

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S DISAPPEARING WOMEN: A STUDY IN SCOPOPHILIA AND OBJECT LOSS

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Sitting in a wheelchair during a hot summer day in his Greenwich Village second-story bachelor apartment, L. B. Jeffries, a freelance travelling photographer, is very bored. His left leg is encased all the way up to the hip in a heavy plaster cast because of an injury sustained while photographing a car race: he has been in this condition for six weeks and has still one week to go. His rear window overlooks a large backyard with a little flower patch and beyond it a group of three buildings.

The two side buildings house a frustrated drinking bachelor song-writer, a couple of newlyweds whose blinds have been closed since they entered their apartment after their marriage (subsequently, very occasionally the blinds of the bedroom are lifted, the groom appears in a T-shirt at the window for a rest but is right away called back by his wife—they are obviously having a great deal of sex). There is also a woman with a pet bird, a man and a woman sleeping on a fire escape, and two women who undress on the roof for sunbathing and are, seemingly, spied-upon from a low-flying helicopter.

In the building directly opposite Jeffries, there is an aged eccentric sculptress, a middle-aged couple which dotes on a dog, a middle-aged woman called by him Miss Lonelihearts, who is desperately lonely and longs for male company, a dancer (Miss Torso) who every morning goes through her exercises and prances around in her bra and underpants and Mr Lars Thorwald, a travelling jewellery salesman with his invalid wife who is seemingly a hypochondriac. When he comes home, she quickly puts on her forehead a white towel, as if she has been suffering from a headache. She interrupts him while he is talking on the phone, and she nags at him, obviously looking for attention. Jeffries, having nothing

else to do, spends most of his time looking out of the window at the goings-on in this scopophilic's paradise. The action of the film covers a period of four days.

During the first day, Stella, a middle-aged insurance company visiting nurse, comes to massage and feed him and in the meantime scolds him for looking on Torso's gyrations and advises him to marry at long last his beautiful girlfriend, Lisa (Grace Kelly). But he rejects her advice because he feels Lisa is too rich, too elegant, lives in a high-faluting world very different from his, and because he considers his irregular travelling and uncomfortable lifestyle entirely incompatible with hers. Meanwhile, Mr Thorwald comes home and has a quarrel with his wife, and Miss Lonelihearts, in her best finery, prepares a dinner for an imaginary guest, goes through the motions of dinner and conversation, but at a certain point gives up the pretence and cries desperately. This sequence is underlined by the lyrics of Bing Crosby's *To See You Is To Love You, and I See You Everywhere*.

To see you is to want you
And I see you all the time
On the sidewalk
In the doorway
I see you everywhere
To see you is to love you
And you're never out of sight
And I will love you
And I will see you
In the same old dreams tonight.

This song was inserted in the film at the request of Hitchcock (Gabbard, 1989).

When later on Lisa arrives beautifully dressed and with the accompaniment of an elegant dinner, the subject of marriage is again raised very seriously, which leads to a sharp disagree-

ment and to Lisa's leaving in anger, threatening to break off the relationship altogether. As she is at the door ready to leave, Jeffries is visibly upset and pleads with her for a continuation of the status quo—'When will I see you again?'—and Lisa, with some hesitation, is swayed by this and consents—'Not until tomorrow night'. Shortly after her exit, the quiet of the night is broken by a single short scream and a thumping noise, like a breaking of glass. Jeffries alternately dozes and looks idly out of the window and through the night hours sees Thorwald going out three times in the rain with a suitcase and coming home again.

On the second day, the window of Thorwald's bedroom is covered by blinds and remains consistently shut during the whole day. Jeffries notices him looking around intently out of a window and later sees him washing and wrapping in paper a knife and a saw and lying down on the living-room sofa. He does not go to the bedroom.

Jeffries becomes immediately very interested and starts watching him with binoculars and a telephoto lens. He suspects foul play and speaks about this with Lisa who is unconvinced and wants him to make love to her, but he is obsessed with the salesman. When she protests about his lack of interest in her, he tells her, 'I want to know what is the matter with the salesman's wife—she is an invalid, she demands constant care. Neither the husband nor anyone else has been in the bedroom all day'. Later on, they watch Thorwald tie up a large trunk, and at this point Lisa becomes convinced that Jeffries must be right.

On the third day, the movers take the trunk away, and Jeffries calls a detective friend, Doyle, who traces the trunk which, surreptitiously opened, is found to contain only women's clothes. Doyle also finds out that in the early morning of the second day, while Jeffries was asleep, Thorwald had been seen by the superintendent escorting out a lady, presumably his wife, who was leaving for the station. The woman is found when she picks up the trunk, but her identity is not properly checked. After this superficial investigation, Doyle concludes that Jeffries' suspicions are unfounded. The case therefore seems to be closed. (Eventually, the woman is found to be Thorwald's girlfriend

who, impersonating his wife, had helped him to cover up the murder.) Thorwald is seen cleaning the bathroom walls.

In the evening, Miss Lonelihearts picks up a man on the street and brings him back to dinner, but he wants to have relations with her right away and after a little scuffle he leaves. (Eventually she tries to commit suicide with sleeping pills.) The little dog, which had been near the flower patch, is found strangled, which produces loud screams and cries from the owner.

On the fourth day, Jeffries decides to bring things to a climax and sends Thorwald a note ('What have you done with her?'), then lures him away from home with a telephone call. Lisa and Stella try to dig in the flower patch for a body, but not finding it, Lisa sneaks into Thorwald's house and finds his wife's wedding ring. However, she is caught by Thorwald who has a scuffle with her and throws her to the ground. This confrontation is interrupted by the police who have been called by Jeffries. During the conversation with the police, Lisa, with her left hand behind her back, shows the ring to Jeffries: Thorwald notices this and realizes that the gesture was in the direction of Jeffries' window. Lisa is arrested for trespassing, and while Stella is gone to bail her out, Thorwald goes to Jeffries' apartment, attacks him, and in spite of his attempts to blind him with his camera flash, throws him out of the window.

The police arrest Thorwald and he confesses that he threw the body in the East River and buried the head in the flower patch, then dug it out, brought it home and placed it in a hat box because the dog had been too inquisitive. Jeffries is returned to his apartment, but this time both his legs are in a cast. Lisa, very serene, looks dotingly at him while leafing through *Bazaar*. Perhaps there is still hope for the marriage.

Just like Hitchcock, the film director, who from his chair controls his actors, Jeffries, from his wheelchair, with his eyes, his binoculars, and his long-focused lens, has been surveying all the actions of these characters. The scenes which develop in front of his eyes certainly have many general primal scene implications—some nudity, women disrobing and being spied upon, a couple sleeping together on the fire escape, the interest in looking, Mrs Thorwald's and the newlyweds'

closed blinds, a repeated motif which hints at closed doors, at looking at the forbidden, and at the compulsive need to look and understand the meaning of the primal scene.¹

In a more specific sense, two scenes are indicative of primal scene experiences: that in which Thorwald discovers Lisa in his apartment and throws her on the ground, while Jeffries, terrified and unable to help, looks on from a distance, and the scene in which Miss Lonelihearts becomes involved in a scuffle with a young guest who tries to force her to submit. The sadistic interpretation of the primal scene is strongly suggested in both cases.

This motif is further confirmed by the other oedipal features of the film's plot. Jeffries is presented as a regressed individual: he is symbolically castrated, he is like a small child who sleeps a great deal, is unable to help himself, has to be cleaned and fed by others, and his sexual drive appears to be very weak. He is clearly the enemy and rival of Thorwald, an older and somewhat bulldog-like man: he suspects the salesman almost immediately on the basis of very scanty evidence, and he goes very much out of his way and takes frightful risks to uncover the murder.

In the course of the film, Jeffries becomes more and more active: the oedipal struggle reaches a climax when Thorwald attacks Jeffries and throws him out of the window, breaking his other leg—another castration equivalent. Even so, Jeffries prevails—his leg will heal eventually, Thorwald is in jail, and he has the woman. Thus, *Rear Window* hints at the coming of age and the final victory of the child who ultimately prevails in the oedipal struggle and becomes a real man.

Yet, besides the primal scene, another motif of even greater significance is at the very core of this film and permeates the whole action—the

motif of loneliness, of the absence of the love object and the anxiety connected with it.

The first indication of something unusual going on in Mr Thorwald's apartment is his leaving repeatedly during the rainy night with a suitcase. Yet at first this is only noted by Jeffries as a curiosity, without alarm. The first signs that really engage his attention, bring out his anxiety and become the focus of his obsessive concern are the closed blinds in the bedroom: the woman is nowhere to be seen.² The theme of a disappearing woman is also found in other Hitchcock films. It first appeared in his 1938 film *The Lady Vanishes*, in which this theme is repeated three times: a lady who spies for the British is set upon in a train to London by plotters who try to spirit her away. She disappears but is finally liberated by the combined efforts of a young woman whom she had befriended and a young musician. In the course of their search through the train, they come upon the paraphernalia of a magician who is one of the plotters and find a poster advertising one of his acts entitled 'The Lady Vanishes'. This sequence was added personally by Hitchcock. When the train finally reaches London, the young woman, whose fiancé is expecting her and is looking anxiously for her, gets herself lost in the crowd, calls a taxi, pulls the musician into it and the two fall into a tight embrace: thus, she becomes the third vanishing woman in the film.

In a third film, a 1956 television play produced three years after *Rear Window*, *Mr Blanchard's Secret*, a neighbour suspects that a husband may have killed his wife, but this suspicion is found to be baseless and nothing happens (Spoto, 1983). The plot of these two films, in which a woman who was feared gone for ever returns unharmed, seems to be a replay of the episode—to be discussed later—in which Hitch-

¹ The voyeuristic theme is to be found in other productions by Hitchcock such as *Notorious*, *Foreign Correspondent*, *I Confess*, and *Topaz* (Spoto, 1983, p. 187). The repetition of this theme may well be the result of primal scene exposure on Hitchcock's part, but, as Gabbard (1989) notes, this is a possibility about which we can only speculate.

² Also, in the short story by Cornell Woolrich (1942), from which Hitchcock's film derived, it is the fact that the woman cannot be seen that immediately clinches the sus-

picion. Although in the film a great many substantial changes were made, this central detail is completely unchanged. 'I had not seen the woman all day', says the protagonist. This detail must have struck a very responsive chord in Hitchcock. In the film, he certainly identified very closely with Jeffries. He was enormously involved in the making of it, was enthusiastic about it, worked on its preparation very hard at all levels, spoke a great deal about it (Spoto, 1983), and considered it 'the most cinematic' of his films (Spam & Pearson, 1986).

cock's mother came back one night safe and sound from a stroll in Hyde Park.

The fundamental importance of the fact that the woman seems to have disappeared is very reminiscent of 'eight month' anxiety and of the small child's visual search for the familiar face of the absent mother. This is the searching look of the institutionalized children which, we shall see later, Anna Freud had pointed out to Ernst Kris.

Other situations reflect the separation theme. When Lisa threatens to leave Jeffries for good, his face immediately betrays sadness and anxiety. Lisa herself obviously dreads losing Jeffries and clings to him with all her strength to the end. Miss Lonihearts' solitude is so profound and painful that on one occasion her sense of reality seems to be temporarily suspended and on another she humiliates and endangers herself by taking a perfectly unknown man into her home.

Thorwald, too, feels lonely: he has a sickly and unpleasant wife and, in order to be free with another woman, he feels pushed to commit murder. The separation theme is also echoed in the screams, sobs and acute pain of the lady who owned the little strangled dog, and in the lyrics which accompany Miss Lonihearts' pitiful fantasy of having a male guest for dinner.

With separation anxiety, as with the resolution of the oedipal situation, the film hints at the final sexual and emotional growth of the man and at the possibility of some healing of the trauma of object loss: Jeffries' girlfriend, for whom he had feared so much when she was caught by Thorwald in his apartment, is safe, well and with him: he, too, looks relaxed, and hopefully they will never be separated again. A more mature relationship seems to lie ahead.

To summarize, we may conclude that this film is basically rooted in two interlocking psychic mechanisms: on one level, there are very strong indications of severe separation anxiety which, as indicated before, appear in many different contexts through the film, and on another level we find clear traces of a sadistically interpreted primal scene. These two mechanisms are intimately fused and converge in a frightening single conclusion: mother must have been killed.

The presence and the intimate blending of these two themes is not a matter of chance: they are, in fact, closely joined to one another by an

essential link—the profound feeling of loneliness often engendered by primal scene exposure, an occurrence noted by several authors. Greenacre (1973) wrote that the child's earliest reactions (sense of strangeness and unfamiliarity) incidental to the primal scene may be complicated by a feeling of loneliness if there is no response to his crying and if he notices the deprivation of close bodily contact.

Later on, in the second year, the primal scene may engender 'reactions of loneliness, alienation and of feeling overwhelmed'. Kanzer (1952) speaks of a 'sense of irreparable alienation', Dahl (1982) of a feeling of abandonment, Bick (1989) sees the primal scene as an alienating experience and a narcissistic blow leading to a disruption of the narcissistic continuity between the child and the parents, James (1981) writes of 'irreparable alienation'. Additional possible traumatic factors incidental to the primal scene are some of the parents' reactions to the child's observation of their activities (Harrison, 1979), or the child's removal from the parental bedroom (Wang, 1978).

In his 1979 paper 'On the concept and consequences of the primal scene', Blum states that the primal scene may be linked to pre-oedipal problems and that at 18 months 'castration anxiety would be fused with the crucial separation anxiety', the dominant dangerous situation being the loss of the object.

Considering the above, and the pervasiveness of the separation motif in Hitchcock's film, it seems probable that the central and essential element here is the separation trauma, and that the primal scene experience may subsequently have added significantly to its impact.

I am, of course, mindful of the many possible variations in the operation of these mechanisms produced by the child's developmental phase, variations in ego state, total psychic situation and different life experiences, which have been pointed out by Blum and others.

Still on the subject of separation anxiety, it is interesting to note the way the two main protagonists of the film cope with object loss by seeking external substitution for the object, rather than by internalization. This may be related to the highly conflictual relationship to the object. Thorwald, having lost his love for his wife, killed her in order to shift his affection to

another woman. Similarly, at the end of the film, after Mrs Thorwald's death has been ascertained, all appears very serene between Jeffries and Lisa, with a subtle hint that they will eventually marry. Hitchcock adopted the same solution in his personal life, substituting his wife for his ageing mother well in advance of the latter's death.

Another point of theoretical and clinical significance is the genetic relationship between scopophilia and object loss.

In his paper on the recovery of childhood memories, Ernst Kris (1956) mentioned a patient whose scopophilic impulses represented a displacement of oral drives. He harboured a wish to incorporate with the eyes: his mother's image was to him that of a 'beloved stranger...in which closeness and distance were strangely intertwined'. This originated at a time when the mother was depressed and was only able to communicate with him through her facial expressions. Kris discussed this observation with Anna Freud who, to his astonishment, mentioned that she had noted a 'searching look' and an emphasis on visual contact in children of depressed mothers: this was subsequently confirmed by observations at the Hampstead Clinic.

Keeping in mind Spitz's observation that while nursing, the infant looks steadily at the mother's face, Kris hypothesized that 'oral and visual incorporation grow out of the same situational set-up and normally merge. The searching look, in the last analysis connected with the breast, would, in the material of the adult patient, appear colored and overshadowed by oral needs'. He further speculated that a deficit in the nursing situation may be at the root of voyeurism and exhibitionism and commented on 'the unforgettable impression of the searching eye of toddlers in institutions'.

In 1958, before I was aware of this paper, I described at a meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association the case of three scopophilic patients whose voyeuristic interests were closely connected to fear of object loss caused by the

termination of the analysis or by the experience of seeing siblings being nursed by the mother, which gave rise to powerful aggressive impulses. Their drive orientation was directed towards the breast and the mechanism of incorporation through the eye was dominant. There was also a strong unconscious equation of the mother's eyes with the nipples. These themes were detected also in the field of applied analysis, in humorous cartoons, in ancient artifacts, and in linguistics.

On the basis of these data, I suggested the possibility of a genetic relationship between object loss and the development of voyeuristic tendencies. All this material was published in 1960. Similar findings had been reported by me (1958) in another strongly scopophilic and orally fixated patient who, in a period when his wife was pregnant and his financial security threatened, developed great frustration and anger towards mother figures, a wish to be attached to the breast and fear of losing it. One evening he developed a hypnagogic phenomenon which embodied traces of his mother's face during the nursing period. This phenomenon was underlain by severe separation anxiety and connected with scopophilic urges.

Along the same lines, Greenacre (1971) described a patient who developed eye symptoms which had scopophilic and exhibitionistic significance in cases of threatened separation from a significant object. Similarly, Allen (1967) described how the lack of a gratifying relationship with the mother may lead to strong exhibitionistic-voyeuristic tendencies. Gabbard (1989), in a paper entitled 'Voyeurism and the primal scene in rear window', discussing Hitchcock's psychology and another film of his, *Vertigo*, mentions that in patients with voyeuristic tendencies he had 'often found that anxiety over the loss of the loved object is one important determinant of the patient's fixation in the role of the observer, and his terror in the role of participant'.³

Another indication that in certain patients scopophilia may be genetically related to

³ The relationship between separation and various visual phenomena was further affirmed by different authors, by Settlege (1971) and by McDevitt (1971), who found that separation seemed to have acted as a stimulus for precocious development of the ego and for precocious verbal and

intellectual development. Sours (1973) in several patients found that separation, real, threatened or fantasized, could precipitate among other symptoms spasm of the ciliary muscles leading to false myopia, misty vision, and variations of visual acuity.

separation anxiety was provided by an analytic patient suffering from a voyeuristic perversion on whom I reported in 1979. He peeped through windows for hours at a time while masturbating, was fascinated by breasts and pornography. He made pornographic drawings, wrote pornographic short stories and made an enormous number of phone calls to unknown women for the purpose of finding out their sexual secrets.

Two themes played a major role in the analysis. The first was a nearly fatal intestinal illness which lasted from the eighth to the eighteenth month of his life and was accompanied by bloody diarrhoea, crying fits, occasional states of semi-stupor, extreme emaciation and feebleness. He lay passively in bed but always intently watching his parents, and felt lonely in their absence. The second set of traumata consisted of many experiences of the primal scene between the ages of 2 and 3½ when he slept in his parents' bedroom behind a screen but was able to see them in a mirror. These episodes could be reconstructed in great detail: there was a double identification, much frustration because of his inability to participate, and a great feeling of loneliness.

Throughout the analysis, there was a continuous correlation between orality, fear of object loss and scopophilic impulses which were caused by the compensatory need to maintain visual contact with the object: these connexions emerged many times in his dreams and in his associations. In the analysis, I was impressed by his darting glances at me when entering or leaving the session: his dreams were very vivid and so were some of his hypnagogic fantasies. It is most probable that separation anxiety in this patient, as in the other patients described in my 1960 paper, had led to a general hypercathexis of the visual function which was further incremented by the repeated primal scene traumata.

The intensity of these traumata and of the circumstances which had caused the perverse patient's separation anxiety well explains why his condition had taken a much more serious, perverse turn than in the other cases of simple scopophilia in which the traumata had been much less severe, had occurred at a later age, and with no serious disruption of the mother-child relationship.

It is necessary to emphasize that object loss can be considered only as one element in the

complex pathogenesis of the perverse patient's condition in which ego and superego factors, problems of sexual identity, and the vicissitudes of aggression also played a role. It seems probable that when fear of object loss and other pregenital factors are less prominent, only mild forms of disturbance of the voyeuristic impulse may be likely to develop. Also, it must be kept in mind that the association of object loss and voyeurism does not necessarily represent a mechanism which applies to all cases of voyeurism.

The man who inspired this paper has left to us very little information about himself. Hitchcock was an extremely private person. He left no diaries or correspondence, but occasionally he spoke of himself, and some details are known through his contacts with acquaintances and friends. Some of this information is highly pertinent to this paper.

As a child, he was a loner and a watcher. He did not remember ever having a playmate, but he played by himself, inventing his own games (Spoto, 1983). Taylor (1978) writes that 'there is no escaping a feeling that there was something curiously desolate about Hitchcock's childhood'. Although he seems not to have been particularly unhappy, all his memories were of being alone. His brother and sister were much older, and he was distant from his parents, scared of teachers, policemen, and authority figures in general.

These fears were certainly encouraged by the strict upbringing of his stern father to whom he had never been very close: in an episode, which he discussed many times, around the age of 6, he had done something that his father considered worthy of reprimand. He sent him to the police with a note which was read by the officer on duty who then put him in a cell for five minutes, saying, 'This is what we do to naughty boys'. This childhood event led to a lifelong fear of policemen and to a recurring motif in his work of fear of prison and of enclosure (Spoto, 1983). In *Rear Window* we may find some echoes of the feelings engendered by this episode. The police cut a very poor figure in the film: Doyle and the people involved in the investigation are presented as a bunch of incompetents, but Jeffries, the maverick amateur, is vindicated in the end.

Fears were omnipresent in Hitchcock's exist-

ence. Spoto (1983) reports that, when asked if he had ever been really frightened about anything, Hitchcock would simply reply, 'Always'; Spoto feels that the brevity of the reply and the insistence with which Hitchcock changed the subject indicate that he was telling the truth. He traced a large part of his dread to a time when his parents left him alone one night to take a stroll in Hyde Park. In his own words:

First of all, I must confess that I get easily scared. I realized this when I was 4 or 5 years old. I remember one night in which I woke up with a start. The house was immersed in darkness and entirely silent. I sat up and I started calling my mother. Nobody answered because there was nobody. I shook from fear. However, I was able to find enough courage to get up. I wandered throughout the house which was entirely empty. I went to the kitchen which was lighted by the moon in an eerie way. I was shaking more and more. At the same time, I was hungry. I opened the kitchen cabinet in which I found some cold meat that I started to eat while crying. I only got calmer when my parents came back. They explained to me that they had gone to take a stroll because they thought I was asleep. Since that day, there are two things that I cannot tolerate, to be alone at night and eat cold meat (Hitchcock, 1960).

Food was, therefore, the means by which he tried to placate his fear of abandonment.

Towards the end of his life, when he had become very reclusive and his mental faculties were beginning to ebb, speaking on the phone to a scenarist he said, in a voice filled with terror, 'Tony, they're all betraying me! Everyone's leaving me! You have got to come and rescue me! I'm all alone'. In the same period, he told some visitors to his office that his parents 'always left him alone when he was a child', and his voice shook with emotion as if he were once again being abandoned at night. With shaking hands and in tears, he complained that 'no one really cared, he had been betrayed all his life... he was alone, always alone, and in the dark... would he die?... when would he die... the awful dark, when he wanted the light... and the cloudless horizon' (Spoto, 1983).

The intensity and persistence of this theme can leave no doubt that we are confronted with an anxiety of very long standing, much older, I don't doubt, than the episode when he was 4 or 5 when his parents left him to go to Hyde Park. That recollection is most likely merely a screen

memory which harkens back to a period when the ego's functioning and its integration were still in a highly immature condition.

All these fears are closely related to Hitchcock's relationship to his mother. He rarely spoke of her and only in a very brief and general way (Spoto, 1983). This reticence concealed a most important secret, the secret of his need for her, of his enormous attachment to her, and the extent to which she managed to dominate his life. As a child, he did not play sports and was 'contented with his books, his games, and especially with his mother's close and constant companionship' (Spoto, 1983). Every evening, when he was living at home, he was made to stand at the foot of her bed and answer in detail her questions about his day's doings. It was something that he always had to do. 'It was a ritual, I always remember the evening confession.' This continued for years, even after he was employed in central London. Even after his marriage, his mother often went along on vacation with him and his wife, and on those occasions he was more concerned with her than with his wife.

Hitchcock's relationship with his wife Alma shows a striking similarity to that with his mother. It was an exclusive relationship; he had never gone out with a woman before he met her (Taylor, 1978). Most reticent about their relationship, he was in awe of her and intimidated by her; she was outspoken and the only person who dared to express opinions opposite to his. He had a deep regard for her, was concerned about her, and respectful of her reactions (Taylor, 1978). In his work, he relied enormously on her judgement.

Although by his own account he had been almost completely celibate with her for over forty years, his need for her was enormous: when his wife was giving birth, he ran away from the hospital and stayed away for a long time. When he came back, he brought her a sapphire and gold bracelet, explaining that he had felt guilty about deserting her and that the gift was a peace offering ('I know I shouldn't have left you, but you seemed to be getting along all right while I was getting weaker and fainter every minute'). Alma replied that he needn't have left because she wasn't really feeling so bad, and Hitchcock answered, 'I know you

weren't, my dear, but consider my suffering. I nearly died of the suspense' (Spoto, 1983).

While Alma was being operated on for cancer of the cervix, he dined alone, in a state of great anxiety, in a nearby restaurant; afterwards he never went there again and even refused to go near the place. In *The Woman Who Knows Too Much* (1956) Hitchcock wrote, 'I dread being alone. Alma knows that, too. I simply like the woman's presence about, even if I am reading'.

Spoto notes that there was never any question in anybody's mind about their loyalty to one another. Yet, in spite of this need for her and, one may well suspect, because of it, there was also in the relationship an edge which became often manifest. With Alma, Hitchcock may well have felt freer to express the hostility which he must have experienced towards his mother for the way in which she monopolized his life.

In general, he harboured a deep resentment towards women which expressed itself at times in his behaviour on the set and in cruel practical jokes.⁴ Mother-dominated characters are a common feature in his films, in *Notorious*, in *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Strangers on a Train*, *North by Northwest*, and in *Psycho*. Also in *Rear Window* there is a mother figure, Stella, the visiting nurse, who scolds him and tries to direct his life (Spoto, 1983). On one occasion, under the influence of liquor, he spoke unusually frankly to a journalist. He said that 'all men were potential murderers, but the woman is always the dominant figure in a relationship... That's the way it is in real life', he said quietly, looking cautiously towards Alma's room and leaving no doubt of his meaning.

Look at the producer's wife who has her husband cancel a television series because she doesn't like it. She could appear to be a frail little blonde with no strength at all. But she whines. She's such a nag that he will do anything, but anything, just to stop her. This little thing can probably tear the pants off him if she has a mind to. Maybe that's me, too. Maybe my wife dominates me more than I think.

Then, in a rare moment of self-disclosure off the screen, he spoke of his very nearly lifelong celibate state, and of the relationship between food and sex.

As they get on, after five or six years, in most married couples that old feeling begins to disintegrate. Food oftentimes takes the place of sex in a relationship (Spoto, 1983).

Thus, like Jeffries, who spurned sex with Lisa, and displaced his libido in the act of looking, Hitchcock, nearly forty years celibate, used food and his scopophilia to satisfy his libidinal urges.

As is well-known, food and drink were most important to him and he abused both. He always searched for the best food and wine, spoke often of food recipes and restaurants, and had an obsession for French food. One of his actresses said, 'His relationship to food was almost sexual' (Spoto, 1983). Alma, who was a most excellent cook, catered to his preferences in the most devoted way and dutifully followed his oscillations between over-eating and dieting.

The intensity of his oral urges, the only ones which he allowed himself to act out, was paralleled by his intense sadistic fantasies: he was fascinated by crime, particularly in its most gruesome manifestations, especially the act of strangling. Spoto (1983) writes that he saw 'something beautiful, something desirable' especially in strangling, and that he even delighted in showing friends in social situations 'how to strangle a woman with only one hand'. In spite of these fantasies, which found ample expression in his work, he repressed to a high degree his sexuality and his aggression and built around them powerful characterological defences to an extent that is highly reminiscent of the defensive wall described by Greenacre (1973).

In real life, his life-style was dictated by these defences and by the strict religious upbringing of his youth. He was a devoted son to his mother, a faithful husband (in spite of some temporary infatuations with several beautiful actresses which came to naught), a doting father (which did not prevent him from strangling a bust of his beloved daughter in front of a photographer), and, all round, a very conservative family man.

We can, therefore, safely conclude that Lars Thorwald, the angry salesman who murdered his wife, dismembered her body and disposed of her remains in the East River and in the flower patch, and L. B. Jeffries, the scopophilic pho-

tographer who risked his life to uncover the murder because he was concerned for a woman who was an 'invalid' and who needed 'constant care', are only two split-off facets of the same frightfully anxious, deeply conflicted, guilt-ridden and desperately object-seeking man.

SUMMARY

A psychoanalytic investigation of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* reveals that this film is essentially grounded on the coalescence of two convergent psychic mechanisms, an intense fear of object loss which echoes over and over again throughout the film and a sadistically interpreted primal scene. It is suggested that this fusion may have been enhanced by the existence of a very important psychological link between these mechanisms in the fact that frequently primal scene exposure may activate separation anxiety. The genetic connexion between fear of object loss and the development of scopophilic tendencies is discussed and pertinent literature on the subject is presented. Finally, the origins and the operation of the above mechanisms is examined in Alfred Hitchcock's cinematic work, in his character structure and in his life history.

TRANSLATIONS OF SUMMARY

Un examen psychanalytique de *Fenêtre sur cour* d'Alfred Hitchcock montre que ce film est essentiellement fondé sur la combinaison de deux mécanismes psychiques convergents: la peur intense de la perte d'objet qui ne cesse de se refléter de part et d'autre dans le film, et la scène primitive sadis-

tiqument interprétée. L'auteur suggère qu'il est possible que cette fusion ait été mise en valeur par l'existence d'un lien psychologique très important entre ces mécanismes psychiques dans le fait qu'il est fréquent que la scène primitive active l'angoisse de séparation. Il examine le rapport génétique entre la peur de la perte d'objet et le développement des tendances scopophiliques, et passe en revue la littérature se rapportant au sujet. Pour terminer, l'auteur examine les origines et la façon dont opèrent les mécanismes cités plus haut dans le travail cinématographique d'Alfred Hitchcock, dans la structure de son caractère et dans l'histoire de sa vie.

Eine psychoanalytische Untersuchung von Alfred Hitchcock's *Fenster zum Hof* zeigt, dass dieser Film im Wesentlichen auf dem Zusammenspiel zweier konvergenter psychischer Mechanismen beruht, einer intensiven Angst vor Objektverlust, die während des ganzen Films wiederholt, und einer sadistisch interpretierten Urszene. Es wird vorgeschlagen, dass diese Fusion möglicherweise durch das Vorhandensein einer wichtigen psychologischen Verbindung zwischen Mechanismen verstärkt wird, nämlich dass häufig das Ausgesetztsein zur Urszene Trennungsangst aktivieren kann. Die genetische Verbindung zwischen Angst vor Objektverlust und der Entwicklung scopophilischer Tendenzen wird erörtert und einschlägige Literatur zu diesem Thema vorgestellt. Schliesslich werden die Ursprünge und das Wirken der obengenannten Mechanismen in Alfred Hitchcock's filmischem Werk, seiner Charakterstruktur und seiner Lebensgeschichte untersucht.

Un estudio psicoanalítico de *La Ventana de Alfred Hitchcock* revela que la película está basada fundamentalmente en la fusión de dos mecanismos psíquicos convergentes, un miedo intenso a perder el objeto, que se repite una y otra vez a lo largo de la película, y una escena primaria interpretada en forma sádica. Se sugiere que esta fusión pudo haber sido intensificada por la existencia de una conexión muy importante entre estos mecanismos, ya que con frecuencia presenciar la escena primaria puede activar ansiedades de separación. Se discuten la conexión genética entre el miedo a la pérdida del objeto y el desarrollo de tendencias escopofílicas y se presenta bibliografía pertinente al tema. Finalmente se examinan los orígenes y la manera en que operan los mecanismos arriba mencionados, a través de la vida, la estructura del carácter y la obra cinematográfica de Alfred Hitchcock.

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⁴ Hitchcock's hostility towards women had been justly emphasized in Gabbard's paper (1989).

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FELIX GATTEL (1870-1904): FREUD'S FIRST PUPIL. PART I

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The developmental continuity of organized psychoanalysis, of the Freudian school as a group, goes back to 1902. The date is known: it was the year of the foundation of the *Psychological Wednesday Society*. Before that, the collective self-image of the psychoanalysts consists solely of Freud, at most Freud with his friends and opponents.

With hindsight, this view is no doubt justified. However, it ignores the fact that Freud had genuine pupils even before 1902, although on a more informal basis, sporadically and without any lasting traces. The first of them,¹ and also the one whose apprenticeship with Freud is best documented, is the subject of this study. Freud mentions his name to Fliess for the first time on 16 May 1897 (FF, p. 244)²: 'I now have... a real pupil—from Berlin, a Dr Gattel'. An examination of Gattel's contact with Freud sheds some light on the characteristics of these early attempts at the formation of a psychoanalytic school and on the reasons for their failure. Whoever realizes the importance of illuminating initial cases for the progress of Freud's clinical ideas (Schröter, 1988, pp. 151-3), will find it worth while to take a closer look at this particular initial case in the field of psychoanalytic education.

GATTEL'S LIFE AND PERSON

Who was this man, Dr med. Felix Gattel?

Significantly enough it is harder to answer this question than it is to describe his relationship with Freud.³ We have recently come to learn a great deal about the latter, especially from a series of references in the complete edition of the Fliess letters (Freud, 1985), but our information about Gattel as a person is meagre and exiguous. He died in obscurity and nothing is known of any descendants; with one exception, no letters from him to more famous contemporaries appear to exist; nearly all the historical light that falls on him emanates from Freud, whose orbit he entered for a short period. Let us summarize the facts of his life which have hitherto been established, first of all without reference to his relationship with Freud.

Gattel came from San Francisco (Gattel, 1893, title page), and was half-American, a nephew of Prof. Julius Dreschfeld of Manchester (FF,

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¹ Huber (1986) describes Emma Eckstein as Freud's 'first pupil'. However, the earliest evidence of her therapeutic activity, which suggests a kind of training extending beyond her own therapy, dates from December 1897 (FF, p. 286).

² 'FF' refers in this paper to the complete English edition of the Fliess letters (Freud, 1985). The German version of the same edition provided by one of the present authors

offers slightly more text and considerably more notes than the English one. Reference must therefore be made to it where appropriate, and in this case the abbreviation FF⁶ is used.

³ In the literature, Gattel is mentioned by Jones (1953-57, Vol. 1, p. 367), whose account seems to be based on the Fliess letters (as well as unpublished family letters) but not by Clark (1979) and Gay (1988). Decker (1977) discusses Gattel's study of neurasthenia (1898), while Sulloway (1979, particularly pp. 513-15) also uses two examples of the response to this study and the appearances of Gattel in the incomplete edition of the Fliess letters produced by Kris et al. (1950).