by Hitchcock's camera as well as the narrative.

In this scene in "Poison", Harry is acutely aware of his predicament. He is far from detached. Here Hitchcock uses the profile shot to emphasise entrapment. Harry is at the mercy of Timber, a 'friend' and partner who is less than enthusiastic in providing assistance. James Donald shatters the possibility of seeing the profile shot as an image of detachment. He achieves this by frequent anxious glances towards (but not at) Hitchcock's close-up camera. The part of his body he is able to move, he moves as much as possible.

The main 'action' in this sequence is Timber looking up the doctor's number and his telephone calls. Hitchcock decides to render these moments in a way which evokes Harry's restricted and fixed POV. In a programme with little real action, Hitchcock intentionally makes his visual presentation even more static than it had to be. The effect of this decision is to align us with Harry for the majority of the programme.

Harry's approximate POV of Timber in the doorway is echoed at the end of the narrative when the tables are turned. Once Timber has been bitten by the

snake, Harry stands framed by the doorway as Timber pleads for him to try and fetch the doctor. Harry, and the camera, stand still. He looks past the camera frame-right, watching as Timber dies from the poison: 'The doctor's gone, Timber'. At the end of the story, Harry's stillness is seen as his strength. His ability to be still saves his life and also rids him of Timber.

The positions of Harry and Timber have been inverted. When Harry was paralysed by the presence of the snake, Timber's response to the situation was to come to his aid half-heartedly, to act upon the predicament in a detached and amused manner. However, when Timber calls on Harry to provide similar help Harry's response is purely verbal. It seems that inertia is not only a condition which was forced on Harry; this ending implies that stillness is part of his general character.

What this tells us about Harry is that stillness is his method of minimising his effect upon and presence within the world. Like Norman/Mother at the end of Psycho, Harry signals his withdrawal from the situation through his lack of action. 'I won't even swat that fly' becomes 'I won't even call the doctor'. Hitchcock frequently presents characters who are withdrawing from the exterior world. He understands the importance and meaning of character action and inaction in conveying these mental states. The final static image of Harry speaks of his withdrawal, which will cause Timber's death.

Hitchcock's use of paralysed and detached characters often links with the idea of guilt. As with so many examples of Hitchcock's story-telling, ambiguity surrounds the presentation of this guilt. Can we forgive Mary her act of murder on the grounds of provocation, incitement so cruel she is apparently only half

aware of her murderous action against her husband? Can we understand Harry's detached response to Timber's pleas for help after being bitten by the snake? The presentation of these situations is such that we are able to make up our own minds; the concept of detachment enhances this open-ended morality.

The visual simplicity of much of "Poison" has been considered in this chapter as an element used by Hitchcock to create static and restrictive imagery which feeds into the programme's themes of paralysis and detachment. However, this example, and many more which have been analysed in previous chapters, can be considered from a different perspective. The following chapter will contemplate the role played by some of the practical considerations in the products of Hitchcock's television career.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Hitchcock's Television Aesthetic

I remember only one aesthetic that [Hitchcock] offered:

'Remember, it's a close medium.' In television, you get an establishing shot and then you get in close, as fast as you can. I believe he was right.

(Norman Lloyd 1993: 173)

As John Russell Taylor (1979) has noted:

Long before television was born Hitchcock was making films which exploited to the full the kind of devices later (and still) characteristic of television ... in most respects of storytelling technique and money-saving ingenuity he was there first. (p. 52 and p. 86)

Hitchcock did not develop a style *for* television as such. However, in a number of ways, his film style was suited to the television medium and he used some of these elements to benefit his television productions, primarily his use of close-up images and judicious use of the long take. The purpose of the following analyses is to contemplate examples of Hitchcock's television filming technique and the ways Hitchcock integrates the practical conditions of television into his programmes' narration and themes.

Hitchcock's film style is not totally responsible for the look of his television shows. There are production choices made within television which do not correlate with Hitchcock's modes of presentation. Therefore, other aesthetic aspects related to television will be considered, such as the use of particular lighting effects, intertitles and visual elision of narrative events. Hitchcock's awareness of the reduced requirements at least for lighting on television is shown in his statement that 'One doesn't need complicated lighting since it won't have any effect on a twelve inch screen' (1956: 6-7 Cahiers du cinéma #62, quoted in Rüdell in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 98).

Hitchcock's shows for 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' were filmed and rehearsed in two or three days. In exceptional circumstances, programmes were filmed in just two working days. Post-production was a longer process, but many programmes would appear on the air within three to four months of being filmed. For 'The Alfred Hitchcock Hour', the shooting and rehearsal schedule would be extended to between three and five days, depending on the nature and content of

the programme. The budget was \$129,000 per episode for the first series (McCarty et al 1985: 13).

Hitchcock would not be given special dispensation when it came to his directorial projects, nor would he expect any. He had the same amount of time for preparation as all of the other directors for the show. In fact, Hitchcock sometimes made a point of bringing his shows in on time, or earlier:

He took enormous pride in doing these things very fast on a tight TV schedule without going a moment over. I remember when he did “Lamb to the Slaughter” and he finished on the nose at six o’clock quitting time, he turned around and said, ‘There’s your picture.’ Then he looked at everybody as if to say, ‘So don’t come to me with any ideas that you need an extra hour or two for something else.’ It was all in fun, but the message was clear: all of you had better be able to finish at six too. (Norman Lloyd quoted in McCarty et al 1985: 17).

Hitchcock’s achievement is all the more remarkable when one considers that “Lamb to the Slaughter” was one of those exceptional programmes rehearsed and filmed in only two days. The set-bound nature of that programme certainly helped in this accomplishment. Hitchcock was able to control his filming environment to a large degree.

The context of Hitchcock’s television work is distinctive from most of his film work in a number of important ways in relation to budget and production conditions. Most of the narratives attempted within the half- or full hour format

are 'small-scale'. They involve a small number of sets or locations. They use few characters in the tales they tell. A central single character or couple is used to carry the majority of the narrative. The programmes do not involve a large time-scale. We often join the stories halfway through and they conclude only a short while afterwards (in terms of story and screen time). (The only major exception to the last two generalisations is "The Crystal Trench" which involves the passing of many years between its beginning and end.)

Hitchcock was acutely aware that television allowed him to present stories that would never be made into movies:

I'm doing material on television of a downbeat nature that possibly I could never do for the movies ... The very first one I did ["Revenge"] was a story about a man who set out with his wife to find a rapist who had attacked her. The wife points out the criminal and her husband kills him. Then he discovers that his wife is deranged and had no way of knowing who her attacker was. That's the end of the story. (Hitchcock quoted in Grams Jr. et al 2001: 22 and Internet Article accessed 21/2/2005. See note 4, p.17).

The above quote is noteworthy for the implicit elements of the tale, rather than Hitchcock's literal re-telling of the narrative and his comments on its 'downbeat nature'. Hitchcock is able to offer a synopsis with three main characters (wife, husband, rapist) in three sentences. His fourth, narratively redundant sentence reads like an apology, almost like: 'sorry, there is no more'. In fact, it is an

indication of the different nature of these television narratives that Hitchcock must add this final sentence. It wards off the interviewer, used to the longer film drama, who asks 'And what happens next?'. His indication that 'That's the end of the story' is an acknowledgement of the differences in time, budget and narrative scope ordinarily available to the television anthology drama.

The economic conditions relating to the filming of Hitchcock's shows are key to the following analysis. The production conditions are often perceived as limitations for the scope, detail and explicitness of a television-based story, its characters and its aesthetic presentation. However, Hitchcock often uses the limitations of the television environment as opportunities for artistic expression, turning many conditions to his advantage. The following chapter will highlight some of the moments where television's economic conditions and its multiple influences on the final look and sound of the programmes become most apparent.

In a number of instances, the previous chapters have dealt with issues related to the programmes' televisual nature, such as their use of voice-overs, tight and economical filming styles and censorship issues. This chapter will serve to highlight some further moments where production condition considerations become apparent in Hitchcock's television corpus. It will eschew prosaic moments such as when a set seems shakier than it should be, like the unsafe banister in "Back For Christmas", or the inclusion of stock footage, such as the long shots of the ocean liner in "Dip In The Pool". It will concentrate on points where one can constructively consider the synthesis and tensions between television production conditions and the creation of meaning. These moments are not grouped as representative of the whole of Hitchcock's work in television but

they are considered a fair sample of those moments where Hitchcock achieves an integration of style and meaning.

“Back For Christmas”

Synopsis

Herbert Carpenter (John Williams) is an accomplished metallurgist. He and his wife Hermione (Isobel Elsom) are to leave for Los Angeles for Herbert to take a temporary post with a company. But Herbert wants rid of his obsessively organised and controlling wife. He plans to murder her before their trip, to go away as everyone expects and never to return.

On the day of their departure, Herbert digs a hole in the basement, ostensibly to start a wine cellar. They are then visited by some friends. Hermione assures them they will be back from America for Christmas, despite Herbert's hints they may stay longer. Hermione intimates to one friend that she is planning something which will require their return for Christmas. The friends leave and the Carpenters do their final preparations.

Herbert goes to the cellar and lures Hermione to look at the hole he has dug. As she leans over the hole, Herbert strikes her on the head. He fills in the hole and goes upstairs to wash.

In the bathroom, he realises Hermione has turned the water off at the mains. He goes back to the cellar to turn it back on, leaving the bathroom tap open. On his return to the hall, another couple who had hoped to see the Carpenters before they went, arrive at the door. Herbert manages to stay out of sight, but the running tap upstairs makes them think the Carpenters have not yet

left. They leave, resolving to return in a short while. Herbert heaves a sigh of relief and escapes.

He travels to Los Angeles and settles into an apartment. He writes letters back to England, typing them and signing them as Hermione. He is visited by a colleague from the factory (Ross Ford) where he is due to work. He brings some post that has arrived for Herbert and his wife.

Herbert sorts through the post. One envelope catches his eye and he reads it. It is a receipt from a building company, confirming to Hermione that the wine cellar will be built straight away, as per her instructions, to be finished by Christmas.

In “Back For Christmas”, there is a scene between Herbert and Hermione Carpenter at the dinner table. They are preparing to leave for Herbert’s post in America, which Hermione is sure will be temporary. Herbert has already hinted to the audience he intends to kill her and use the trip abroad as his escape. The dinner scene is a televisual example of a regular trait in Hitchcock’s film work:

A house is a place of conviviality, a shared space where meals taken together manifest our fellow-feeling. Hitchcock disturbs this ancient function of the human shelter (Conrad 2000: 338).

One only has to also recall the final meal of the murder weapon in “Lamb To The Slaughter”, “Arthur”’s pseudo-cannibalistic remodelling of the normal food

chain, and the awkward breakfast scene in “Revenge” to recognise that Hitchcock’s ‘TV dinners’ continue and develop this theme.

During the scene, Hermione demonstrates her stifling control over Herbert’s life. She has planned every little detail and Herbert’s questions (‘Have you had the gutters cleaned out?’) are despatched with her sense of despair at Herbert’s inadequacy when contrasted with her zealous efficiency (‘AGES ago!’). She insists Herbert occupies his mind with ‘more important matters’ and let her do the preparation. Henpecked Herbert’s remark to Hermione that ‘few men have wives like you’ is taken by the audience as ironic since we know him to be preparing his wife’s grave in the cellar, but to Hermione, it is a compliment she accepts graciously:

Hermione: Well that is nice of you Herbert. [Giggles slightly, coquettishly] One likes to have one’s little efforts appreciated, doesn’t one.

Her final sentence, with the addition of the rhetorical question ‘doesn’t one’, turns her response into a demand for Herbert’s agreement. The scene is one in which Hermione’s total dominance over Herbert’s existence becomes only too apparent, as does his simmering hatred at her controlling behaviour.

The scene is presented in a single, largely static shot of two minutes and five seconds duration. The camera is at approximately eye-level and frames the couple sat at the table in a medium shot. Herbert is on the left-hand side of the frame, Hermione on the right but closer to the centre. There are a small number

of minor reframing pans during the scene, to maintain Elsie (Mollie Glessing) the maid in view, but nothing occurs to shatter the basic construction of the shot or the placement of its main constituent parts.

The decision to use a basically static single shot for the whole scene is a clear example of the conditions of television production affecting the aesthetic of the finished programme. The scene requires one set-up, no new set, a single camera and is not dependent upon the skills of a virtuoso camera operator for its successful completion. The onus is instead placed upon the actors to deliver their lines correctly and convincingly without the need for excessive re-takes. However, even with a mistake on their part, a re-take could be achieved quickly and cheaply with the minimum of effort on-set.¹ The Hitchcock team knew the lead actors and their reliability from previous parts in other Hitchcock productions. Hitchcock had worked with his two principals prior to shooting “Back For Christmas”. John Williams had worked on Dial M For Murder (1954, Warner Bros., U.S.A.) and To Catch A Thief. Williams had also proven his abilities in “The Long Shot”, his first role in an ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ show, directed by Robert Stevenson. Both Williams and Isobel Elsom acted in The Paradine Case (1947, Selznick International/Vanguard, U.S.A.). They would also appear in future Hitchcock television shows, even performing as a married couple again in “The Three Dreams of Mr. Findlater” (Tx. 21/4/57).

Crucially, the decision to use the single-shot works on an artistic level. It enhances the themes of the programme and can be seen as associated with the

¹ In fact, Williams commits what may be a minor fluff with ‘Have we - have you had the gutters cleaned out?’, but it hardly merits a retake.

characters' personalities and their situations. Consider the subtle differences in the framing of Herbert and Hermione. Ostensibly, he occupies frame-left while she occupies frame-right. However, Herbert is so far left that the right side of his body is, for most of the clip, partially out of the frame. Hermione is fully contained within the frame. She is not as marginalised as Herbert by the composition of the scene. The placement of camera and actor underlines Herbert's perception - Hermione's control over his life is such that his own self is pushed aside. While Hermione does not actually dominate the frame through centrality, she is placed to imply a greater level of control than Herbert. Although she claims to be planning his life for his own good, this is not what Herbert wants. What Herbert wants and what Hermione thinks he wants are two very different things, as shown in the early part of the scene:

Hermione: There you are, your favourite lunch, Herbert: Shepherd's Pie.

Herbert: It isn't truly my favourite, you know.

Hermione: Of course it is, Herbert. You know how often we have it and you always enjoy it.

Herbert: Do I?

Hermione passes Herbert his plate of Shepherd's Pie and laughs off his mild belligerence as playfulness with a swallowed, forced chuckle. The moment is the scene's strongest indication of their unequal relationship. Herbert does air his opposition but ineffectually, in a way Hermione can dismiss as joking. She continues to dominate him and thinks he prefers it that way. Herbert's frustration

and hatred bubbles up to the surface and explodes into murder, and yet the murder is as planned as one of Hermione's trips. Herbert's explosion of rage is calculated; an example of Herbert not being so different from Hermione after all.²

The static and 'undramatic' camerawork in the scene can also be considered as part of the programme's overall project. The camera does not draw attention to its presence as an observer and as such does not draw our attention away from the performances of John Williams and Isobel Elsom for a second. We are invited to observe their interactions and troubled communications without distractions from edits or obvious reframings. There is an element of discomfort for the viewer whose contemplation of this couple must be concentrated on gesture, voice and facial expression. The static camera both invites and *forces* us to watch intently, offering no respite from their relationship. The lack of escape for the viewer parallels Herbert's position within the marriage. He has no easy escape from Hermione's stifling regime.

Taken out of the context of the programme, the dinner scene might seem uninspired and cheap. In context, its form and content can be seen to be as much the result of conscious production and directorial decisions as the 'restrictive' conditions of television production. Hitchcock presents the scene in a manner conducive to the creation of character empathy, greater perception of the situation and deeper understanding of the roles and traits of the characters involved.

² Even their similar names imply an affinity and similarity that Herbert might not accept.

Another long take appears near the end of “Back For Christmas”.³ Hitchcock evinces a confidence in his own ability and that of his crew in presenting this second long take. The result is a fine piece of performance from John Williams with tight and accurate interaction between camera and actor. The dinner scene is marked by its lack of camera or main actor movement within the frame. The long take in the programme’s final sequence would not be so simple to capture with such ease, and yet in many ways, little has changed.

The scene dissolves in from the end of a montage sequence depicting Herbert’s trip across America by car, ending with an up-tilting exterior shot of an apartment building on the west coast. Herbert is then seen at his typewriter in the foreground. He seems to be seated at a desk on a balcony. Large French windows lead into the apartment behind him and a door to the right of those windows serves as the entrance to the space.

Herbert is typing letters to friends back home, pretending to be Hermione. There are two close-ups of the letters he is writing in the first fifty seconds of this scene, but each time the camera returns to the main shot, the framing has not changed, implying that the whole scene is likely to have been achieved in one take with just these two close-ups inserted later. The scene lasts approximately four minutes from the beginning to the final close-up of the bill to excavate the cellar.

In those four minutes, the maintenance of action within the frame and emphasis of certain moments precipitates a number of reframings using small cranes up and down, panning left and right, and tracks left, right, forwards and

³ A picture of Hitchcock directing this scene is reproduced in McCarty et al (1985: 74).

backwards. All the movements are quite minor and the whole set is in constant deep focus, so no focus pulling is involved.

A man from Herbert's company has brought mail for Herbert and Hermione. Herbert greets him at the door of the apartment and they walk towards the camera to speak, the section of the scene which requires the camera to move the most. However, none of the reframings is of particular importance in isolation. The issue is this presentation in long take of Herbert as a 'free man' returns us to the similar visual strategy of the dinner scene, where Herbert was trapped. Although there is some alteration in the presentation of the long take, they are still broadly the same.

The return to the long take is also important in terms of Herbert's characterisation. Although free from Hermione, Herbert seems to have changed very little once he has escaped. He is not revelling in emancipation by slouching on a sofa, carousing with women, enjoying a hedonistic existence. Instead, he is nibbling at the edges of what is at essence an ordered lifestyle. His are small rebellions such as leaving his apartment in a mess (although he still asks the maid to do the washing-up and vacuuming), drinking a beer at breakfast and wearing a short-sleeved shirt with the top button open. He still wears a watch, opens his post straight away, plans the order, date and content of his written replies to Hermione's mail and says to his colleague 'I think I have everything under control' (a comment heavy with irony given the twist, but words which still indicate his feeling of being organised). Hitchcock's second long take underscores how little has changed in Herbert's life. The more mobile camera in

the second long take equates to the small freedoms seized by Herbert. Yet, fundamentally, little has altered.

Hitchcock's presentation of the scene in long take can also be seen as the reintroduction of Hermione's restrictive influence from beyond the grave. No matter how free Herbert feels because of carelessly discarded towels and early morning drinking, the scene's presentation pre-empts Hermione's return as the guiding presence in Herbert's life, in the form of the letter about the wine cellar.

The long take provides the lead up to the narrative twist where Hitchcock's use of the close-up becomes important. At the end of it, Herbert looks down and frame-right at the bill for the cellar excavation which he has put aside as he stares in dreadful realisation. A psychologically-induced POV shot of the statement in extreme close-up then appears; the camera tracks slowly towards it, echoing Herbert's intense concentration on its dreadful contents. The first line of the statement becomes masked off in black as the camera moves in closer:

To excavating cellar floor

The camera moves along the line, ending on 'cellar floor'. We then see Herbert, from a camera position and angle which implies that the letter is looking up at him, as he mutters:

Herbert: Back for Christmas. She said I'd be back for Christmas.

This final shot with Herbert looking downwards fades to black on the finale music. Like the return to the long-take, it is designed to imply the ‘ghost’ of Hermione. The letter’s ‘supernatural gaze’ up at Herbert evokes Hermione’s own supernatural point of view. From her current resting place in the cellar, she would look up at those who look down upon her. The letter is Hermione’s doing; that it uncannily echoes her POV is a deliberate resurrection of her controlling influence on Herbert. As with her shutting off of the water supply, Hermione’s actions come back to haunt Herbert from the grave.

“Poison”

“Poison” is adapted from a story by Roald Dahl which seems to be set in India. Although Dahl never specifies the setting, many of his tales take place in India since he knew the country from personal experience. The doctor’s name, Ganderbai, is undoubtedly Eastern; we discover Ganderbai is a Hindu; the krait snake is a tropical animal.

In the adaptation, such woolly allusion is dispensed with in the first seconds. The Hitchcock programme is based in Malaya. A large capitalised title over the first shot informs us of this, and it is the role and context of this title which will be discussed.

There is concealment and rhetoric relating to this ‘MALAYA’ title. It is an authoritative stamp which impacts upon the audience’s perception of the image it labels. The writing is large on the screen, bright white against a dark background and centrally placed. The way the ‘MALAYA’ title appears is obviously related to the televisual need for clarity. With a relatively primitive

picture tube, the title would still be legible. The title's dimensions, whiteness and placement are, therefore a result of the need for it to be visible. However, the converse also applies: the title acts to both obscure and draw attention away from the image behind which it describes as 'MALAYA'.

When one considers the image behind this bold title, one begins to realise why the title looks as it does. The image is a studio-bound creation. Although the set of the house in the middle distance is believable, the ground in front is perfectly flat. The canvas-backed truck Harry drives up to the house has no obstacles on the ground. It is strewn with soil and bits of vegetation. The rest of the image is dominated by foliage. A leafy branch extends from frame-left across the top of the screen, obscuring half the sky, and large bushes and trees dominate the image both left and right. The composition draws the eye through the central space, where the truck drives in, and up to the large lighted windows of the house.

Although the scene is set at night, there seem to be two main diegetic light sources: the house and the moon. The tops of the leaves on the trees are white with reflected light, an effect which also draws the eye centre-frame, spotting the centre ground with dappled light patterns. This level of lighting on the waxy leaves is achieved through strong non-diegetic illumination. The truck's headlights are not used as an added source of illumination, although it is noticeably darker on the house front once Harry kills the headlamps.

From this description, it is clear there are few visual cues to this being an 'exotic' setting. The reflective quality of the leaves and the dappled light patterns are the strongest indications that the setting is tropical. Other than that, this might

well be backwoods America. The weight of the image's label as 'exotic' is carried by a crude but effective lighting scheme.

It is not inconceivable that the programme, rather than being located in Malaya, could have been set in America. The continent has sufficient poisonous snakes and remote areas to make the narrative believable. However, this would have required the representation of a setting recognisable to the majority of the original audience. By placing the tale in Malaya, the setting is largely unknown and mysterious to that audience and the programme is able to exploit that ignorance by presenting the barest bones of a believable set. The 'MALAYA' title's role is to provide the context for the viewer to perceive the set as a credible depiction of a small corner of an unknown country.

After the first image, there is a cut to a framing of Harry climbing out of the truck and walking up to the house. In terms of the budgetary aesthetic, the most important aspect of this image is the elision of the sky. The backdrop in the first shot, but largely obscured by foliage, is omitted by the camera's position in relation to the *mise-en-scène*. Frame-right shows the rear of the canvas truck. The background of the scene is taken up and closed off by the house, the bright windows on the left, stairs up to the darkened doorway on the right. Frame-left, a few shiny fronds peek into the composition, retaining the visual cue of the 'tropical' from the previous image.

The use of multiple lighting sources is betrayed by Harry's shadow as he walks to the house. The light from the windows does not provide his main shadow; a strong backlight coming in from above and frame-left is the main source of illumination for Harry's figure.

There is a reason for this light, related to the bold rhetorical effect of the large title during the previous image. Harry is dressed in a light-coloured suit. This in itself is another element to connote a tropical setting - light suits of this kind being associated with western explorers to deflect heat. Harry does not wear a pith helmet. If he did it would not look incongruous. The shadows that fall on Harry's suit, created by the strong non-diegetic light, provide the shot's further rhetorical touch of the exotic. He is dappled by leaf patterns on his shoulders and back. Compared to the jungle-like presence of foliage in the previous image, the lighting widens our continuing sense of the surroundings by imposing these leafy shadows on Harry.

The shadows also assist in conveying the setting's feeling of enclosure. There is no escape from the composition; all roads lead to the house, the place where the majority of the drama will be played out. As we experience Timber's inability to move and escape the snake, it becomes evident a sense of claustrophobia is crucial to the tale. The second set-up used in the programme begins to build that sense by eradicating the sky, eliding the route towards the house and creating the feeling that the jungle surrounds and encroaches on this place by casting dappled shadows over its inhabitants and spaces.

To criticise the programme for an unrealistic depiction of Malaya would be to miss the point. The programme has chosen Malaya as a setting not because it wishes to depict that country. The decision over setting has been influenced by the need to use a place unknown to most of the programme's audience, somewhere sufficiently exotic to harbour poisonous snakes, but somewhere not America. The programme bestows upon itself a level of freedom to depict an

exotic setting without being too concerned about specifics. The ‘MALAYA’ title, the shiny foliage and its dark, leafy shadows are sufficiently forceful cues to take the audience along, whilst not perhaps taking them all in. Believability is sufficient; accurate realism would be too expensive.

“Mr. Blanchard’s Secret”

“Mr. Blanchard’s Secret” is a tale of perception and interpretation of events which has already been discussed in relation to its use of voice-over and lack of POV. In those discussions, it was clear the programme’s visuals implied that Babs’ perception of events is untrustworthy. Her inability to accurately correct her own manuscript is just one reason to doubt her perceptual powers. The programme makes these powers central to the narrative since we are forcibly dependent on Babs’ perception at a number of points, and frequently at the whim of her twists of imagination. This issue has already been discussed in the context of its effect on our viewing experience. The same moments will now be considered as examples of the effect of television production conditions.

With Babs’ perception and interpretation of events so central, it is interesting to note the programme’s use of visual elision in depicting certain plot details. One scene in particular is notable for its use of off-screen space where important story events are taking place. Just prior to the scene in question, Mrs. Blanchard has visited Babs without Mr. Blanchard’s knowledge. He then appears and forces his wife to leave to return to their house. Babs is under the impression Mr. Blanchard has his wife under virtual house arrest.

Babs harbours this conviction as she and husband John get into bed in the next scene. John hides his face under the covers as Babs witters her theories, expressing sympathy for poor Mrs. Blanchard whose beautiful clothes are never seen by the outside world. Babs looks out of the upstairs bedroom window which looks down upon the Blanchard's front door. On hearing an off-screen door slam, she cuts off from her condemnation of Mr. Blanchard, rushes back to the window and flings the net curtain aside:

Babs: He just came out of the house. He's... he's carrying something. It looks like a large sack. He's putting it into his car. John, [off-screen sound of a car starting up] he's driving off with it. Oh, John!! [Babs rushes out of the room]

Having panned right to follow Babs' exit through the door, the camera rests on the door as this scene dissolves into the next. A lap dissolve indicates some time has passed, but that the space is the same. The position of the camera as it frames the door has altered slightly as the new image takes precedence over the previous image. Babs rushes back into the room and breathlessly reports to John what she has just seen:

Babs: Ten minutes ago Mr. Blanchard left here in a great hurry, practically *dragging* a heavy sack. I've been pounding on their door ever since. Mrs. Blanchard's light is still on but Mrs. Blanchard doesn't

answer. *Now* do you understand? ... Suppose what Mr. Blanchard had in that sack - was the body of Ellen Blanchard?

In terms of financial economy, it would be difficult to film the scene any cheaper. A great deal of narrative information is condensed into two simple shots. If one considers the number of extra set-ups required to present what Babs sees and experiences in those first moments out of the bedroom window and the following ten minutes, it is obvious cost and time have been major factors in the way this information is delivered.

The temporal elision, neatly achieved through the lap dissolve of the bedroom door, also condenses screen time. Babs is simply required to report her actions over the previous ten minutes of story-time. Since she is so excited, this takes a few seconds and some lines of dialogue. This allows the programme to present more interesting passages in full later on. There is constant awareness of the parameters in terms of the programme's running time.

The elision of Mr. Blanchard's departure from the house with the curious sack saves time and money. Babs is able to describe what she 'sees' and a small number of post-production sound effects underscore her words and give the scene sufficient veracity. There is no need for POV shots that would need a crane or raised platform to achieve the desired position on the action taking place downstairs and outside. The use of POV would be one of a number of ways the scene might have been presented, but whichever alternative one might choose, additional set-ups would have been required.

The selected presentation for the events might be one of the cheapest methods available and yet it is also the most effective method in terms of maintenance of the programme's narrational strategy. The programme attaches us to Babs in virtually every scene. We follow the workings of her mind, through voice-over, the dramatic representation of her crime writer's mind (the imagined murder scene between the Blanchards), through her thinking out loud in our presence, and her one-sided conversations with John. And yet we are given good reason to doubt her powers of perception.

The only element of Mr. Blanchard's departure which cannot be given credibility through the use of off-screen sound effects is the sack he is carrying. His leaving the house is accompanied by a door slam, his departure in the car by the engine sound. The sack becomes the most important piece of evidence in Babs' theory that Mr. Blanchard has killed his wife and her corpse was in that sack. It is consistent with her character that on seeing the sack in the first instance, Babs says Mr. Blanchard is simply 'carrying' it, yet, once she has formulated her next fiction around the Blanchards, she describes Mr. Blanchard as 'practically *dragging*' a 'heavy sack'. From the basic report of the event, Babs starts applying connotations to something she alone witnessed, to support her wild interpretations. The audience is reliant on her version, in no position to question her interpretation of an event we did not witness.

Hitchcock uses the economical elisions in this scene to sustain the audience's reliance on Babs' perception, to keep the twist away from the audience by denying us access to the full facts. Unfortunately, in the case of "Mr. Blanchard's Secret", this strategy also results in frustration. She is not

admonished for leading us astray. Within the context of the scene, Hitchcock chose a suitable and economical method to convey off-screen events. But the wider project and method of presentation needed to strike a better balance between events the audience is told about and those it is allowed to see for itself.

“Revenge”

One aspect of Hitchcock’s style that provides suitable television images is his depiction of ordinary objects which become charged with narrative importance, shown in extreme close-up.⁴ These images are a product of the high level of ‘told-ness’ in his films. His style cues the audience to consider particular objects or persons as significant, cues which are sometimes untrustworthy. In order to provide an intelligible image, large-scale depiction of objects, faces and movements is ideally suited to 1950s television, reliant as it was on small, low-definition pictures to convey its stories. The happy convergence of television’s practical requirements and this element of Hitchcock’s visual style means he can apply the technique for his own ends.

Hitchcock’s use of the close-up to make his presentation of events seem informative, whilst using them to withhold important information, has already

⁴ Some film examples: the ticking bomb in Sabotage; the glass of milk in Suspicion; young Charlie’s ring in Shadow of a Doubt; the wine cellar key, champagne bottles and poisoned cup of coffee in Notorious; the broken spectacles, the monogrammed tie and the cigarette lighter in Strangers on a Train; the necklace and flowers in Vertigo; the stolen money in Psycho; the luggage compartment key and handbag in Marnie (1964, Universal/Geoffrey Stanley Inc., U.S.A.).

been discussed in relation to censorship. Another, different example of Hitchcock's use of close-up from "Revenge" occurs during the programme's introductory images. Kuhns (in Mogg 1999: 138) notes that the beginning 'generates apprehension' but does not elaborate. Hitchcock sets a distinctly uneasy tone through disorientating depictions of everyday objects.

The beginning of "Revenge" involves a series of repetitive images of trailer homes linked by swift, smooth dissolves. After this, Hitchcock cuts to an imposing image of the front of Carl's car. The camera, inches from the ground, looks up at the car that dominates the frame with its graceful 50s lines and downturned, threatening radiator grille. The edit to this image is striking since it follows such benign shots of a serene and deserted trailer park in various eye-level compositions. It transforms an ordinary car into an object with a menacing presence. The shot of the car grille creates pertinent meaning within the realm of the story by instantly evoking a sense of unease with the everyday. Chapter Four considers Hitchcock's presentation of the Spans' uneasy new marriage, how they are less than a happy couple, and the whole narrative concerns the intrusion of insanity and/or violent attack into the lives of these ordinary people. The disquieting introduction immediately begins the articulation of this theme.

Later, Hitchcock depicts Elsa's body in a similar manner, developing the sense of disquiet and abnormality. At the end of her chat with Mrs. Ferguson, Elsa settles in a deckchair to sunbathe. She is dressed in a bathing costume and sandals. The framing emphasises her legs in the foreground frame-left, the camera positioned close to the ground. The framing echoes the unease of the car shot and links it with Elsa's exposed body. It appears just before a fade-to-black,

at the end of a sequence during which POV and reaction shots of Mrs. Ferguson inform us of the neighbour's unspoken worries for Elsa's safety. In an innocuous scene, Hitchcock inserts a shot designed to create and sustain the feeling that there will be a traumatic intrusion into this fictional world.

CONCLUSION

Hitchcock was responsible for a number of masterpieces in the cinema. The same is true of his television directorial work. Within the twenty programmes he directed, there are tremendously successful achievements within the medium. This thesis has concentrated upon those successes and demonstrated some of the terms by which they can be fairly evaluated as such. Through close analysis, many examples have been found which demonstrate Hitchcock's skills in harnessing the production conditions of television to his own artistic ends. He is not always restricted by censorship, small budgets, brief programming slots, and the like. Many of the analyses which take these conditions into account have shown how Hitchcock responds positively to television's perceived limitations and uses them to further enhance his programmes' themes.

Programmes which work as television, which are not simply subject to their production conditions, but instead are seen to harness those conditions, have been foregrounded and celebrated. Hitchcock's use of censorship codes and network restrictions to create deep ambiguity in "Revenge" is just one example of his ability to mould his talents to the small-screen medium. The decision to emphasise the televisual origins of these programmes was intended to permit

them to be judged by the correct criteria. To compare the programmes to Hitchcock's movie direction work was deemed unfair and bound to discover the programmes to be lacking in many ways.

As a result of this emphasis, there have been fewer comparisons drawn between Hitchcock's movies and his television work. A full consideration of the thematic and aesthetic similarities between Hitchcock's film and television output is the role of another thesis. Little in the way of textual analysis has been undertaken to seriously map out these film/television associations in detail, even though they have been (and continue to be) the main preoccupation of many publications on Hitchcock's television. It is hoped such a piece of research would achieve its comparisons with sensitivity to the different production conditions of each medium.

Artistic excellence in any medium is a rare commodity and is to be celebrated and given due credit. So the fact a number of the programmes directed by Hitchcock do not always achieve excellence should not detract from or temper the enthusiasm felt for programmes like "Revenge", "Arthur", "Banquo's Chair", "Lamb To The Slaughter" and "Back For Christmas" which represent the best of Hitchcock's television canon. These programmes remain as testament to Hitchcock's consummate abilities as a television director. As a cinematic analogy: the astounding achievements in Vertigo should not go down in our estimation as a result of dissatisfaction with the rendering of Jamaica Inn.

As regards the non-Hitchcock directed episodes studied as context, it is clear 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' is a series with many excellent instalments. There are pleasures to be found within a large number of the programmes it

produced during its run. In the context of the concerns of this thesis, the programmes analysed in detail do not, on the whole, fully measure up to the achievements of the Hitchcock-directed episodes. There are undoubtedly moments within the programmes when some of Hitchcock's accomplishments come close to being matched; this is clear from the enthusiastic comments made about these examples in Chapter One. The use of voice-over narration in the opening moments of "The Long Shot", for example, is one such (rather fleeting) instance, with its counterpointed elements of certainty and uncertainty. The dialogue in "No Pain" is exceptional in its contradictory messages both about Cindy and Dave's relationship, and the nature of the narrative twist. It compares well with the portrait of a relationship provided by the first few minutes on "Revenge". The chosen programmes all reward multiple viewings, which is no minor achievement in itself.

The examples not directed by Hitchcock, then, can sometimes match Hitchcock's programmes in various ways - but only rarely. There is no example here (or of another programme seen by this writer) that equals the sustained achievements of the very best of Hitchcock on television, as listed above.

'The Twilight Zone' programmes analysed similarly do not provide an example to best Hitchcock's finest achievements. As with the examples from Hitchcock's shows not directed by him, some of these dramas do have fine technical, creative moments which place them above the average fare. "Eye Of The Beholder", in a different context, might be considered to be more of a success than it has here. The thesis' concentration on integration of form and content (and form *as* content) as a criterion of value does not serve to emphasise

the technical achievements used in this programme to conceal the faces of some of the characters. It is felt that the story's presentation is stymied by its moralistic and politicised twist. With "Time Enough At Last", the preachy tone leaves an even more bitter taste, dependent as its message is on a tale which so cruelly condemns its central character for no good reason. "Mirror Image" is perhaps closest to Hitchcock's best. It has moments of fine technical skill and they are fully aligned with its uncanny story material. But it cannot resist reducing the number of available explanations for its tale; its use of close-up demonstrates little trust in its audience to be able to make sense of the story without strong visual guidance. These two tendencies alone effectively limit its ambiguity and possible interpretations when compared with, for example, "The Case Of Mr. Pelham" and "Revenge".

Research has indicated that Hitchcock's directorial working pattern in television was similar to that which he followed in making movies. Hitchcock's level of involvement in the selection of specific material, production and post-production of the programmes he directed was less than in most of his movies. However, Hitchcock's television series were unique in that the production team and the remit they followed was specified personally by him. The series reflected his interests and preoccupations, resulting in the selection and treatment of story material all geared to the aim of reflecting the figure of Hitchcock. As the director of the shows analysed, this role further amplified that influence. His creative influence has been sought and frequently discovered in the place most likely to yield evidence of this influence: upon the screen.

Hitchcock's creative input as a director has been emphasised. Aspects of Hitchcock's personal style of story-telling have been found to be suited to the television medium. Particular elements such as the use of close-ups and long takes, translate well from one medium to the other. Television therefore simultaneously moulded Hitchcock's artistic talents (through the imposition of its specific production conditions discussed above) and acted as another outlet for a style of filming he had developed within the cinema.

It has been the desire of this project to rediscover and re-evaluate Hitchcock's television work for a new generation of critics and scholars. Since the genesis of this thesis in 1997, rediscovery of this topic has been facilitated through the increased availability of the programmes and some new writing about them. The re-evaluation provided here goes some way to correct the injustices meted out by previous literature. The more spurious interpretations or assessments of the programmes have been assessed with assistance from evidence provided by the shows.

Elision is inevitable in any piece of work. Evidence from some programmes in support of themes and issues represented in analytical chapters has been lost. Most drastically, a small number of programmes have not been discussed at any great length. In the most part, this was because they did not stand as strong examples of the themes discussed. For example, "The Horseplayer" and "Dip In The Pool" were to be considered together in relation to their common theme of gambling. Another chapter drawing together Hitchcock's masterful presentations of married life and the family unit on television was a victim of the organisation of the material in the chapters which survived. The

loss of an extensive chapter on Hitchcock's less successful television work has also reduced slightly the thesis' coverage.

It is hoped that any future work on Hitchcock's television should engage with it as television rather than as 'mini Hitchcock movies'. With this one essential condition in place, there is certainly scope for future analysis and research. The whole output of the Hitchcock production team would make an interesting study, to investigate parallels and distinctions between Hitchcock-directed and non-Hitchcock-directed productions. Such a study might consider, in more depth than has been possible here, the creative roles of Hitchcock's production personnel or regular contributors. In particular, the roles of Joan Harrison and Norman Lloyd in shaping and delivering the Hitchcock series would be central. Prolific writers such as Henry Slesar may also be the focus of further work, as might directors other than Hitchcock who frequently created outstanding achievements in television. Robert Stevens, Arthur Hiller, Paul Henreid, Norman Lloyd, Herschel Daugherty, John Brahm and Don Taylor all directed programmes deserving of closer analysis and assessment. Some of these directors' work appear as context, but this has been a context dictated largely by the perceived concerns and interesting elements of the Hitchcock-directed programmes.

The legacy of Hitchcock's foray into television lives on. Every day, somewhere around the world, a Hitchcock programme is being shown in syndication. Their enduring popularity is testament to their high quality. Those

directed by Hitchcock are at the vanguard of the series' artistic achievements, and indeed of the greatest dramatic accomplishments of television generally.

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TELEOGRAPHY

Key to Abbreviations:

EST: Eastern Standard Time	M: Music Composer
Tx.: First U.S.A. transmission date details	Ed: Editor(s)
Sc: Screenplay	W: Wardrobe or Costumes
DP: Director of Photography	ad: Assistant Director
AD: Art Director or Production Designer	P: Producer
S: Set Design	AP: Associate Producer
D: Director	

Hitchcock-Directed Television Programmes

- The programmes are arranged in order of first American network broadcast date, not production date.
- All programmes were produced by Shamley Productions and filmed at Revue Studios, Hollywood, California. All were directed by Alfred Hitchcock.
- All programmes are in black and white, approximately 23 minutes duration and produced for the 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' series, unless otherwise noted.

“Revenge”

Show 1, Season 1 (Premiere programme)

Prod. Date: 15th to 17th September, 1955

Tx.: 2nd October, 1955 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Francis Cockrell and A.I. Bezzerides, based on a story by Samuel Blas

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Jack Corrick;

AP: Joan Harrison.

Cast: Ralph Meeker (Carl Spann); Vera Miles (Elsa Spann); Frances Bavier

(Mrs. Ferguson); Ray Teal (Lieutenant); Ray Montgomery (Man in the grey

suit); John Gallaudet (Doctor); Norman Willis (Sergeant); John Day

(Policeman); Lillian O'Malley (Hotel Maid); Herbert Lytton (Hotel

Receptionist).

“Breakdown”

Show 7, Season 1

Prod. Date: 7th to 10th September, 1955

Tx.: 13th November, 1955 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Francis Cockrell & Louis Pollock, based on a story by Louis Pollock

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** James Hogan;

AP: Joan Harrison.

Cast: Joseph Cotten (Mr. Callew); Raymond Bailey (Ed Johnson); Forrest

Stanley (Hubka); Lane Chandler (Sheriff); Harry Shannon (prisoner, tyre thief);

Murray Alper (Lloyd); James Edwards (black clothes thief); Aaron Spelling (Road worker); Marvin Press (Jessie); Mike Ragan (white clothes thief); Jim Weldon (prisoner, tyre thief); Richard Newton (prisoner, tyre thief); Harry Landers (prisoner, tyre thief); Elzie Emanuel (Callew's secretary); Ralph Peters.

“The Case of Mr. Pelham”

Show 10, Season 1

Prod. Date: 7th, 8th and 10th October, 1955

Tx.: 4th December, 1955 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Francis Cockrell, based on a story by Anthony Armstrong

DP: John L. Russell; **AD/S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson; **Ed:** Richard G.

Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Jack Corrick; **AP:** Joan Harrison.

Cast: Tom Ewell (Mr. Pelham); Raymond Bailey (Doctor Harley); Justice Watson (Peterson the butler); Kirby Smith (Tom Mason); Kay Stewart (Miss Clement); John Compton (Vincent); Norman Willis (Ray, the bartender); Jan Arvan (Harry); Tim Graham (Man); Richard Collier (Tie salesman); Diane Brewster (Typist).

“Back For Christmas”

Show 23, Season 1

Prod. Date: 13th, 14th and 16th of January, 1956

Tx.: 4th March, 1956 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Francis Cockrell, based on a story by John Collier

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** Ralph Sylos; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Richard

Birnie; **AP:** Joan Harrison.

Cast: John Williams (Herbert Carpenter); Isobel Elsom (Hermione Carpenter); A.E. Gould-Porter (Major Sinclair); Lily Kemble-Cooper (Mrs. Sinclair); Gavin Muir (Mr. Wallingford); Katherine Warren (Mrs. Freda Wallingford); Gerald Hamer (Mr. Hewitt); Irene Tedrow (Mrs. Hewitt); Ross Ford (American colleague); Theresa Harris (American maid); Mollie Glessing (Elsie the English maid).

“Wet Saturday”

Show 1, Season 2 (40th programme)

Prod. Date: 22nd to 24th August, 1956

Tx.: 30th September, 1956 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Marian Cockrell, based on a story by John Collier

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Jack Corrick;

AP: Joan Harrison.

Cast: Sir Cedric Hardwicke (Mr. Princey); John Williams (Captain Smollett);

Kathryn Givney (Mrs. Princey); Tita Purdom (Millicent Princey); Jerry Barclay (George Princey); Irene Lang (Maid).

“Mr. Blanchard’s Secret”

Show 13, Season 2 (52nd programme)

Prod. Date: 18th, 19th and 22nd October, 1956

Tx.: 23rd December, 1956 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Sarett Rudley, based on a story by Emily Neff

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James Walters; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Richard Birnie; **AP:** Joan Harrison.

Cast: Mary Scott (Babs Fenton); Robert Horton (John Fenton); Dayton Lummis (Mr. George Blanchard); Meg Mundy (Mrs. Ellen Blanchard); Eloise Hardt [credited actor who does not appear].

“One More Mile To Go”

Show 28, Season 2 (67th programme)

Prod. Date: 9th to 11th January, 1957

Tx.: 7th April, 1957 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: James P. Cavanagh, based on a story by F.J. Smith

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** Ralph Sylos; **M:** Stanley Wilson; **Ed:** Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green; **AP:** Joan Harrison.

Cast: David Wayne (Sam Jacoby, husband); Louise Larrabee (Martha Jacoby, wife); Steve Brodie (Motorcycle Policeman); Norman Leavitt (Red).

“Four O’Clock”

For ‘Suspicion’ series; 52 minutes duration

Show 1, Season 1 (premiere programme)

Prod. Date: 29th July to 2nd August, 1957

Tx.: 30th September, 1957 - NBC, Monday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Francis Cockrell, based on a story by Cornell Woolrich

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green;

AP: Joan Harrison.

Cast: E.G. Marshall (Paul Steppe); Nancy Kelly (Fran Steppe); Richard Long

(David); Charles Seel (Watch repair customer); Jesslyn Fax (Wife of customer);

Harry Stanton (Harry, a teenager); Tom Pittman (Bill, a teenager); Vernon Rich

(Doctor); David Armstrong (Policeman); Juney Ellis (Voice of neighbour); Brian

Corcoran (Bobby, neighbour’s son); Chuck Webster (Gasman).

“The Perfect Crime”

Show 3, Season 3 (81st programme)

Prod. Date: 17th to 19th July, 1957

Tx.: 20th October, 1957 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Stirling Silliphant, based on a story by Ben Ray Redman

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green;

AP: Joan Harrison.

Cast: Vincent Price (Charles Courtney); James Gregory (John Gregory); Marianne Stewart (Alice West); Gavin Gordon (Ernest West); Mark Dana (Harrington); Charles Webster (Reporter); John Zarembo (Photographer); Nick Nicholson (Reporter); Therese Lyon (Housekeeper).

“Lamb To The Slaughter”

Show 28, Season 3 (106th programme)

Prod. Date: 18th to 19th February, 1958

Tx.: 13th April, 1958 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Roald Dahl, based on his own story

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James S. Redd; **Ed:** Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green; **P:** Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: Barbara Bel Geddes (Mary Maloney); Harold J. Stone (Lieutenant Jack Noonan); Allan Lane (Patrick Maloney); Ken Clark (Mike, a Police Sergeant); Robert C. Ross (Grocer); William Keene (Policeman); Thomas Wild (Doctor); Otto Waldis (Policeman).

“Dip In The Pool”

Show 35, Season 3 (113th programme)

Prod. Date: 15th to 16th April, 1958

Tx.: 1st June, 1958 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Robert C. Dennis, based on a story by Roald Dahl

DP: John F. Warren; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Stanley Wilson;
Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green;
P: Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: Keenan Wynn (William Botibol); Louise Platt (Mrs. Ethel Botibol); Philip Bourneuf (Mr. Renshaw); Fay Wray (Mrs. Renshaw); Doreen Lang (Emily); Doris Lloyd (Emily's companion); Ralph Clanton (Purser); Ashley Cowan (Sailor); Owen Cunningham (Pool auctioneer); Barry Harvey (Steward); Michael Hadlow (Auction bidder); Margaret Curtis (Boat Passenger); Judith Brian (Boat Passenger); William Hughes (Sailor).

“Poison”

Show 1, Season 4 (118th programme)

Prod. Date: 21st to 22nd August, 1958

Tx.: 5th October, 1958 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Casey Robinson, based on a story by Roald Dahl

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James S. Redd; **Ed:** Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green; **P:** Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: Wendell Corey (Timber Woods); James Donald (Harry Pope); Arnold Moss (Doctor Ganderbai); Weaver Levy (Malayan housekeeper).

“Banquo’s Chair”

Show 29, Season 4 (146th programme)

Prod. Date: 25th and 26th March, 1959

Tx.: 3rd May, 1959 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Francis Cockrell, based on a story by Rupert Croft-Cooke

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** George Milo; **M:** Frederick Herbert;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green;

P: Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: John Williams (Mr. William Brent); Kenneth Haigh (John Bedford);

Reginald Gardiner (Major Cooke-Finch); Max Adrian (Mr. Robert Stone);

Thomas P. Dillon (Sergeant Balter); Hilda Plowright (Miss May Thorpe/Elinore

Ferguson); George Pelling (Lein, the butler).

“Arthur”

Show 1, Season 5 (154th programme)

Prod. Date: 7th to 9th July, 1959

Tx.: 27th September, 1959 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: James P. Cavanagh, based on a story by Arthur Williams [pen-name of Peter Barry Way]

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Frederick Herbert;

Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green;

P: Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: Laurence Harvey (Arthur Williams); Hazel Court (Helen Braithwaite); Robert Douglas (Inspector Ben Liebenberg); Patrick Macnee (Sergeant John Theron); Barry G. Harvey (Constable Barry).

“The Crystal Trench”

Show 2, Season 5 (155th programme)

Prod. Date: 25th to 27th August, 1959

Tx.: 4th October, 1959 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Stirling Silliphant, based on a story by A.E.W. Mason.

DP: John F. Warren; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** Julia Heron; **M:** Frederick Herbert; **Ed:**

Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Hilton Green; **P:**

Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: James Donald (Mark Cavendish); Patricia Owens (Stella Ballister);

Werner Klemperer (Otto Ranks); Patrick Macnee (Professor Kersley); Harald O.

Dyrenforth (Frederick Blauer); Ben Astar (Hotel Manager); Oscar Beregi

(Austrian); Eileen Anderson (Woman); Otto Reichow; Frank Holms.

“Incident At A Corner”

For ‘Ford Startime’ series; 52 minutes duration; filmed in colour

Show 27, Season 1

Prod. Date: 8th to 12th and 15th to 17th February, 1960

Tx.: 5th April, 1960 - NBC

Sc: Charlotte Armstrong, based on her own story

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** John Lloyd; **S:** George Milo; **M:** Frederick Herbert;
Ed: Richard G. Wray, Edward W. Williams; **ad:** Hilton Green; **P:** Joan Harrison;
AP: Norman Lloyd

Cast: Vera Miles (Jean Medwick); George Peppard (Patrick Lawrence); Paul Hartman (James Medwick); Bob Sweeney (Uncle Jeffrey); Leora Dana (Mrs. Tawley); Philip Ober (Malcolm Tawley); Jerry Paris (W.E. Grimes, Lawyer); Alice Backes (Pauline, Jeffrey's wife); Charity Grace (Elsa Medwick); Alexander Lockwood (Mr. Rigsby); Eve McVeagh (Georgia Clooney/Mrs. Crane); Tyler McVey (Chief Taylor); Joe Flynn (Dr. Sidney Sinden); Barbara Beard (Mary Jane Ryder); Warren Berlinger (Ron Tawley); Leslie Barrett (Mrs. Batie); Jack Albertson (Harry Crane).

“Mrs Bixby And The Colonel’s Coat”

Show 1, Season 6 (192nd programme)

Prod. Date: 17th to 19th August, 1960

Tx.: 27th September, 1960 - NBC, Tuesday 8.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Halsted Welles, based on a story by Roald Dahl

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** James S. Redd; **M:** Frederick Herbert; **Ed:** David O’Connell, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** James H. Brown; **P:** Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: Audrey Meadows (Mrs. Bixby); Les Tremayne (Dr. Fred Bixby); Stephen Chase (the Colonel); Sally Hughes (Miss Pulteney); Maidie Norman (Eloise, the Colonel’s maid); Howard Caine (Pawnbroker); Bernie Hamilton (Butler); Lillian Culver (Patient); Harry Cheshire (Mr. Gorman); Ted Jordan (Mr. Evans).

“The Horseplayer”

Show 22, Season 6 (213th programme)

Prod. Date: 4th to 6th January, 1961

Tx.: 14th March, 1961 - NBC, Tuesday 8.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Henry Slesar, based on his own story

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** John McCarthy, Julia Heron; **M:** Joseph Romero; **Ed:** David O’Connell, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** James H. Brown; **AP:** Joan Harrison

Cast: Claude Rains (Father Amion); Ed Gardner (Mr. Sheridan); Kenneth McKenna (Bishop Cannon); Percy Helton (Morton); Mike Ragan (Mr. Cheever); William Newell (Bank Teller); David Carlile (Bank Teller); Ada Murphy (Dripped-on old lady); Jackie Carroll (Altar Boy); John Yount (Altar Boy).

“Bang! You’re Dead”

Show 2, Season 7 (231st programme)

Prod. Date: 25th to 27th July, 1961

Tx.: 17th October, 1961 - NBC, Tuesday 8.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Harold Swanton, based on a story by Margery Vosper

DP: John L. Russell; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** John McCarthy, Julia Heron; **M:** Joseph Romero; **Ed:** David O’Connell, Edward W. Williams; **W:** Vincent Dee; **ad:** Wallace Worsley; **P:** Joan Harrison; **AP:** Norman Lloyd

Cast: Steve Dunne (Uncle Rick Sheffield); Biff Elliott (Fred Chester); Lucy Prentiss (Amy Chester); Billy Mumy (Jackie Chester); Cleo (Juanita Moore); Marta Kristen (Jiffy Snack Girl); John Zaremba (Supermarket Manager); Karl

Lukas (Mailman); Olan Soulé (Darlene's father); Craig Duncan (Supermarket Clerk); Thayer Burton (Cashier).

“I Saw The Whole Thing”

For ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’ series; 52 minutes duration

Show 4, Season 1

Prod. Date: 23rd to 27th July, 1962

Tx.: 11th October, 1962 - CBS, Thursday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Henry Slesar, based on a story by Henry Cecil

DP: Benjamin H. Kline; **AD:** Martin Obzina; **S:** John McCarthy, Glen Daniels;

M: Lyn Murray, Stanley Wilson; **Ed:** David O’Connell, Edward W. Williams;

W: Vincent Dee; **ad:** Ronnie Rondell; **P:** Joan Harrison; **AP:** Gordon Hessler

Cast: John Forsythe (Michael Barnes); Kent Smith (Jerry O’Hara); Evan Evans

(Penelope Sandford); John Fielder (Malcolm Stuart); Claire Griswold (Joanne

Dowling); Philip Ober (Colonel John Hoey); John Zaremba (Richard Anderson);

Barney Phillips (Lieutenant Sweet); William Newell (Sam Peterson); Willis

Bouchey (Judge B. Neilson); Rusty Lane (Judge R. Martin); Billy Wells (George

Peabody); Robert Karnes (Police Sergeant); Maurice Manson (Doctor Palmer);

Ken Harp (Court Bailiff); Anthony Jochim (Jury Foreman); Lou Byrne (Nurse);

Mel Jass (Court Recorder); Marc Cavell (Freddie Drew); Ben Pollock (Court

Clerk); Ronnie R. Rondell (Harold Brady - stuntman).

Programmes not directed by Hitchcock

“The Long Shot”

For the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ series; 22 minutes duration

Show 9, Season 1

Tx.: 27th November, 1955 - CBS, Sunday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Harold Swanton, based on his own radio play of the same name; **P:** Joan

Harrison: **D:** Robert Stevenson

“The Glass Eye”

For the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ series; 22 minutes duration

Show 1, Season 3 (79th programme)

Tx.: 6th October, 1957 - CBS, Sunday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Stirling Silliphant, based on a story by John Keir Cross; **P:** Joan Harrison: **D:**

Robert Stevens

“No Pain”

For the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ series; 22 minutes duration

Show 5, Season 5 (158th programme)

Tx.: 25th October, 1959 - CBS, Sunday 9.30 p.m. EST

Sc: William Fay, based on the short story “Pigeon In An Iron Lung” by Talmage

Powell; **P:** Joan Harrison: **D:** Norman Lloyd

“The Landlady”

For the ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ series; 22 minutes duration

Show 19, Season 6 (210th programme)

Tx.: 21st February, 1961 - NBC, Tuesday 8.30 p.m. EST

Sc: Robert Bloch, based on the short story of the same name by Roald Dahl; **P:**

Joan Harrison; **D:** Paul Henreid

“A Piece of the Action”

For ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’ series; 52 minutes duration

Show 1, Season 1

Tx: 20th September, 1962 - CBS, Thursday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Alfred Hayes, based on a story by Oliver H. P. Garrett; **P:** Norman Lloyd; **D:**

Bernard Girard.

“Hangover”

For ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’ series; 52 minutes duration

Show 12, Season 1

Tx.: 6th December, 1962 - CBS, Thursday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Lou Rambeau, based on a story by John D. MacDonald; **P:** Norman Lloyd;

D: Bernard Girard.

“Memo From Purgatory”

For ‘The Alfred Hitchcock Hour’ series; 52 minutes duration

Show 10, Season 3 (74th programme)

Tx.: 21st December, 1964 - NBC, Monday 10.00 p.m. EST

Sc: Harlan Ellison, based on his own autobiographical story; **P:** Joan Harrison;

D: Joseph Pevney

‘The Twilight Zone’

“Time Enough At Last”

22 minutes duration

Show 8, Season 1

Tx.: 20th November 1959 - CBS

Sc: Rod Serling, based on a short story by Lynn Venable; **P:** Rod Serling, Buck

Houghton; **D:** John Brahm

“Mirror Image”

22 minutes duration

Show 21, Season 1

Tx.: 26th February 1960 - CBS

Sc: Rod Serling; **P:** Rod Serling, Buck Houghton; **D:** John Brahm

“Eye Of The Beholder”

22 minutes duration

Show 6 , Season 2 (42nd programme)

Tx.: 11th November 1960 - CBS

Sc: Rod Serling; **P:** Rod Serling, Buck Houghton: **D:** Douglas Heyes

FILMOGRAPHY

- Basic chronological credits for films mentioned within the text are given below.

Alfred Hitchcock-directed films

The Lodger, A Story of the London Fog 1926, Gainsborough Pictures, U.K.

Blackmail 1929, British International Pictures, U.K.

Murder! 1930, British International Pictures, U.K.

Rich and Strange 1931, British International Pictures, U.K.

Sabotage 1936, Gaumont-British, U.K.

Jamaica Inn 1939, Erich Pommer Productions, U.K.

Rebecca 1940, Selznick Studio, U.S.A.

Foreign Correspondent 1940, Wanger Productions, U.S.A.

Suspicion 1941, R.K.O., U.S.A.

Saboteur 1942, Frank Lloyd/Universal, U.S.A.

Shadow of a Doubt 1943, Universal/Skirball Productions, U.S.A.

Lifeboat 1944, 20th Century-Fox, U.S.A.

Spellbound 1945, Selznick International Pictures, U.S.A.

Notorious 1946, R.K.O., U.S.A.

Paradine Case, The 1947, Selznick International/Vanguard, U.S.A.

Rope 1948, Transatlantic, U.S.A.

Under Capricorn 1949, Transatlantic, U.S.A.

Stage Fright 1950, Warner Bros.-First National Pictures, U.S.A.

Strangers on a Train 1951, Warner Bros./First National, U.S.A.

I Confess 1953, Warner Bros./First National, U.S.A.

Dial M for Murder 1954, Warner Bros., U.S.A.

Rear Window 1954, Paramount/Patron Inc., U.S.A.

To Catch a Thief 1955, Paramount, U.S.A.

The Trouble with Harry 1955, Paramount/Alfred Hitchcock Productions,
U.S.A.

The Wrong Man 1956, Warner Bros., U.S.A.

Vertigo 1958, Paramount/Alfred Hitchcock Productions, U.S.A.

North by Northwest 1959, M.G.M., U.S.A.

Psycho 1960, Paramount/Shamley Productions, U.S.A.

The Birds 1963, Universal/Alfred Hitchcock Productions, U.S.A.

Marnie 1964, Universal/Geoffrey Stanley Inc., U.S.A.

Torn Curtain 1966, Universal/Alfred Hitchcock Productions, U.S.A.

Frenzy 1972, Universal, U.S.A.

Films by other directors

Sunrise 1927, Fox, Dir.: F. W. Murnau, U.S.A.

Quartet 1948, GFD/Gainsborough, Dirs: Ken Annakin, Arthur Crabtree, Harold French and Ralph Smart, U.K.

Trio 1950, Rank/Gainsborough, Dirs: Ken Annakin and Harold French, U.K.

At War With The Army 1951, Paramount/Fred K. Finklehoffe, Dir: Hal Walker, U.S.A.

Encore 1951, GFD/Two Cities, Dirs: Pat Jackson, Anthony Pelissier and Harold French, U.K.

O. Henry's Full House 1952, T.C.F., Dirs: Henry Koster, Henry Hathaway, Jean Negulesco, Henry King and Howard Hawks U.S.A.

The Lieutenant Wore Skirts 1955, 20th Century-Fox, Dir: Frank Tashlin, U.S.A.

The Seven Year Itch 1955, 20th Century-Fox, Dir: Billy Wilder, U.S.A.

The Girl Can't Help It 1956, 20th Century-Fox, Dir: Frank Tashlin, U.S.A.

The Great American Pastime 1956, M.G.M., Dir: Herman Hoffman, U.S.A.

Room at the Top 1959, Remus, Dir: Jack Clayton, U.K.

APPENDIX 1

Synopses & Synopsis Index

- Synopses for programmes not discussed at length in the body of the thesis are provided below, along with page references of those used within the thesis.
- Organised in alphabetical order.
- For further details, see the Teleography.
- All programmes are from the series 'Alfred Hitchcock Presents' unless otherwise noted.

"ARTHUR" (Tx. 27/9/59) - Page 71

"BACK FOR CHRISTMAS" (Tx. 4/3/56) - Page 265

“BANG! YOU’RE DEAD” (TX. 17/10/61)

Jackie Chester (Billy Mummy) is a five-year-old boy, trying to play war with the children in his suburban neighbourhood. Jackie watches one of the other boys, Stevie (Kelly Flynn), as he loads his realistic gun. Stevie tells Jackie to go home because he is not allowed to play in his war.

As he heads home, Jackie’s father Fred Chester (Biff Elliott) pulls up with his brother-in-law, Jackie’s uncle Rick Sheffield (Steve Dunne). Fred tells Jackie that Rick has just come back from Africa. They go into the house after Amy Chester (Lucy Prentiss), Jackie’s mother, greets them.

Rick talks about his experiences in Africa. He is a car salesman but the place was so violent it is hard to do business. He shows them a Witch Doctor’s mask he managed to salvage after one savage incident.

Jackie shows his uncle Rick the guestroom. Rick says he has a surprise for Jackie that he will reveal later. Jackie is eager to have his surprise, but Rick insists he wait. Fred comes in with Rick’s drink. They leave Jackie alone in the room and Fred light-heartedly suggests to Jackie he should unpack for his Uncle.

Jackie soon finds Rick’s real gun in its holster. It is a six-round revolver, a cowboy’s gun. Jackie puts the real gun in his own holster and puts his toy gun into Rick’s holster. He finds bullets, tips them out and puts several in his pocket. He takes one bullet and places it in one of the six chambers. He spins the chambers and goes downstairs.

In the lounge, the three adults are too busy to give Jackie any attention. They do not notice the gun. He is told to run along so he does. On his way out, he thanks Uncle Rick for the present (meaning the gun).

Jackie encounters a mailman (Karl Lukas) whom he holds up with his gun. Jackie tells him he is going to the store and they part company. Back at the house, Rick unpacks in the guest room, realises the gun is missing and tells Fred.

There then ensues a series of close shaves as Jackie loads more and more of the gun's chambers with bullets as he has various encounters in and around the local supermarket. Meanwhile, the adults frantically search for Jackie.

Jackie returns home while the adults are out looking for him. The maid is in the house preparing for Rick's welcome party. Jackie wants her to play but she is too busy. He is rude to her and she tries to grab him to reprimand him. He eludes her and stands behind the sofa, the gun trained at her as she comes in and out of the kitchen.

Outside, Amy, Fred and Rick return in the car. Rick expresses his guilt at what has happened and Fred resolves to call the police.

In the house, Jackie still wants Cleo to play. Tired of his demands and oblivious to the danger, she invites him to shoot her. Amy, Rick and Fred have entered the house and just before Jackie shoots, Fred throws the African mask at him and shouts. Jackie pulls the trigger and shoots but Fred's actions spoil his aim. The bullet misses Cleo and shatters a mirror. Fred takes the gun from Jackie who runs to Amy.

"BANQUO'S CHAIR" (Tx. 3/5/59) - Page 197

"BREAKDOWN" (Tx. 13/11/55) - Page 171

"THE CASE OF MR. PELHAM" (Tx. 4/12/55) - Page 141

"THE CRYSTAL TRENCH" (Tx. 4/10/59) - Page 180

“DIP IN THE POOL” (Tx. 1/6/58)

William Botibol (Keenan Wynn) and his wife Ethel (Louise Platt) are on a cruise, heading for Europe. One evening Mr. Botibol bumps into Emily (Doreen Lang). Botibol seems to make an impact on Emily who is ushered off by her companion (Doris Lloyd).

Mr. Botibol has befriended Mr. and Mrs. Renshaw (Philip Bournef and Fay Wray). Mr. Renshaw informs Botibol there is a ‘ship’s pool’, a betting game which involves guessing the distance the ship will travel in a day. Renshaw explains the Captain makes an estimate of the distance. Passengers bid for the rights to the ten numbers above and below the estimate; or for ‘high field’ and ‘low field’. These represent all other numbers more than ten miles above or below the estimate. On the strength of inside information from the Purser, Botibol resolves to bid for ‘low field’.

Botibol attends the bidding with Renshaw and spends most of his wife’s money bidding for ‘low field’, which he wins for £350 (\$980). The pot for the winner stands at about \$10,000, which alleviates some of Botibol’s concerns. The next day, Botibol wakes to see clear weather. He confesses his bet to Ethel, but not the extent of his spend.

Renshaw plants the seed in Botibol’s mind that the only way to win the bet is to make the ship slow down. Botibol plans to throw himself overboard, in front of a witness who would alert the crew, thus slowing the boat’s progress and winning his bet.

He walks to the ship's stern. Emily, the woman he met the day before, is looking out to sea. Botibol dives in and is soon lost from sight, shouting for help. Emily does nothing. Her travelling companion appears and Emily reports: 'A man just jumped overboard with all his clothes on!'. Emily's companion ignores her and ushers her to the cabin. Emily follows, saying: 'Such a nice man, he waved to me!'.

“FOUR O’CLOCK” ('SUSPICION') (TX. 30/9/57)

The owner of a watch repair shop, Paul (E.G. Marshall) suspects his wife is having an affair. He experiments with an explosive device before heading home.

Back home, Paul's wife Fran (Nancy Kelly) has heard Paul in the cellar and calls out to him. She is preparing dinner. Paul's suspicions about her affair seem confirmed by the presence of Limburger cheese in the fridge which neither of them likes, and the absence of two bottles of beer.

Next day, Paul is on the bus going past his house. As the bus stops, he notices an old car parked outside. Looking at his watch, he notes the time as four o'clock.

Later that day, Paul is back home, carrying a metal canister. He goes into the basement and listens for movement upstairs. He hears Fran in the kitchen again. He puts the canister down and goes upstairs.

After greeting his wife and noting further changes to the fridge contents, Paul goes into the living room and notices the ashtray on the coffee table has

been used. He shouts through to Fran, saying the ashtray is full and asking if there is another one.

At work the next day Paul, packs an alarm clock and wire into a bag, then goes home to plant the bomb in his basement. He sets it to go off at four o'clock. Paul is then surprised to hear noises from upstairs. Two young intruders (Tom Pittman and Harry Dean Stanton) grab Paul and bundle him back into the basement. They knock him out then bind and gag him.

Paul makes several unsuccessful attempts at escape but to no avail. At three o'clock. Paul hears a car pull up and then the doorbell rings. Paul assumes that Fran is being visited by her lover. In the house, Fran answers the door to a young man. They kiss.

Paul listens in on their conversation. Fran expresses her worry to David (Richard Long) that some money of hers has disappeared and so has her watch. Fran calls Paul's work number. Fran is puzzled by his absence. In the basement, Paul tries to seize his chance. He makes as much noise as possible.

Fran and David discuss whether they should tell Paul about their secret meetings. David thinks it is unlikely most men would be happy with an ex-convict for a brother-in-law.

In the basement Paul realises his mistake: David is Fran's brother and their clandestine meetings were organised to keep the secret of his recent release from prison.

Paul reflects upon his dreadful mistake. He hears Fran and David decide to call Paul and then go down to his shop and tell him the truth.

In the basement, Paul resolves not to look at the clock which now reads three-forty-six. In his final minutes, there are further events which tantalise Paul but he is still unable to free himself or get help. The clock shows three-fifty-nine and Paul wills the clock to stop and begins to struggle violently. The minute hand gradually inches to four. The clock reaches four o'clock and the alarm mechanism begins to move, to complete the circuit. The wires touch but no explosion is heard.

Later, a large crowd has gathered outside Paul's house. Paul is strapped into a strait-jacket. One of the policemen walks forward and accidentally pulls the mains wire from Paul's bomb out of the socket. He asks Fran if there is a light so they can see better. Fran says the lights will not work as she blew a fuse that morning. As a result, Paul's bomb failed to detonate. Paul says he understands Fran now, that she 'can have a lover if you want' but urges her not to 'forget that I'm here, waiting'.

"THE HORSEPLAYER" (Tx. 14/3/61)

Father Amion (Claude Rains) needs \$1,500 to repair his church's leaky roof. After one wet service, Morton (Percy Helton), the Father's assistant, draws his attention to a donation of \$10. Morton reports that a man in sporting-style clothes was the donor.

At the next service, the same man gives another large donation. Father Amion stops the man outside the church to talk to him. He is a gambler called Charlie Sheridan (Ed Gardner). He tells the Father he has been praying for winners at the racetrack, and ever since he has had plenty of success. He thought

it was only right to return some money to the church, since he believes it is the power of prayer providing this good fortune.

Some time later, Sheridan returns. He wishes to make another donation. He tells the Father he has won it at the races. He also gives the Father a tip in a race.

In town at a later date, Sheridan pulls up in a new car, bought by race winnings. Father Amion decides to give Sheridan \$500 to put on another 'dead cert', Sally's Pal. He withdraws the money from his personal bank account and hands it to Sheridan. He is told a \$2,500 win would be the likely result of his wager. Sheridan is so convinced the horse will succeed he intends to bet all his money.

Father Amion's guilt forces him to confess his bet to his Bishop (Kenneth MacKenna). He is told there is only one way to atone for his sin, to pray for the horse 'not to win'.

Father Amion returns to his church and is visited later the same day by a despondent Sheridan. He asks Sheridan if Sally's Pal won; Sheridan says the horse did not win. Sheridan has lost all his money. He then says to Father Amion: 'Well, anyway, here's your money'. Surprised and confused, he asks Sheridan how he has won this. Sheridan explains that, unlike his own wager requiring the horse to win, he put the Father's bet on to place. It came second and so the winnings totalled \$2,100 (the price of the roof repairs, Father Amion's original stake, plus \$100). Father Amion watches Sheridan slot a donation into the collection box, then the priest looks up and stares wide-eyed, at the leaky roof, and beyond.

“I SAW THE WHOLE THING” (‘THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK HOUR’)

(Tx. 11/10/62)

Six different people witness a road crash. After the collision, the car speeds away as the various people go to help.

Next day, Michael Barnes (John Forsythe), a writer of crime fiction, enters a police station to give himself up for the hit-and-run incident. Lieutenant Sweet (Barney Phillips) takes his statement: that the motorcyclist ran into him and went over his car. He claims he was not the cause of the accident but admits he should have stopped. Barnes is anxious to leave; he signs his statement and visits his wife in hospital.

At the hospital, Barnes talks to Doctor Palmer (Maurice Manson) about his wife. He is anxious Stella’s pregnancy will go wrong; she has already suffered two miscarriages. Barnes tells the doctor about his accident and insists they keep it from Stella.

About a week later at home, Barnes is visited by a lawyer friend Jerry O’Hara (Kent Smith). Barnes tells him the events of the week before. The witnesses claim he did not stop at the sign, that he entered the junction at speed, but he claims he stopped. He has no evidence except his own statement. Despite O’Hara’s protests, Barnes has decided to defend himself in court and asks O’Hara for advice.

During the case, all six witnesses give evidence for the prosecution and Barnes cross-examines them all. Meanwhile, the court has news that the motorcyclist has died from his injuries. As the case goes on, it is obvious that the

testimonies of the witnesses cannot be trusted for one reason or another. They variously only heard the accident after it had happened, were drunk, were otherwise occupied, have ulterior motives for wanting Barnes convicted, or give conflicting testimonies.

Back at home after the first day, Barnes and O'Hara discuss the case when the doctor calls. Stella is in the labour room. O'Hara urges Barnes to keep his mind on the case; the prosecution will call the last witness, Joanne Dowling, tomorrow.

Joanne Dowling gives evidence to the court which contradicts her deposition. She now claims the car stopped. Barnes does not want to question Dowling but the judge asks her what she was thinking at the time of the accident. She was thinking about her baby as it was about to be adopted. She was going to the lawyers to settle the adoption when the accident occurred. It upset her so much she decided to go straight home. Since the accident, she has kept her child.

Barnes calls one witness for the defence: himself. He protests his innocence but then Anderson cross-examines Barnes. Anderson asks if he passed the stop-sign but Barnes refuses to answer. Anderson presses Barnes to reply but Barnes refuses, on the grounds it might incriminate him. The judge confirms Anderson's view that Barnes has no right to refuse. Still Barnes will not answer and the judge warns him he risks contempt of court charges. The judge then adjourns the case.

That evening, Penny (Evan Evans), one of the witnesses is dancing at a party with George (Billy Wells). She accuses him of standing her up on the day of the accident but he says he was there. He had seen her on the corner with

Freddie (Marc Cavell) and decided to leave. She says he must have missed the accident just after Freddie left but George says he 'saw the whole thing'. Penny realises everyone at the trial was wrong in their evidence. She takes George to the police to present his evidence.

Barnes is found not guilty. At the hospital he and O'Hara discuss the outcome as they go to see his baby. O'Hara says he was lucky to have the new witness, otherwise he might have been imprisoned. He asks Barnes why he could not answer the question in court. Barnes explains he did not want to perjure himself. O'Hara was right about the witnesses at the trial: none of them saw the accident since they did not even see who was driving the car. Barnes' wife Stella had been at the wheel. To protect his pregnant wife, Barnes took the stand for her.

"INCIDENT AT A CORNER" ('FORD STARTIME') (TX. 5/4/60)

[The same incident at an intersection near a school is shown from three different positions.] Mrs. Tawley (Leora Dana) is the president of the local school's safety council. She drives through the stop-sign that Mr. James Medwick (Paul Hartman), the crossing guard, holds up to allow Mr. Batie (Leslie Barrett) to cross. Mrs. Tawley is apologetic but Medwick says he will have to report her to the police for the offence. She calls him 'an officious old man' and storms off to her school meeting.

The incident is shown for a second time, but no new information is provided. The third presentation is shown from the front garden of a recently-sold house, opposite the school and close to the corner where the argument takes

place. As Mrs. Tawley pulls over in her car, another car parks on the opposite side of the road. Mrs. Crane (Eve McVeagh) gets out, sees the confrontation, hides her face and hurries inside. Meanwhile, her husband Harry Crane (Jack Albertson) watches the altercation and then follows her indoors.

In the Crane's house Mrs. Crane says she knows Mr. Medwick, that he knows about her shameful past in Kansas City. Harry thinks Medwick will not remember her but she says she will not move into the house now she knows Medwick is a neighbour. Harry realises he must get rid of Medwick's presence outside their house to placate his wife.

Chief Taylor (Tyler McVey) calls by and tells Mr Medwick that an anonymous letter has been given to the school, saying Mr Medwick is 'a little too fond of ... the little girls' in his role as crossing guard. Taylor reluctantly sacks Medwick.

The Medwicks have a meeting. After some heated discussion as to how to respond to the letter's accusations, there then follows an investigation led by Pat (George Peppard) who is the fiancé of Mr. Medwick's granddaughter Jane (Vera Miles). Pat clashes with the Tawley family and various other interested parties as he seeks out who is responsible for the poison-pen campaign against his fiancé's grandfather.

Just when all seems hopeless, and Mr Medwick says he has been offered a job on a news-stand and has decided to take it, there is a breakthrough in the investigation. Following up a lead, Pat and his entourage return to question Mr. Batie, who lives close by to the Crane household. As they argue, Mr. Medwick looks out of the window and spots the car which pulled up near the incident at

the corner. He remembers a man and a woman going into the house across the street. The mob decide to investigate these newcomers.

At the Crane house, Mr. Medwick recognises Mrs. Crane and says: 'Isn't that Georgie Clooney from Kansas City?'. Mrs. Crane turns on her husband Harry: 'You were going to get rid of him'. Pat accuses Harry of writing the note to which admits.

Outside the house, Pat asks Mr. Medwick what Georgie/Mrs. Crane did in Kansas that was so bad. Mr. Medwick says she was a mixed-up sixteen-year-old who performed burlesque at a roadhouse. The press heard about it and made a great fuss. Pat and Jane lament the day's dreadful events.

"LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER" (Tx. 13/4/58) - Page 240

"MR. BLANCHARD'S SECRET" (Tx. 23/12/56) - Page 159

"MRS. BIXBY AND THE COLONEL'S COAT" (Tx. 27/9/60) - Page 219

"ONE MORE MILE TO GO" (Tx. 7/4/57)

One night, a couple's argument ends in murder when the husband Sam Jacoby (David Wayne) kills Martha (Louise Larabee) with a single blow with a poker.¹ He decides to dispose of the body in a local lake. Sam puts her in the car boot and drives away.

¹ The synopsis uses 'Sam' and 'Martha Jacoby' as character names, but the programme does not name the couple. The names are taken from other synopses which have taken them from scripts or the short story on which the programme is based.

Sam is near the lake when he is stopped by a motorcycle policeman (Steve Brodie). He tells Sam he has a faulty tail-light and he should get it fixed straight away. Sam drives to a garage and is served by Red (Norman Leavitt). At first, Sam is anxious to buy a bulb for the tail-light and fit it himself. Then, the same policeman rides on to the forecourt. Sam asks Red to replace the bulb, but the light will not work. The policeman gets involved and asks Sam to open the boot; since a fresh bulb has not worked, there must be a faulty wire. Sam pretends to have left the boot key at home. The policeman asks Red for a crowbar and is jemmying the boot when the light to comes on.

Sam drives off and is once again near the lake, only to be followed and stopped by the same policeman. Sam left in a rush and forgot his change. The policeman checks the tail-light and tells Sam it is out again. He orders Sam to follow him: the police station is only a mile down the road. They have a mechanic who will have his boot open in no time.

“THE PERFECT CRIME” (Tx. 20/10/57)

[“The Perfect Crime” is presented using flashback sequences. The following synopsis *italicises* the events told in flashback.]

1912 in New York. Charles Courtney (Vincent Price) is a famed Criminologist who prides himself on perfection. One night, after the successful conclusion of his last case, Courtney is visited by John Gregory (James Gregory), a defence lawyer. Gregory has defended many of the men Courtney has managed to convict and execute.

The two men discuss Courtney's hobby of collecting and displaying exhibits as souvenirs from each of his triumphs. Gregory notices an empty space in Courtney's display and asks what it is for. Courtney replies: 'For the perfect crime'.

Gregory tells Courtney he has come to talk to him about the Harrington case. Harrington (Mark Dana) was a millionaire executed for the murder of Ernest West (Gavin Gordon). Gregory says he would like to discuss how Courtney decided Harrington was guilty.

Courtney explains that Harrington was motivated by greed. He wanted West out of the way to free up his trading on the Stock Exchange. All the material evidence also pointed to Harrington.

But Gregory demonstrates that Courtney has made a mistake. In fact, West had been killed by his wife Alice (Marianne Stewart). Alice and Harrington were in love, but Ernest West had refused Alice a divorce so they could not marry. In a fit of rage, she shot her husband and Harrington tried to cover up the truth and take the blame. Courtney had fallen for Harrington's cover-up, whereas Gregory had been able to discover the whole truth.

Courtney refuses to believe he is wrong; he calls the notion impossible. His 'reputation does not permit mistakes'. The two men shout and square up to one another and Courtney insists no-one should hear of his error. Gregory agrees to be silent as long as Courtney does not help convict and execute another one of his clients. Chastened, Courtney accepts all will be fine as long as their paths do not cross in the future. Courtney invites Gregory to have a night-cap with him.

Courtney seems to leave to get the drinks, but as Gregory turns his back, Courtney strangles him from behind.

Two years later, Courtney has returned from a 'long vacation' in the East. He is being interviewed and photographed for the newspapers. He leads the reporters to his ceramics workshop. He talks of the need for a super-hot oven in ceramics; his kiln is an extremely efficient piece of equipment he remarks.

One of the reporters notices a small vase in his glass-fronted case and asks why the label has no details of the case to which it relates. It occupies the empty space that Courtney had been saving for the souvenir from the perfect crime. He replies that the vase in question was an experiment with 'a special kind of clay'.

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