



Papers based on the Symposium
held at Kings College,
University of London,
5th & 6th September, 2019

Introductory Note

Speakers at the *Under Capricorn* Symposium were each given a 30 minute slot to deliver their paper and respond to questions. In preparing for this collection, all the papers have been revised and several have been considerably developed to provide additional context, argument and analysis. Apart from changes in format introduced to create a unified document (and in one or two cases to integrate images), the papers appear as the writers submitted them.

The papers are arranged in the order of the symposium programme, with one exception. Bertrand Tavernier was unfortunately unable to attend and his paper is the first the reader will encounter.

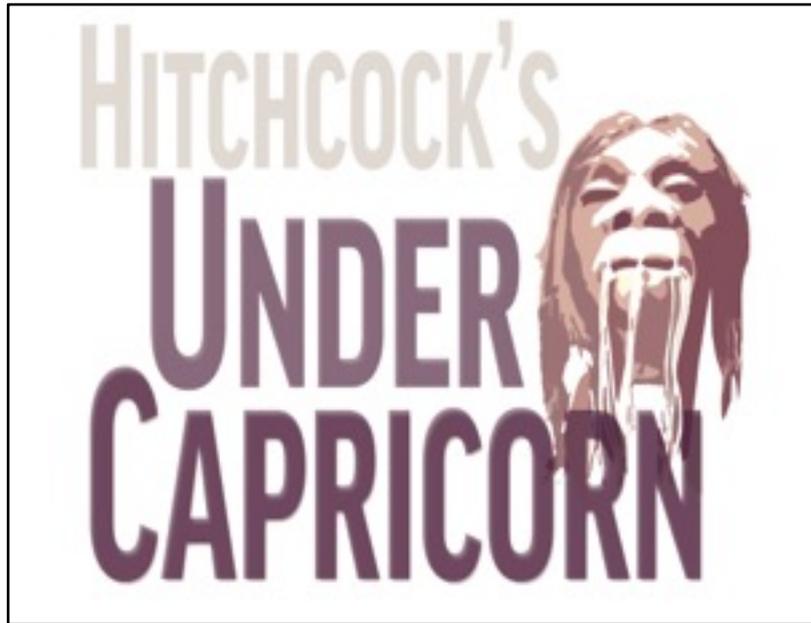
Papers that do not appear in this collection are marked by an asterisk in the programme.

Under Capricorn at 70
King's College, University of London
5th and 6th September 2019

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| Day 1 | 5 September |
| 9:00 - 9:30 | Registration |
| 9:30 - 10:00 | Welcome & Introductions |
| 10:00 - 10:30 | An Overview of <i>Under Capricorn</i> <i>Stéphane Duckett</i> |
| 10:30 - 11:00 | Hitchcock and Ireland <i>Charles Barr *</i> |
| 11:00 - 11:30 | Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered. A Fairy Tale of Old Ireland <i>Richard Blennerhassett</i> |
| 11:30 - 12:00 | Teas & Coffees |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | <i>Under Capricorn</i> and Helen de Guerry Simpson <i>Ed Gallafent</i> |
| 12:30 - 1:00 | <i>Under Capricorn</i> and <i>The Paradine Case</i> <i>Douglas Pye</i> |
| 1:00 - 2:00 | Lunch |
| 2:00 - 2:30 | “Between P & B- The Past and the Bottle” or Ingrid Bergman’s Acting and Opinions on Acting <i>Tytti Soila</i> |
| 2:30 - 3:00 | <i>Under Capricorn</i> and the Hitchcockian Melodrama of Recovery and Remarriage <i>Sidney Gottlieb</i> |
| 3:00 - 3:30 | <i>Under Capricorn: Hitchcock and Melodrama</i> <i>Richard Allen *</i> |
| 3:30 - 4:00 | Teas & Coffees |
| 4:00 - 4:30 | An International Production but not much Australian: Authenticity and Australianness in <i>Under Capricorn</i> <i>Stephen Morgan</i> |
| 4:30 - 5:00 | Questions, Discussion and Comments |
| 7:30 | Screening of 35mm print of <i>Under Capricorn</i>, introduced by Clyde Jeavons, past curator of the BFI archive – Lucas Theatre |

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| Day 2 | 6 September |
| 9:00 - 9:30 | Announcements |
| 9:30 - 10:00 | A New Video Essay on <i>Under Capricorn</i> <i>Catherine Grant</i> * |
| 10:00 - 10:30 | The Melodramatic Gesture: Figure, Camera, <i>Mise en Scène</i> <i>Laura Mulvey</i> * |
| 10:30 - 11:00 | Humiliation Finery in George Cukor's <i>Gaslight</i> (1944) and Hitchcock's <i>Under Capricorn</i> <i>George Toles</i> |
| 11:00 - 11:30 | Teas & Coffees |
| 11:30 - 12:00 | <i>Minyago Yugilla</i>: Architecture in Hitchcock's <i>Under Capricorn</i> <i>Steven Jacobs</i> |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | <i>Under Capricorn</i> and the 'One Camera' Television Technique of Fred O'Donovan <i>John Wyver</i> * |
| 12:30 - 1:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 - 2:00 | <i>Under Capricorn</i>: Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes <i>John Bruns</i> |
| 2:00 - 2:30 | A New Mirror: The Feminine versus the Queer in <i>Under Capricorn</i> <i>David Greven</i> |
| 2:30 - 3:00 | Adare in the Underworld: Suspicious Characters, Discarded Histories <i>David Sterritt</i> |
| 3:00 - 3:30 | Teas & Coffees |
| 3:30 - 4:00 | The Use of Music in Alfred Hitchcock's TransAtlantic Productions <i>Brian Davidson</i> |
| 4:00 | Discussion Forum and Final Remarks |

* Not currently included in the collection.



70 Years On

First shown in September 1949, *Under Capricorn* remains one of Alfred Hitchcock's lesser-known films, which makes the chance to explore its riches on this 70th anniversary occasion all the more welcome. A 35mm archival Technicolor print of the film will be screened on the evening of Day One.

The two-day symposium, on either side of the screening, is a sequel to the very successful event organised by Dee Martin in Dublin in September 2018 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of *Vertigo* and it follows the same pattern. An international team of scholars and enthusiasts come together to discuss the film from a variety of perspectives. Instead of the more conventional panel-of-three format, speakers all have their own half-hour slot, allowing for some Q and A.

The range of speakers and topics matches the distinctive multicultural nature of Hitchcock's project.

England: the film was shot mainly at Elstree by an English crew including cinematographer Jack Cardiff, Oscar winner for his work on *Black Narcissus*. Born in East London, Hitchcock had worked in British cinema for two decades up to 1939.

America: the two stars, Ingrid Bergman and Joseph Cotten, were brought over from Hollywood and some scenes were shot in Hollywood. Hitchcock by 1949 was an established Hollywood director.

Australia: the film is set entirely in the Australia of the 1830s, though without the use of Australian locations. It is based on the novel of 1937 by the Sydney-born Helen Simpson.

Ireland: the main characters are Irish émigrés, and memories of Ireland are crucial to the film's story, although the original intention to shoot a prologue in Ireland was not fulfilled. Hitchcock himself had strong family roots, on his mother's side, in the West of Ireland, though it suited him to present himself in Hollywood as an entirely English figure.

Sweden: the star is Ingrid Bergman, who began her film career in her native Sweden, and always maintained her Swedish links.

All of these countries, and related themes, will be represented at the symposium. Many other topics of interest will be covered, notably the remarkable long-take style of much of the film (carried over from *Rope* in 1948); the musical score by Richard Addinsell; and the place of the film within Hitchcock's 50-year directing career.

Furthermore, a sixth country has its own stake in the film: **France**. As is well known, it was the French critics who took the lead in celebrating Hitchcock as a major 20th century artist rather than a mere entertainer and *Under Capricorn* was named in a top-twelve all-time film list by *Cahiers du Cinéma* magazine as early as 1958. We are delighted that the distinguished film historian and film director Bertrand Tavernier has agreed to attend and to share a French perspective on the film.

As the joint organisers of this event we hope that you find it interesting and stimulating.

Stéphane Duckett & Charles Barr

Bertrand Tavernier on *Under Capricorn*

The discovery of *Under Capricorn* at the Cardinet cinema in Paris, during a Hitchcock festival in 1957 that included *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Strangers on a Train* and *Saboteur*, made a terrific impact. We felt that we were discovering a film in which the author – the director – was speaking to us in subtle ways that revealed himself, bared himself, allowed us to understand his obsessions, his fears. And as always in such cases, or nearly always, the critics missed the point.

For them a 'personal' film must be openly autobiographical, told in the first person, if possible with an explanatory commentary (how I kissed my first girlfriend or started my first job, how I survived polio) – or revisited a theme that had been covered many times before. If, in contrast, a director operates behind a mask, behind genre conventions, in particular those of historical films, he is very likely to go unrecognised, at least to begin with: this is what happened to Jacques Becker of *Casque d'or*, to Michael Powell of *Peeping Tom*, to Max Ophuls of *Le Plaisir*, trashed by Bazin, or to David Lean of *Ryan's Daughter*. In this regard we can pay tribute to Charbrol, Austruc and Truffaut for the acuteness of their analysis at the time; some of their reviews were to be seen posted on the cinema's walls.

Under Capricorn also bears witness to Hitchcock's love for a particular kind of Gothic novel, romantic, typically English – something that was already apparent with *Rebecca*, and Selznick could not extinguish. And this proof – to use a word rarely used in speaking of Hitchcock – of a true compassion for the characters that populate his films, of a desire to understand them and absolve them. *Lifeboat* is an example of this. Even the apparent cynicism of *Notorious* does not hide this fact. There is no ironic withdrawal, no detachment, but a true moral engagement - consistent with the anti-Nazi commitment to democracy that energises *The Lady Vanishes*, *Foreign Correspondent*, *Saboteur* and *Lifeboat*. It is interesting to note that the most striking, brilliant and complex anti-Nazi films were made by non-Americans film-makers such as Hitchcock and Powell from England, Andre de Toth from Hungary – with *None Shall Escape*, the only film of this period to portray Jewish resistance – and Anatole Litvak from Russia, with the film that led the way in 1939, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.

In the years after its release, *Under Capricorn* found itself caught up in a debate in France that was ultimately sterile and empty, following the attack launched by Truffaut against the 'Tradition of Quality' in French cinema. His target was films that were well made by vacuous, lacking any personal imprint. His polemic applied perfectly well to certain films by, say, Delannoy

and by Carné (his films of the 1950s) – but with hindsight it seems completely unjust in relation to the work of Clouzot, René Clément, Duvivier (Truffaut praised his *Voici le Temps des Assassins*) and Claude Autant-Lara. These are distinctive film-makers whose voices and whose style we readily recognise in their work.

A particular target was the screenwriting team of Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost, who wrote *Les Jeux Interdits* and *Gervaise* for Clément and, for Autant-Lara, *Le Diable au corps*, *Douce* and *Le mariage de Chiffon*. Truffaut contrasted a screen-writer's cinema (Bost and Auranche) with a director's cinema (Hitchcock). He took a scene from Yves Allégret's *Les Orgueilleux* (*The Proud and the Beautiful*, 1953) – a film now championed by Martin Scorsese- which was co-written by Aurenche and Clouzot's brother. Michèle Morgan, alone in a Mexican village, dictates a telegram requesting help for her sick husband. She has little money, and when she is told the sum payable, and realises she lose a word, she replies: 'delete *Tendresse*'.

Truffaut contrasts this resonant scene with the wonderful moment where Michael Wilding uses his coat to create a mirror for Bergman's Hattie. On the one hand, cinema driven by words, on the other Hitchcock's very visual style. I always found this comparison very biased – opposing words to visuals does not make sense to me. The problem with *Les Orgueilleux*, if indeed there is one, surely comes from the direction, from the way the reply is framed – something which Hitchcock would perhaps have shot in a different way.

For me this was a pointless controversy which defamed a pair of talented writers and put them on a kind of black list. When I worked with them on *L'horloger de Saint Paul* (*The Clock-Maker of Saint Paul*, 1974), some people made the ridiculous claim that I was getting my revenge on Truffaut, whom I admired profoundly. in fact I did not read his notorious article until later. No, I used Bost and Aurenche because they were remarkably talented writers, that is all – in the same way that Hitchcock worked with Norman Lloyd for his television series.

I once was having lunch with my agent, the legendary Sam Cohn, at the Russian Tea Rooms in New York, and he introduced me to Hume Cronyn and his wife Jessica Tandy. Very quickly I took the opportunity to ask Cronyn about that particular scene in *Under Capricorn* [on which he is credited for 'adaptation'], and I saw his face light up:

"In that film I can tell you that 98% of the scene-construction and dialogue, was the work of Hitchcock. The only thing I can lay claim to is the mirror sequence. You will not find it in the original novel, because I was the one who proposed it, and Hitchcock loved it. He filmed it beautifully."

It was therefore an idea from the writer, on a par with a piece of dialogue, which a gifted film maker knew how to realise so admirably. Thinking that writers contribute words and words alone strikes me as naive. Writers can contribute ideas on, for instance, settings or clothes or props, and it will be for the director to know whether or not to make use of these ideas.

An Overview of Under Capricorn

Stéphane Duckett

Hitchcock's 34th film has received comparatively little scholarly attention and yet it came at a critical period of transition for Hitchcock when he was seeking to reestablish himself with this unique opportunity to become his own producer. With this much control he wanted to recapture both the critical as well as popular acclaim that he had enjoyed prior to going to the States. To achieve these goals he looked to the lessons learned at the start of his career, particularly with respect to what it was that defined quality within a British context. Its failure had Hitchcock 'running for cover' as he tells us and led to his abandoning an aspect of the British Hitchcock leading into his most celebrated period. I would argue that to better understand what was to follow we need to understand what he rejected as much as what it was he embraced moving forward.

Hitchcock's disavowal

A large part of the responsibility of the poor standing of *Under Capricorn* has undoubtedly been the result of Hitchcock's disparaging remarks on subsequent interviews. In a typically self-deprecating manner he ascribed its failure to his 'juvenile' ambitions.

On interview Hitchcock would claim that he judged the success or failure of his films based solely on whether they were able to fill seats at the cinema. Posterity would probably disagree with him. His arguably most commercially successful film, *Frenzy*, is unlikely to top most Hitchcock admirers list of his most compelling works. Hitchcock himself was inconsistent in his application of this criteria. *Spellbound* which was an enormous success for him he dismissed as hokum later in his life.

When questioned about his rigid adherence to this standard, he claimed his only concern in making cinema was about keeping his set-workers, actors etc employed. Despite growing up in relative affluence (his father was a grocer) his turn-of-the-century Limehouse upbringing would bring him into daily contact with the often severe consequences of poverty and unemployment.

Variety put *Under Capricorn's* failure down to its being far too talky. Hitchcock himself told Truffaut that he perhaps should not have attempted a costume drama. It was not what his audiences expected from him.

It should have done well. Hitchcock's alliance with his co-producer, Sidney Bernstein, was a strong one. They remained life-long friends. Either he or Bernstein had worked with most of the cast

in one form or another. There were difficulties on set. Ingrid Bergman complained about how slow the hairdressers were and a strike by electricians over tardiness did not help.

However, what remains for me is a brave film, particularly when contrasted with the messaging of what else was being produced in British cinema at this date. Without doubt 1949 was an extraordinary year for British cinema, particularly for comedy. *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, *Passport for Pimlico*, but also *The Third Man* which won an Academy award for best cinematography. Yet as Charles Barr has pointed out in his seminal *Ealing Studios* the message was for the time essentially conservative: post-war Britain does best when it works collectively. This had a darker edge to it, one that discouraged breaking out from convention and we see this message come through on the issue of class. *Chiltern Hundreds* (Carstairs 1949) a moderately successful comedy – at least in Britain, was perhaps a bit more explicit with regard to the issue of the unsuitability of men and women choosing their partners in defiance of class.

And yet here with *Under Capricorn*, we have a woman not merely marrying a man of lower social standing, but getting a happy ending. The unrelentingly bleak nature of the themes treated in this film often has its viewers overlook the essentially redemptive nature of this film.

Perhaps the best line for this film comes right at the start with the bank manager telling the newly arrived Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) not enquire after a man's past here. It is not polite. In this respect 1830 Colonial Australia becomes the perfect metaphor for a post-war Britain, eager to leave the horrors of the second world war behind them.

In the same manner the two main characters, Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman) and Sam (Joseph Cotten), are left wanting to put behind them the world that had denied them their love.

Hitchcock's legacy

We now take for granted the man Hitchcock was to become with the enormous success that was yet awaiting him with his 1950s productions and television, but in 1949 that success was anything but guaranteed. Hitchcock's own father had died at about his age when Hitchcock was himself a boy, from overwork. He was fortunate enough to have an uncle who could take up the responsibility for his extended family.

Hitchcock of course had had a number of remarkable successes during the 1930s in Britain and subsequently in the States but he had been savaged by his British compatriots for his wartime departure. Many, including Michael Balcon – his erstwhile principle producer for some of his most outstanding 30s production – were wholly unaware of Hitchcock's substantial wartime contribution.

It was not just about his wartime record. The legendary documentary filmmaker John Grierson, a man whom Hitchcock paid a moving tribute to in later life, had described Hitchcock's 1930s productions as unimportant cinema despite its commercial success. This represented for Hitchcock a marked fall from the critical attention he had received in the 1920s and one that would undoubtedly have pained him.

Adrian Brunel – a founding member of the influential (London) Film Society – had at one of their meetings during the late 20s, posed the question *for whom do we make cinema?*

Hitchcock, at the height of his critical as well as popular recognition, surprised his colleagues by suggesting the critics. His reasoning, he subsequently said, was founded on an ambition to open up cinema to a wider middle class audience for whom the medium was still seen as down-market and positive critical reviews would reel them in.

The opinion and esteem of British critics mattered to Hitchcock. He had formed what he thought of as personal friendships with many of the leading writers of the day such as Iris Barry and C.J. Lejeune. To this end with his return to Britain postwar and on the termination of his contractual ties to the States, he was determined to win back the extraordinary acclaim he had once enjoyed from both audience and critic alike. He quite simply wanted to make great cinema, cinema that would endure.

Quality in British cinema

“Whenever there is doubt or confusion in your mind, the first thing to do is to recover your bearings. Any guide or explorer will tell you that. When they realise they are lost, or they've taken a wrong road, they won't take a short cut through the forest nor do they rely on their instinct to set them back in the right direction. What they do is to carefully go back over the whole road until they've found their starting point or the point at which they took the wrong turn.”

Hitchcock-Truffaut Interviews.

This curious quote might just well have been lifted from The 17th century French philosopher, René Descartes's *Discourse on Method*. It has most certainly a very Jesuit flavour to the reasoning. Hitchcock took this dictum to heart in his attempt at reclaiming the admiration of his British critics, but in a way that almost predated his own cinema. British cinema, in contrast to both the States and France, had emerged from very humble origins. The prestigious International Fairs had provided for France's the Lumière brothers the setting upon which they were able to launch their product. By contrast in Britain the moving image found a natural home in the music halls – as

an extension of the illustrated songs – amongst other venues. Such settings attracted the disapprobation of a very class-bound society. The Music halls were, up until the First World war, wholly working class (with an aristocrat or two slumming it).

“If you examine the history of cinema you will see that the art of film-making was often held in contempt by the [British] intellectuals. No well bred person would be seen going to a cinema; it simply was not done” as Hitchcock explained to Truffaut.

There had, however been from certain quarters a concerted effort to legitimise film-making by aping theatre. This however was not simply about hiring stage actors or filming West-end theatrical productions as Christine Gledhill and others have carefully documented, but involved *acting styles, staging and narrational practice* of which *continuous action* [or takes] as Hitchcock labelled it, were the most publicised manifestation.

He had first reacquainted himself with the use of the continuous take during his wartime work for Bernstein. Sidney Bernstein was a British film producer (and founder of Granada) who at that time owned a series of cinemas. He was an important and successful businessman who had played a founding role with the (London) film Society. It was at one of the Society’s meeting in 1923 that he first got to know Hitchcock.

As with Hitchcock, he was too old to serve at the start of the war, but made a far more significant contribution by volunteering to advise the Ministry of information as the importance of the film industry towards the overall war effort dawned on the authorities. At the start of the war there had been some debate as to whether the film industry altogether should be closed so as to preserve precious resources. In his role as adviser Bernstein made ample use of the contacts he had established with his work and this included Hitchcock. At considerable personal risk to Hitchcock, he had had the director transported by boat (flying was deemed too dangerous) to Britain for what has subsequently come to be known as *Memory of the Camps* (German Concentration Camps Factual Survey).

In the weeks and months immediately after Germany’s unconditional surrender in the spring of 1945 renegade self-styled *wolf-packs* of Nazis were murdering Germans citizens who were seen as cooperating with Allied forces, a theme that Hitchcock had explored with *Notorious*. This was at that time seen as a serious threat in reestablishing control of a defeated Germany.

It was felt that the only way to successfully overcome the threat was by winning over the hearts and minds of ordinary Germans who might prove sympathetic to the reactionary former Nazis. A film documenting the full horrors of the newly liberated camps would reveal to the general

populace the full implication of what the Nazis stood for and that this in turn would lead to their loss of support.

The Hollywood director Billy Wilder, as a German-born Jew, was felt to be the obvious choice. He was commissioned, but what he produced – *Death Mills* – was an unrelenting, angry representation of the grotesque inhumanity of the camps. His agenda was clearly one of punishing the viewer, rather than necessarily bringing them around. It was also, crucially, just not believed by the propaganda weary German viewers. The Ministry of Information's response to this dilemma was to consult Bernstein who in turn approached Hitchcock. His solution was simple: don't edit the footage showing the initial entry into the camps. Let the camera run as long as the reel would allow it.

Hitchcock also made two other recommendations as Bernstein reminisced some years later: one was for the use of maps to highlight quite how widespread the camps were (effectively every community throughout Nazi Germany lived within a matter of a few short miles of a concentration camp). The third recommendation came with accompanying images of the surrounding bucolic German landscape as well ordinary Germans coming out of this to see what had been done in their name.

Fortunately the need for such a film evaporated when it became clear that the wolf-packs had disappeared. There was also concern that a dispirited populace would not engage in the rebuilding of their country.

Hitchcock subsequently made use of the continuous take in his last production for Selznick, *The Paradine Case*, on two occasions that I am aware of. The first involved the initial credits where the camera would gradually work its way through the law courts themselves. This is a device Hitchcock had also wanted for the credits of *Spellbound* (a psychiatric facility focusing on the treatment aspects such as the tiled hydrotherapy rooms) and again with *North by NorthWest* with the camera gradually meandering from the lobby of an office building, up the elevators and through the office area typing pools to Cary Grant's plush office – this proved too expensive and was dropped. The second use of the continuous take for *The Paradine Case*, came with a very long circumnavigation of the beautiful Italian actress Valli. This was filmed but ended up on the cutting room floor. *We are not doing a theatre piece*, Selznick declared.

However I would wish to argue there was purpose in Hitchcock's lingering shot and that was for what was to come. As with *Dial M for Murder*, it was essential that Hitchcock win the sympathy of his audience for his fallen female lead so that the full horror of her destiny be brought home with the judge's words, *she will hang by the neck until she is dead*.

Hitchcock needed his audience to fall in love with Valli's extraordinary beauty.

The Psychological Impact of the Continuous Take

What is the impact of the continuous take? The first has to do with making viewers into purely observers. Alternating point of view has you assume the position of the actor and the response their conduct or words solicits from their interlocutor whereas with continuous takes you are simply observing the action as in theatre. For instance during Hattie's confessional scene Charles is also at various points seen within the frame, but it is to the audience that she discloses. This is not to say that there are no alternating points of view within *Under Capricorn*. They are used sparingly, but principally during moments of revelation towards one or other of the players for instance sitting across at dinner.

The observer, however, is not passive. The enormous technicolor cameras – which caused so much consternation for all concerned – followed the actors from room to room in a veritable ballet of moving walls, props and technicians. This places us, as viewers, into the sets which brings me to the third element which is bringing the heritage decors to the forefront. We see the sets three-dimensionally as it were.

This is a crucial element in the definition of quality cinema from a British perspective and it very much remains so today with both television productions as well as cinema. Charles Barr highlighted the importance of heritage cinema within a British context. When British cinema first attempted to reclaim the medium as a legitimate art form, just as Victorian photography aped painting, cinematographers such as Cecil Hepworth created what he termed *living tableaux*. Figures were framed aesthetically in a balanced manner in beautiful settings that referenced an earlier historical period. A lot of this followed from the rapprochement to theatre and the informal rules that govern on-stage performance.

However it was not just to the past that Hitchcock sought guidance on creating quality cinema.

London Film Society

Whilst more recent scholarship has suggested that commentary on the day tended to exaggerate its importance, the Film Society's screenings regularly attracted audiences of up to fourteen-hundred attendees for its Sunday programming on Regent Street. Bernstein, as a proprietor of a chain of cinemas, represented the exhibitors' side. He also served as treasurer for the Society.

The Society had made a concerted effort to insure its membership was not just a talking shop for critics, but included people from within the industry. Membership fees for technicians were heavily discounted. Hitchcock positioned himself squarely within the commercial end of this group. The influence of the Society also extended not merely with respect to providing a wider British public with access to foreign made films, but also as Jamie Sexton tells us with respect to the critical discourse through the program notes that accompanied screenings.

Sexton tells us that there was an explicit understanding of what constituted quality cinema which was not altogether shared with the British producer. The three elements were:

Formal Balance.

Because the industry was understood to be in its infancy technical innovation was encouraged; however it should not be seen as arbitrary, but integrated into the overall objective of providing good cinema i.e. telling a story where there is a clear narrative trajectory. This is very much the case with *Under Capricorn*. Whilst much was made of the continuous takes in the promotion of the films for TransAtlantic Productions, as we have seen with respect to the psychological impact the use of this device was not gratuitous.

Authorial Status of the Director.

Well before Andrew Sarris, the Society's program notes were "*privileging the director as the creative intelligence guiding every aspect of the film.*" This, Sexton tells us, was an essential component which was not lost on the Hitchcocks.

Surface v. Deeper Meaning.

This last component reflects the influence of John Grierson. When asked Grierson never identified himself as a film maker, documentary or otherwise, but as an educator – of which film was merely one medium amongst others with which to convey your message. Grierson himself believed firmly, indeed morally, in the institutions that came to define Empire. His cinema very much reflects that message; cinema for entertainments sake alone was unimportant. Hitchcock very much took this message to heart and we see throughout his cinema from this period very consistent themes.

From the close of the war all of the cinema Hitchcock produced revolved around one of two related issues, namely capital punishment and the fundamental injustice that can follow from this. For Hitchcock this was a moral issue that was profoundly informed by his faith.

In 1938 the Criminal Justice bill had proposed a five year moratorium on capital punishment. England historically had had an appalling record when it came to capital punishment with over two-hundred crimes punishable by death at the start of the 18th century. The concern for the public with an outright repeal was that there would be an increase in serious crime. The bill was not however put before politicians for debate because war was eminent. The decision was made to hold off until after the war which was duly done by 1946. However, whilst a clear majority vote had been held in the lower chamber, the Lords had opposed it. The government of the day were sympathetic and could have pressed ahead, but the general public were not supportive. It is here that Hitchcock felt that his cinema could bring home the issue to the British public. In this ambition he was ably assisted by Charles Laughton and Ethel Barrymore's performances as Lord and Lady Horfield in *The Paradine Case*.

The second event immediately post war was the conviction of Neville Heath, a man who posing as an aristocrat got away with the most brutal murders imaginable. He would not have been caught either had it not been for his own arrogance by surrendering himself to a police station to have a bit of fun playing with the police. Hitchcock instructed script-writer Anthony Shaffer to lift some of the debate between the prosecuting barrister and an expert psychiatric witness which we hear reproduced in a pub scene for *Frenzy*. The Neville Heath Case was one of two legal cases involving capital punishment that proved to be an important preoccupation for him, the other being that of Edith Thompson. *Dial M for Murder* is very much an amalgam of both those cases: a woman presumed guilty of murder because of her infidelity and a clever man's ability to manipulate both the police and the courts. *Rope* similarly has at its heart the story about how wealth and privilege along with a sense of superiority on social standing, can allow an individual to brazenly commit the most egregious of crimes.

Similarly we find at the heart of *Under Capricorn* a story of the ways in which social station prejudices a person's standing within their community such that he may very well hang for a crime he did not commit. His freedom depends on the word of a gentleman, not his own.

Hitchcock and Truffaut.

In the interview with Truffaut Hitchcock describes *Under Capricorn* as a failure. Truffaut was quick to defend it. Indeed it was very well received by both the French critics as well as the public.

To start his interview with respect to *Under Capricorn* Truffaut notes how inefficient the continuous takes proved to be. This may in part have been in response to Hitchcock's claim that continuous takes were just about keeping post-production costs down. Hitchcock throughout the

production gave no indication that he was showing any financial restraint. *Under Capricorn* proved to be a very costly affair which Hitchcock took as further evidence of its failure. Truffaut's response I believe to be informative. "I don't think, like you, that it was a useless experience. I think it constitutes a stage in a career and that every good film maker passes through this phase to want to relate everything." (Scott's taped translation).

Truffaut is here suggesting that *Under Capricorn* not be seen as an isolated aberration, but rather within the context of the evolving career of an artist.

On Late Style

Edward Said in his *On Late Style* argues that many of our greatest artists found themselves towards the end of their careers taking enormous risks with their artistic product, often requiring them to reject the expressive form that may have dominated their art. The examples he brings, naturally enough, are from music, including Beethoven or Richard Strauss, but he also includes theatre writers such as Jean Genet. Not infrequently these artists found themselves retracing some aspect of their earliest output that may have been left unexplored. As with the example of Richard Strauss, his *return* was to a period of musical history that predated Strauss quite considerably.

Said argues these late periods in some instances proved so successful that they may have eclipsed their earlier work in a way that makes it difficult for a modern audience to quite appreciate how novel it was for the artist or audience at that time. The most dramatic example he provides is with Beethoven where his ninth symphony heralded the romantic era in such a way that its creation appears almost inevitable. At the time it represented for his contemporaneous audience an extraordinary break with the music of the 18th century.

Said's explanation was psychological, where he sees the artist as aware of their finality towards the close of their lives and yet feeling that producing the same product for which they have been celebrated is a stagnation. Breaking with that stagnation represents an affirmation of their creativity, of life itself.

Conclusion

The establishment of TransAtlantic Pictures with Sidney Bernstein gave Hitchcock an extraordinary opportunity after years of being subject to the constraints of working for other producers. Whilst he had experienced considerable commercial success, Hitchcock wanted to return to a point in his career where he had been celebrated both critically as well commercially in Britain. *Under Capricorn* to an extent represented just such a return to a form of British quality that should have

put his career back on track from where he had left when he was making *important pictures*, to paraphrase John Grierson. However, it neither pleased the critics nor his public.

He ran for cover, as he put it, but in so doing freed himself from his past success to engage in the Hitchcock that we more readily recognise today. Truffaut may very well have had it right when he stated that *Under Capricorn* represents *une étape*, a stepping stone towards an evolving artistic product. However, I would equally agree with Truffaut in saying that in its own right *Under Capricorn* remains a beautiful film that needs to be seen and appreciated on its own terms.

Truffaut in discussing *Under Capricorn* on more than one occasion saw parallels with *Vertigo*. He described them both as dream-like, nightmarish even but that they also represented Hitchcock turning away from his audience. With *Under Capricorn* he was looking backwards, but with *Vertigo* he was looking inwards. Maybe it was for this reason he never disowned *Vertigo* in a manner that he would for *Under Capricorn*.

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Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered:

A fairy-tale of old Ireland

Richard Blennerhassett

Under Capricorn is a romantic melodrama with many elements of the classical fairy tale. It features a couple with a tragic secret, who live in an isolated mansion, who have become alienated from one another and are seen as outsiders in the foreign land in which they now reside. They have fallen under the spell of a witchlike housekeeper, who controls nearly every aspect of the household. The arrival of a naive cousin from Ireland acts as a catalyst that brings new life and breaks the spell that has cursed the household.

This paper will focus on the fairy tale elements of *Under Capricorn* and examine these from a Jungian perspective using the work of Jung's collaborator Marie-Louise Von Franz. Given that a traumatic event is central to the relationship difficulties in *Under Capricorn* I will also explore this theme, referring to the work of the Jungian analyst Donald Kalsched who is the foremost Jungian scholar in the area of trauma.

There was a great interest in collecting fairy tales in many countries in the 19th century, sometimes seen as containing the remnants of an old wisdom or faith. A striking feature was the enormous number of recurrent themes that arose in different cultures. In Ireland a Celtic revival occurred towards the end of the 19th Century. Lady Wilde, the mother of Oscar Wilde and Douglas Hyde the first President of Ireland, were among those whose fairy tales were collected by the poet W.B. Yeats and published in two collections in London, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* in 1888 and *Irish Fairy tales* 1892. Yeats in his introduction noted that while the English fairies may long have departed, in Ireland fairies were still extant, giving gifts to the kindly, and plaguing the surly. 'Have you ever seen a fairy or such like?' I asked the old man in County Sligo. 'Amn't I annoyed with them,' was the answer. 'Do the fishermen along here know anything of the mermaids?' I asked a woman of a village in County Dublin. 'Indeed they don't like to see them at all', she answered, 'for they always bring bad weather'. (Yeats 2014: 3) 'These folk tales are full of simplicity and musical occurrences, for they are the literature for a class for whom every

incident in the old rut of birth, love, pain and death has cropped up unchanged for centuries: who have steeped everything in the heart: to whom everything is a symbol'. (2014:5)

Psychoanalysis was drawn to fairytales, seeing them like dreams, as a way to explore the life of the unconscious. The most notable contributor from the Freudian school of depth psychology was the self-styled analyst and psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, born in Vienna, who wrote *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Interpretation of Fairy Tales* first published in America in 1976. (Bettelheim 2020) The book grew from his therapeutic work with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, when he worked as Professor of Psychology at the University of Chicago. He was a very acclaimed figure at the time though it later emerged he had little qualifications in either psychoanalysis or psychology. (Raines: 2002) He considered the book as an attempt to show how fairy tales represent in imaginative form the process of healthy human development. He wrote 'This growth process begins with fear of resistance against the parents and fears of growing up, and ends up when youth has truly found itself, achieved psychological independence and moral maturity, and no longer views the other sex as threatening or demonic, but is able to relate positively to it'. He argued that fairy tales proceed by image and symbol; these account for their richness, leading them to many sorts of interpretation which need not be exclusive of one another.

Fairy tales had a particular attraction for the Jungian school of depth psychology. Their foremost interpreter was Marie-Louise Von Franz who lectured on this topic for over twenty years at the Jungian School in Zurich and the book based on these lectures *The Interpretation of Fairy tales* was first published in English in 1970. (Von Franz: 1996)

Marie-Louise Von Franz emphasised moving beyond a personalistic approach to fairy tales where the interpreter judges the hero or heroine to be a normal human ego and his misfortunes to be an image of his neurosis. She rather viewed the heroes and heroines in fairy tales as being archetypal figures. She viewed fairy tales as emerging from the deepest layer of the unconscious, the collective unconscious, that realm which for Jung 'contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution' (Jung 2002:158) and so far as we can say anything about it at all appears to consist of mythological motifs or primordial images. Von Franz considered fairy tales as the purest and simplest expression of collective unconscious psychic processes. Von Franz concluded from the myriad of fairy tales she studied that all

fairy tales are seeking to describe the same psychic fact: what Jung called ‘the *Self*’ which is the psychic totality of an individual and also paradoxically the regulating centre of the psyche. In simpler terms fairy tales illustrate different stages of our psychic development on the path to becoming who we truly are, the journey that Jung terms “individuation”, a journey that continues over our life time and is never really completed. The true value is what happens along the way as we develop our individual psychological outlook distinct from the general collective psychology.

Looking at *Under Capricorn* as a fairy tale, the approach to interpretation would be similar to the approach to a dream, we first look at the time and place in which the story is set. Fairy tales begin with “Once upon a Time” or something similar, which means in timelessness and spacelessness, in the realm of the collective unconscious where chronological time does not exist.

Under Capricorn is set in a particular time and place but once we travel by carriage to Minyago Yugilla we are in a setting where time has become suspended and the characters are locked in a repetitive pattern of endless suffering.

We next look at the characters involved. The story begins with Sam and Hattie, an estranged couple, and their housekeeper Milly. They are joined by the fourth character Charles Adare, the appearance of whom, as is not unusual in fairy tales, leads to a reordering of the existing relationships.

Next we proceed to name the problem. In *Under Capricorn* we see a couple, both sick in their own way, Sam who has retreated into a surely resentful state and Hattie who has succumbed to alcoholism. They are both under the influence of Milly the housekeeper. So the trouble with the main couple is their relationship with themselves and each other, so they are no longer able to live life fully.

Next we move to the ups and downs of the story. The focus here is the emotional turmoil that is triggered by the presence of Charles Adare which reaches a climax with Hattie’s revelation of the past trauma, suffered by herself and Sam and which has bound them together, now in their unhappy state. At this point in the fairy tale there is a lysis, an end result where the prince gets his princess and they live “happily ever after”. In *Under Capricorn* the dark forces which have held sway are ultimately banished with Sam and Hattie emerging from their ordeal to find their love renewed.

Looking at *Under Capricorn* from a psychological perspective both Sam and Hattie have become estranged from themselves and from each other. Their ego, their sense of who they are has become rigid and there is a loss of connection with the archetype of wholeness, Jung's *Self*, with which we need to be in harmony for our lives to flow. As I said earlier the journey in fairy tales is about bringing the characters in harmony with this regulating centre of the psyche and when this happens the experience is of a fullness of life. As Sam and Hattie are suffering from a neurosis they are both under the influence of the *shadow* aspects of their personality, Jung's terms for all those aspects of our make-up that we despise and consider inferior and wish to disown. In Sam's case we observe his anger and resentfulness projected onto "the gentry", the ruling class, as epitomised by Sir Richard the Governor, Charles Adare and also has come to include his wife Lady Henrietta. His truer self is revealed in his moving conversation with Charles as to how he came to love Hattie 'I would no more have thought of making love to her than if she had been a blessed angel, you know how it is, she had a reckless strain in her and I had a bit of the devil in me, there was bound to be trouble and trouble there was alright' Sam is harking back to when he was very much in love, under the influence of *anima*, the inner feminine side of man. Here Sam has projected the *anima* in her divine angelic aspect onto Hattie. Within the psyche the *anima* functions as a man's soul influencing his ideas, attitudes and emotions.(Sharp 1991:18) Sam has experienced a loss of soul and is estranged from Hattie who embodied soul in his life. Hattie too is possessed by her *shadow*, she feels a deep sense of shame and guilt and Milly may be viewed as a personification of her *shadow*, an evil witch who has locked her up so that she is no longer capable of relating to Sam while still recognising their deep bond. 'Sam is part of me and I am part of Sam for ever and ever'. Sam is a personification of her *animus*, (1991:23) her inner male side and like Sam the task for her is also to restore the relationship with this figure in the inner and outer world.

The problem they both face is becoming conscious of their *shadow* with the hope that it may be possible to restore their relationship with themselves and each other.

The figure of Charles Adare is critical to this. The task of the hero in fairy tales is to put things right, in this story, to restore the relationship of the central couple. From a Jungian perspective the hero is an archetypal figure which represents a model of ego functioning in accordance with the *Self*. In other words the figure of the hero expresses or

brings about what the *Self*, the regulating centre of the psyche wishes to happen, shaping the destiny of the characters.

Charles Adare, naïve and foppish in nature, may seem an unlikely hero but looking at fairy tales he would correspond to the innocent, beautiful youth or the dummling figure. Characteristically in fairy tales the dummling is the one called stupid and unlucky but if you look closely at his character you see he is simply spontaneous and naïve; he takes things as they are. The figure of Charles Adare is a contrast to the collective attitudes of society as represented by Sir Richard, a society in which “oughts and shoulds” dominate and a more spontaneous adaptation to life is lost. Charles is not afraid to go against the will of his uncle, while maintaining his link with him, he is not afraid to venture into the peculiar setting of Minyego Yungilla and doesn't take himself too seriously. He amusingly observes in his second meeting with Hattie ‘It is pleasant to be gathering shamrocks at the other end of the world’ and is at ease in speaking the truth. ‘I know you were extremely drunk’.

The relationship between Charles and Hattie is set in motion by Sam as a parody of therapy. ‘If you could get her talking about old times it might help you never know, I think she took a fancy to you.’ Charles naively embarks on the role of therapist and soon becomes embroiled in an erotic transference. This in turn results in a closer relationship developing between Sam and Milly. Charles' deepening friendship with Hattie allows her to reveal the dark secret of her shared past with Sam, to acknowledge her abiding love for him, to confess her guilt and now be prepared to sacrifice herself to save Sam. The relationship with Charles reconnects her with her true self, now older and burnished in the fire of suffering she has endured. Hattie's willingness to sacrifice herself reawakens in Sam his most tender feelings for her and he is now able to confront the evil presence of Milly and banish her from their lives. From a fairy tale perspective Milly is the evil witch who tries to poison Hattie and possess Sam. She is the keeper of a shrunken head which primitives believed contained the essence of their enemy and was used to instil fear. Classically she represents a bit of the evil in the psyche which cannot be assimilated and which must be thrown out.

Sacrifice is the central theme in *Under Capricorn*. The story develops in Minyego Yungilla, a house of suffering and it is through suffering that the characters are transformed. Donald Kalsched observed that Mythology and all the great religions of the world are preoccupied with an essential question – the relationship between the human and the divine

and how it is maintained in the face of human suffering. How and through what agencies is a connection made between the transcendent world, with its life giving energies, and the mundane temporal world bound by time, space, history and routine? (Kalsched 1996:142) There is a strong religious theme in *Under Capricorn*, with Hattie as a Mary Magdalene figure, who in Hitchcock's words has 'degraded herself for love'. Sam in the final stages sorrowfully observes: 'Sacrifice, sacrifice all along we have sacrificed ourselves for each other, there must be an end to it'. It is a strange aspect of our existence that suffering and sacrifice are so integral to our human journey yet these experiences are what shape us and link us with the deepest aspect of our nature. The word "religion" contains the notion of "re"-flection and "ligeo", ligament or connection-hence reconnection (1996:142) Charles in his lightness acts as an agent for reconnection, a magical agent representing something of the eternal that enters the temporal world in *Under Capricorn* and forever changes it. Sam, Hattie and Charles are all transformed at the end of *Under Capricorn* and for each of them life with all its possibility has been renewed.

I will now look a little further at the relationships in *Under Capricorn*. At a psychological level there are two love triangles, Sam, Hattie and Milly and Hattie, Sam and Charles. A dark and a light triangle.

Donald Kalsched in his outstanding study of the effects of trauma on the psyche '*The Inner World of Trauma*' (Kalsched 1996:1) begins by asking what happens in the inner world when life in the outer world becomes unbearable? Kalsched's book arose from his clinical practice and seeks to explore the phenomenology of a "daimonic" figure that he encountered repeatedly in the unconscious material of patients with a history of early childhood trauma. While *Under Capricorn* does not deal with early childhood trauma the trauma experienced by Hattie as a young woman, the killing of her brother with her lover being sent to prison is unbearable and results in her case in the threat of the total annihilation of her human personality. For Kalsched the effect of trauma is to divide up the inner world and the daimonic figure appears to personify the psyche's dissociative defences where early trauma has made psychic integration impossible.

Kalsched described the personal spirit of the individual as follows 'This spirit has always been a mystery - an essence of selfhood never fully to be comprehended. It is the imperishable essence of the personality - that which Winnicott referred to as the "True Self",

and Jung seeking a construct that would honour its transpersonal origins, called the *Self*'. (1996:3) In the aftermath of severe trauma a splitting appears to occur in the psyche to protect a person's innermost personal spirit. It becomes hidden within, protected by a powerful benevolent or malevolent presence. Kalsched sees the trauma defences as a self-care system which is seeking to protect the person from experiencing further trauma. The difficulty that arises is that a defence against further trauma becomes a resistance to all unguarded spontaneous experiences of the person in the world in which they live. The protective figure that arises screens the person's interactions with the outer world. In this situation a person survives but cannot live creatively. In Hattie's case she has retreated into alcoholism and in Sam's case he has retreated into a state of resentment and bitterness. Psychotherapy in such cases is extremely difficult as there is marked resistance to letting go of the self-care system.

In many fairy tales the innocent hero or heroine is bewitched and then the struggle in the tale focuses on how to release this hero or heroine from bewitchment and turn this tragic state into enchantment which is what fairy tales mean when they end happily ever after.

In *Under Capricorn* both Sam and Hattie are struggling with the aftermath of trauma. Both, Hattie in particular, have fallen under the persecutory side of the self-care system as personified by Milly, who controls their interactions with each other and the outer world. Milly may be viewed as a personification of a daimonic figure in their psyches. She has lured Hattie into a state of addiction which shields her from the painful reality of her daily life. In Sam's case she supports him in his proud isolation and thereby shields him from his social exclusion. Their lives are in a state of suspended animation with little prospect of change.

Charles represents for both of them the hope of reconnecting with their true spirit and so is a threat to Milly. Sam talking with Charles about Milly remarks 'A good girl Milly, I don't know what we would do without her. She has got a way with Hattie', to which Charles, recognising that Hattie needs something more than the ministrations of Milly, replies, 'We have got to do something about her'.

The initial unfolding of the "therapy" between Hattie and Charles is promising in respect of initiating healing. He very movingly conjures up the beauty of the west of Ireland of her childhood and gives her a glimpse of her inner self, asking her to look at herself in the

mirror he creates. He gently encourages her to regain control of her life. In keeping with the early stages of psychotherapy in such a case the person starts to improve, Hattie drinks less and she tentatively starts to assume her role as the Lady of the Manor. This of course is resisted by Milly who seeks to humiliate her and to undermine Charles. She warns Sam of his 'ill purposes. In a person who has suffered severe trauma, the protector/persecutor figure that arises seeks to' shield the person from experiencing any further trauma. The improvement in Hattie therefore is seen as a threat, that she will suffer further humiliation, so she is thereby tempted to return to the oblivion of alcoholic stupor. Kalsched has observed 'The patient wishes to let go of the self-care system, and get well again, but the system is more powerful than the ego, at least initially, and so the patient inadvertently resists the very surrender to the process that would restore a feeling of spontaneity and aliveness' (1996:26)

Freud coined the term "repetition compulsion" for the repetitive self-destructive behaviour he observed in some patients that resisted analysis. He linked it with the psyche mistaking a benign situation in the present with the original trauma. He viewed it as being linked to the death instinct (Freud 1966:118)

The initial progress and change in the dynamic of the household results in the resentful departure of Milly. However as seen in *Under Capricorn* such a powerful malevolent force is not easily dispatched.

It is fascinating that Milly's reappearance coincides with the developing relationship between Hattie and Charles. She starts to re-exert control over Sam and ultimately, after the confrontation between Sam and Charles appears to regain control over Hattie. Her attempt to poison Hattie reflects the extent to which the figure at a psychic level will go to, to protect the core of the individual's personal spirit even to the misguided extent of killing the host personality. All seems hopeless but Hattie, almost at the point of death, is able to summon her inner strength and, calling on Sam, the true witchlike character of Milly is unmasked leading to her banishment and the scene is set for the couple to live "happily ever after"

The dangers of the psychotherapeutic process for the therapist working with the severely traumatised individual are vividly illustrated by the perils faced by Charles who is also almost killed in the process. Kalsched noted 'unlike the usual analytic patient, we must remember that for a person carrying around a dissociated trauma experience, integration or "wholeness" is usually experienced as the worst thing imaginable'.(1996:26) Charles as the

therapist in *Under Capricorn* with his essential goodness and belief that he can restore Hattie to her rightful place in the world, and ultimately Sam to a renewed sense of life, illustrates how such a commitment can be ultimately transformative in persuading a person to forsake the dark protection of the self-care system. Sam and Hattie now redeemed can make their lives anew in their world, no longer fettered by the illusions of the past. The world has not changed, Sir Richard and what he represents as Governor remains, but their relationship to this world will no longer be fettered by the bonds of the past.

The process of transformation undergone by Sam, Hattie and Charles, now results in a renewed sense of wholeness. The light and dark triangles when interlaced and encircled, form a symbol of completeness and perfect being, bringing together the dark and light sides of the psyche. In *Under Capricorn*, Sam and Hattie, with the lifting of the spell of enchantment cast over Minyago Yungilla, once more, find life and true relationship.

Hitchcock, in *Under Capricorn* has given us a very rich drama of human suffering illustrating that the integrity of the personal spirit, with the support of those around us who wish us well, can be found anew and guide us once more on our journey through our

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***UNDER CAPRICORN* AND HELEN DE GUERRY SIMPSON**

Edward Gallafent

The literary origins of *Under Capricorn* are straightforward. The film was based on a novel of the same name by Helen Simpson, an author little read and largely forgotten in 2020, whose name probably survives for film scholars as the source of this film and one other, Basil Dearden's *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (1948) also based on a Simpson novel. And it might be assumed that the romance elements of Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn*, its account of an incipient love affair dissolved to allow the restoration of the bond between husband and wife, are a product of the kind of female novelist we might assume Simpson to have been. That is, one offering the excitements of passions set in exotic situations, but a writer whose melodramas conclude with happy, if not radical, resolutions, based on a positive attitude to marriage. But the case is not so straightforward.

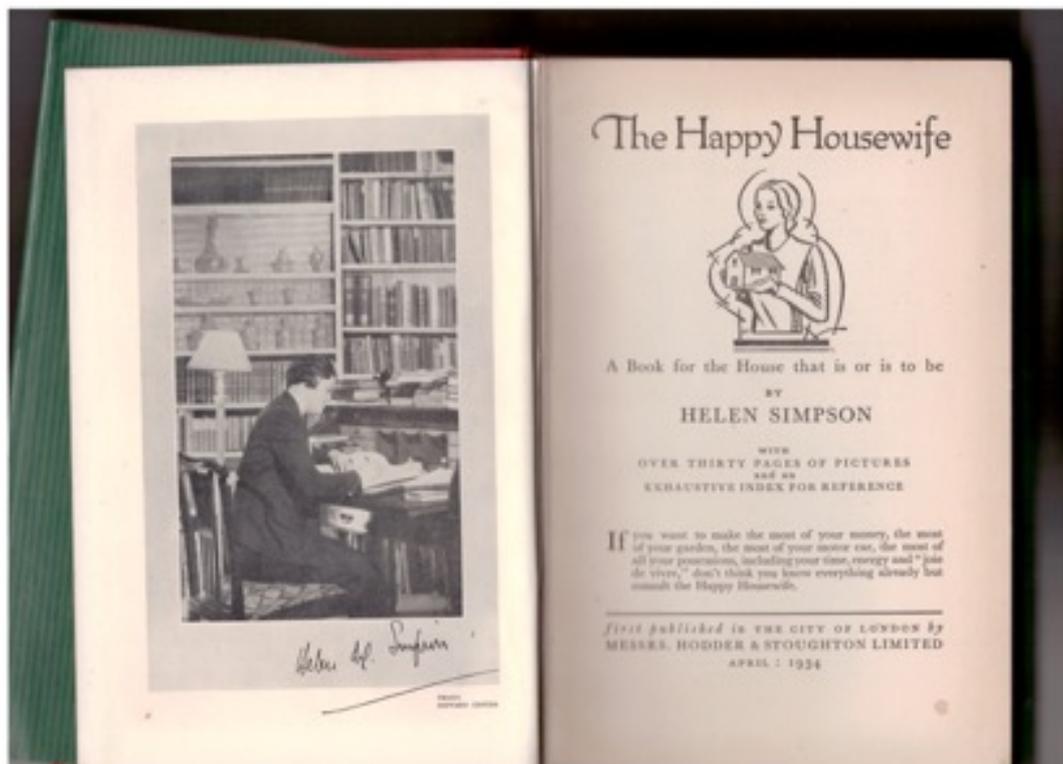
I am not going to explore the detail of the ways in which Simpson's *Under Capricorn* relates to Hitchcock's film, as this is comprehensively covered in Doug Pye's discussion of the adaptation of the novel in this collection. What I want to do is to put *Under Capricorn* in context by looking at Simpson's other writing, and tracing some of the elements which appear repeatedly in her work.

Before looking at this, I want to bring Helen Simpson out of her current obscurity by laying out some of her background. Simpson was from an upper class and well-heeled family, with aristocratic French origins. She was essentially a woman of the twentieth century, born in 1897. Although she was Australian and spent her childhood there, she left that country to come to Europe around 1914 and studied at Oxford during the years of the first world war. She returned to Australia at intervals, but the majority of the rest of her life was spent in England, where she died. Hers was largely a London life; she lived in Queen Anne Street and during World War Two in a flat at Great Ormond Street hospital, where her husband was a surgeon.

She was a woman with a remarkable multiplicity of skills, interests and achievements. She was a much admired novelist, particularly in the 1930s for a group of five literary novels,

several of which I shall discuss: *Boomerang* (1932), *The Woman on the Beast* (1933), *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (1935), *Under Capricorn* (1937) and *Maid no More* (1940).

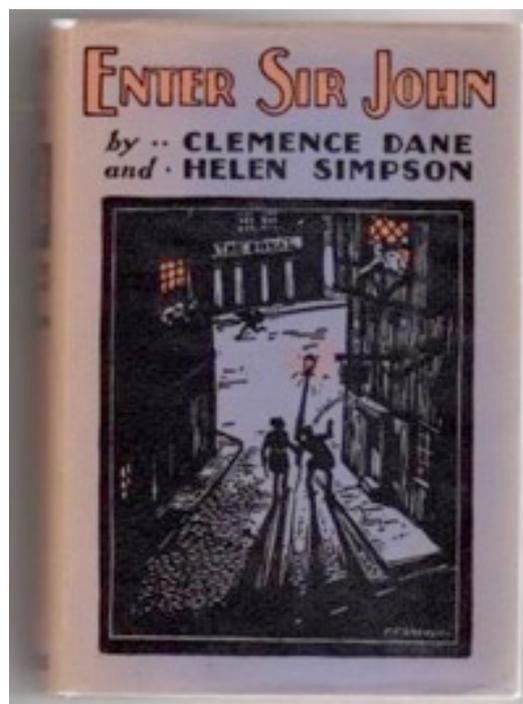
She also produced a wide range of writing apart from the novels: non-fiction, drama, two biographies, translations. She was very much a public figure: a radio broadcaster, a social commentator and an outspoken opponent of censorship in the run up to the war. She was an accomplished musician, a celebrated cook who broadcast extensively for the BBC on cookery. Selected in 1938 as a parliamentary candidate (the liberal candidate for the Isle of Wight), she might have become an MP but the outbreak of World War Two caused that general election to be cancelled. One interest which can be related to *Under Capricorn* is that she was fascinated by domestic order, the smooth or otherwise running of a home, sufficiently so to have published a domestic bible: *The Happy Housewife* (1934) a substantial, comprehensive how-to book specifically addressed to women, on the running of a household.



(Men only really appear in it when she is discussing invalids). Finally, an interesting note when we think about her relation to Hitchcock, is that she was, true to her French roots, a Catholic.

I want briefly to outline the relation between Helen Simpson and Hitchcock. Donald Spoto in his biography comments that ‘Hitchcock knew Simpson socially and professionally’ (Spoto 1983: 295) , but he says nothing else about the former, so what I will concentrate on is the professional connection.

The connection begins in 1928, with the publication of *Enter Sir John*, a detective novel jointly written by two women, Simpson and Clemence Dane.

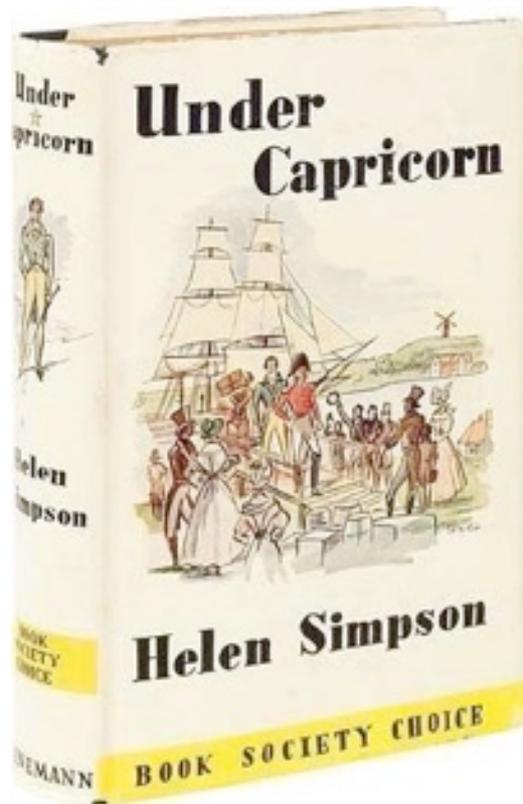


It is part of a strand of Simpson’s early work in which the crime story was a co-operative enterprise, either co-written as here or in collective publications by the group of crime writers who formed the basis of the Detective Club, which included figures such as Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie. It appears that *Enter Sir John* was quite successful. It was originally published as a serial in Nash’s Magazine, then separately in book form in the UK, Canada and the US, and sufficiently exploitable for an Italian translation of it to appear in 1932. And Hitchcock’s film adaptation of it, under the title *Murder!* appeared in 1930.



The next point of professional contact is 1936, when Helen Simpson and the writer known as Ian Hay were employed by Hitchcock as dialogue writers for *Sabotage*. According to Charles Barr in *English Hitchcock*, this was her only screenwriting credit (Barr 1999: 237). What connects these two moments is the issue of collaboration, first with Dane and then with Hay. This limits what we can say about her work in the sense that we cannot know what the different contributions were.

The final element of the connection, and the only one which relates to a sole authored book, begins with the publication of *Under Capricorn* in the following year, 1937.



We then have to wind forward seven years to 1944, when the story editor Margaret McDonell, heavily involved with a number of earlier Hitchcock films especially in the Selznick period, sent Hitchcock *Under Capricorn* and a copy of an unpublished play derived from it¹. Hitchcock bought the dramatic rights for the sum of one dollar in 1945.(Spoto 1983: 308) The price paid possibly reflects the fact that Hitchcock was buying the rights from a literary estate: Helen Simpson had died of cancer five years earlier, at the age of 42, in October 1940.

I will turn now to the group of books I mentioned earlier, starting with *Boomerang*.



Boomerang was by no means a first book; if we include the ones co-written with Clemence Dane it was Simpson's seventh novel. Yet it was a crucial point in her career. It won the James Tait Black prize, awarded by the University of Edinburgh. Winners in the decade leading up to her award in 1932 had included E.M. Forster, Radclyffe Hall and J.B. Priestley.

It is a long, ambitious novel (506 pages in its first edition), partly an adventure story and partly a family saga, very loosely modelled on Simpson's own family history. It effectively begins at the close of the 18th century with the exiling from France of its young hero. The narrator, Clotilde Boissy, is the grand-daughter of this hero. She tells us the story of her grandparents and then parents, and becomes the central figure of the book's second half. *Boomerang* has a massive geographical range, moving from France to a small French colonial Island, then to Australia, to England, back to Australia, and finally back to England again before returning to the same part of France from which it started, appropriately enough given the title. But within this structure there's a significant change of tone. The first half, roughly the part which deals with the nineteenth century and with Clotilde's ancestors, could be thought of as an adventure story, essentially a mildly ironic swashbuckler. The second half tells the story of a

young woman's attachments and aversions early in the last century (Clotilde is 15 in 1900). And it ends with a landscape that massively contrasts with everything that has gone before; trench warfare in the Somme in the winter of 1916.

There are two elements of the novel that I want to stress. One is the striking degree of violent death. The book begins with a long episode in its island colonial world, which is then totally obliterated by a massive Tsunami, killing all 40,000 souls. It ends with a landscape where the premise is that death is so likely as to be more or less inevitable. The death of the final male protagonist, killed in action in the Somme is the event that closes the novel.

Both major and minor figures die violently or prematurely. There are drownings, shootings, a heart attack, two throat cuttings, a character whose neck is fatally snapped in a fight, a felon whose judicial punishment consists of being trampled to death by a bull. Then there are characters who are doomed by disease, dying from tuberculosis or asthma. While many of these figures are male, two women die violently at the hands of men in the first 100 pages of the novel.

We might expect that one of the subjects that could be posed against all this violence is romance, but this brings me to the novel's other striking quality, its treatment of love, which can at best be described as ironic, and its consistently negative attitude to marriage.

This treatment is established through two marriages early in the text, in which the men in question simply propose to the first marriageable woman they see. After the second occurrence of this behavior, Simpson allows her narrator a comment on it:

..it was a family trait, a laziness, an unwillingness to spend much time securing women..... They took no trouble over women at all, win or lose, and the result was that their wives married them angrily for money or pique, and stayed with them, simmering down gradually through neglect to a passionate gratitude for not being interfered with, which served as well as love. (Simpson 1932: 67)

This cool note is echoed in comments on marriage as the novel proceeds:

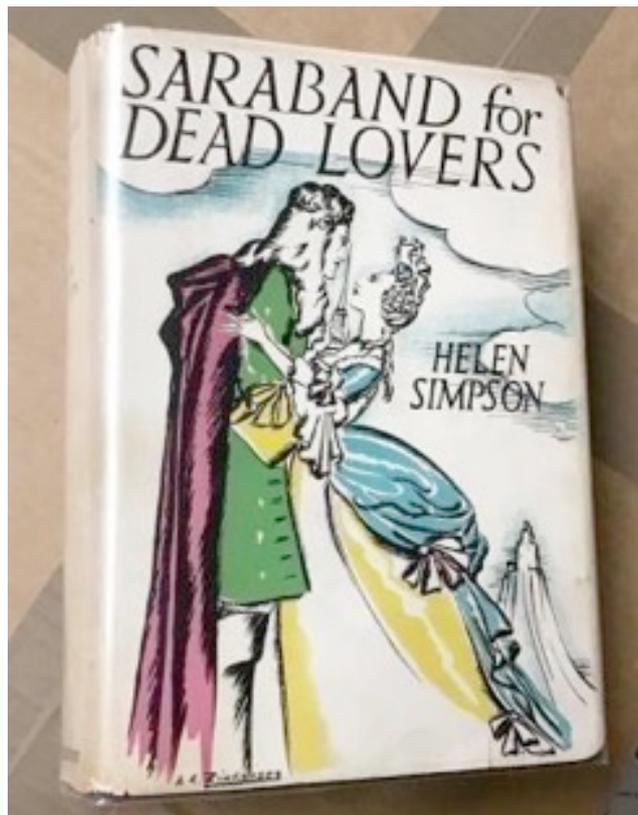
'the deadly possibilities of every marriage.'

‘The full misery of honeymoons has never yet been told, and can now only be lightly touched upon’.

‘Marriage had made of her no more than the shadow of a woman....’

‘ I was sorry for him and fond of him, and the everyday way of showing it just didn’t occur to me, because in my heart I did not want him to touch me and turned sick at the very thought that he should.’(Clotilde here is talking about her husband). (Simpson 1932: 19, 77-8, 136, 457)

Where passion does occur, it is in disastrous contexts: the adolescent Clotilde falls in love with a much older woman who turns out to be a confidence trickster and a criminal, and at the very end of the novel she falls for much younger man, an officer who is killed in action in its final pages.



I will turn now to *Saraband for Dead Lovers*². Here Simpson sets the attitudes that I’ve been identifying in *Boomerang* in a different context. It’s a much shorter book, with a more

concise timeframe covering a few years, and a single geographical setting, the pocket states of Germany in the late seventeenth century.

The other apparent shift is from largely private life and provincial life in *Boomerang*, to military and political life in *Saraband*. Its world is mostly confined to the court of Hanover; the principal characters are the rulers, the dukes, duchesses, their offspring or consorts, princes and princesses, and the other two crucial elements of any such court, mistresses and spies.

This is a world in which marriage, far from being the oddly casual matter that we find in *Boomerang*, is now treated exclusively as a public arrangement through which the powerful can gain political advantage. Its private qualities become completely irrelevant; all that matters for such marriages is the production of legitimate heirs. So what connects this to the earlier novel is that here is another, different context that generates a view of marriage that is entirely negative.

Simpson establishes the mood of the novel via the quotations from Thomas Otway's 1682 play *Venice Preserv'd* that serve as headings to each of its three acts, invoking the pervasively grim world of seventeenth century restoration tragedy. The central figure is an aristocratic young woman, Sophia-Dorothea, who is married off at sixteen to George, a Hanoverian prince. That this prince is a horror in more or less every respect is generally admitted, but nobody, including his parents, has the slightest interest in that fact. Nor are they interested in the qualities of Sophia-Dorothea, other than assuming that her youth and good looks will sufficiently stimulate the prince's lust and thus provide the necessary heirs. This proves true, although in a moment which anticipates the death of Hattie's brother in *Under Capricorn*, the aftermath of the wedding invokes not hymeneal blood, but a scenario of male bloodshed: the bride 'bit him in the fleshy part of his hand so fiercely that she felt the blood come up under her teeth' (Simpson 1935: 71). Four years pass: Sophia-Dorothea has given birth to two children, and the prince has duly found other women to amuse himself with.

Romance now comes into this brutal world, in the form of a generic character, Konigsmark, a handsome young officer. In an adroit piece of plotting, Simpson makes Konigsmark the love-interest of not one but two women. One of these is the lonely Sophia-

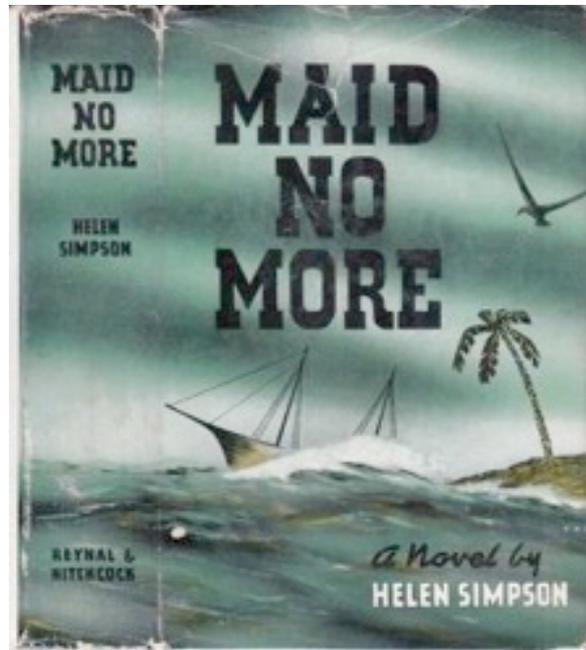
Dorothea, the other an older and much more powerful figure, the Duke's mistress, the Countess Platen. Through Platen Simpson successfully articulates the frustration and humiliation of a woman resentful of her own sexual obsession, desiring a man whom she knows to be drawn to her only by her power.

This is another novel in which passion leads to disaster. We see a deal of romantic business, letters, assignations, but Simpson makes clear how fatally naïve the lovers are to think that they can successfully subvert the system in which they both have fixed parts, and, like their counterparts in restoration tragedy, they completely fail to do so. By the end of the novel Konigsberg is dead, not falling as a soldier fighting valiantly against impossible odds, but killed as a job of work. He is dispatched by a group of hired men set on him in a jealous rage by Platen, men who don't even know who it is that they are killing. The heroine is as good as dead, exiled to the Hanoverian equivalent of Siberia for the remainder of her life, and banned from any contact with her children.

The film of *Saraband for Dead Lovers* departs completely from this mood; no trace of Otway is to be found. It was a prestigious production, marked by being Ealing's first film in colour, with a cast of well-known and experienced stars³ but it adopts the mode of romantic operetta rather than that of tragedy. The result is a conventional romance, achieved by making the military/political world less rigid and crucially less disgusting. Of course it can't manage a happy ending, but it does shift the emphasis given to different elements of the story.

One way it does this is to be found in the film's structure. In the novel, Konigsmark does not appear until one third of the way through the text. In the film, Stewart Granger appears as soon as narratively possible, in minute 18 of its 92 minutes. And the first act of the film, up to the wedding, is focused directly on Sophie Dorothea, whereas in the novel she does not appear until the power-brokers of Hanover have sealed her fate, some 40 or so decisive and deadly pages into the text. There is no interest in the film in presenting the court of Hanover as an unbeatable machine, and more chance to see the lovers as touching and heroic, rather than as helpless victims crushed by a vicious system.

Under Capricorn was the next novel, and I shall return to it, but first I will look at Simpson's remarkable final work, published a few weeks before her death, *Maid no More*⁴.



It is another example, along with *Saraband for Dead Lovers*, of Simpson's penchant for euphonious, elegant titles which are also oddly bland, as if deliberately to belie the degrees of violence and horror contained in the texts.

Maid no More is a tale of seafaring followed by a shipwreck, and describes a love affair, but one entered into almost against the will of both parties, neither of whom are young nor especially innocent. The events are not dated but appear to take place early in the twentieth century; one influence might possibly have been the work of Conrad, and particularly *The Rescue* (1920).

The central part of the story concerns a cargo of slaves who take over the vessel that is their prison and run it aground on an uninhabited island. Here Simpson can explore questions of what can constitute a functional society, ideas of power, authority, work and leisure, violence, and the direction / containment of sexual impulses. This feels familiar; it is hard not to see the novel as a harsh response to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The cast consists of the male lover, a kind of Prospero (a scholar and a man with an understanding of wizardry), the female lover (a

countrywoman who has become an itinerant preacher), two other white men from the ship's crew (a Trinculo and Stephano), a woman of colour over whom they quarrel, and a largely undifferentiated group of negro ex-slaves.

We will recall that in *The Tempest*, the shipwrecked vessel is made magically new, the lovers are united, and significantly nobody has to die. But Simpson's novel insists again on the connection between passion and death, taking it to a further extreme. By the closing stages the man of the couple is already dead, casually killed in hopeless combat with a group of soldiers who have invaded the island looking for slaves. Of the two other significant white males, one kills the other, and the victor is killed by the soldiers. The rest of the cast -- the ex-slaves, the female lover, the woman of colour -- reboard their ship, here described as 'A dead ship, swollen and oozing' (Simpson 1940: 309) which then sinks in a huge storm, drowning the entire company.

When passion leads to disaster in Simpson's novels, sometimes the woman survives (or at least lives), but the man usually dies. If we look at the novel *Under Capricorn* in the light of this structure, we find that it is an exception, in fact a uniquely positive book for Simpson, but one that does have connections with the other work. The event which puts the plot in motion is again one of passion leading to bloodshed, here Hattie's marriage to Flusky climaxing in her shooting of her brother on the morning after the marriage-night. So again a man dies, and although the lovers survive, the larger effect is to produce a cursed marriage, one that cannot revive itself.

One reason that this marriage is so difficult to rebuild is not the matter of who shot Hattie's brother (a minor matter in the novel, made into a more important element of the film, as Doug Pye explains). It is another subplot, strongly present in both book and film, which yet again turns on a highly negative image of marriage and the longing for it. Milly's relation to Flusky is offered throughout in terms of a warped desire for *marriage*, for the position of his wife -- never his mistress -- something for which she is prepared to commit murder. The damaged marriage of Flusky and Hattie can be re-established only when Milly, with her sad, carefully attentive act as Flusky's would-be wife, has been dislodged.

To conclude: I have tried to bring out in this essay the argument that the view of marriage as more often a problem than a solution, and alongside it the close connection between acts of marriage and scenes of bloodshed, were recurrent elements of Helen Simpson's work. As Doug Pye shows, Hitchcock did change a number of elements in Simpson's original, but, unlike the adaptation of *Saraband for Dead Lovers*, the film of *Under Capricorn* does preserve elements that reflect Simpson's view of the world. Indeed it could even be argued that Simpson's novel, which includes a benign love story between two young people, is more of a departure from her other work than Hitchcock's film, which preserves Milly's subplot and erases this love story. Had Helen Simpson lived longer, it is possible that she would have enjoyed Hitchcock's version of her world on screen.

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Notes

¹The unpublished play was by Margaret Linden and John Colton. (Spoto 1983 : 308).

² I shall refer to this as *Saraband* hereafter. The film also seems to have been variously known by Simpson's full title, and as *Saraband*.

³ The film starred Stewart Granger as Konigsmark, Joan Greenwood as Sophie Dorothea, Flora Robson as Countess Platen and Françoise Rosay as the Duchess.

⁴ *Maid no More* was published in the US by Reynal and Hitchcock, and in the UK by William Heinemann. The review in *Kirkus Reviews* July 1 1940 gives the publication date of the American edition as July 12, three months before Simpson's death on 14 October. See <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/a/helen-simpson-4/maid-no-more/> for the short, positive review.

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Under Capricorn and *The Paradine Case*:

Adaptation and Convergence

Douglas Pye

The Paradine Case (1947) and *Under Capricorn* (1949) sit on either side of a major divide in Hitchcock's career: his final film under the contract with David O. Selznick that had brought him to Hollywood; and what was intended to be his first film for Transatlantic Pictures, the independent production company he had established with Sidney Bernstein. As it turned out, Ingrid Bergman proved unavailable for an early start on *Under Capricorn* and *Rope* (1948) became Transatlantic's first release, but preparatory work on the film overlapped with production of *The Paradine Case*.

It is this proximity that seems to have led to the two films becoming rather surprising companion pieces, very much in dialogue despite the stark difference in their production circumstances, with Hitchcock working out his contract on a project over which Selznick exercised tight control (Spoto 1983: 294 -297) while planning a new start that would free him to go his own way. In the way these things happen with Hitchcock, other links backwards and forwards also emerge, from *Rebecca* to *Vertigo*. Seen together, the two films appear particularly significant in the evolution of several key Hitchcock concerns.

In his paper, Ed Gallafent describes how Helen Simpson's novel was brought to Hitchcock's attention. Patrick McGilligan asks what might have led him to chose it as Transatlantic's first picture:

What was it that attracted Hitchcock to the idea of filming *Under Capricorn*, the novel set in Australia by Helen Simpson? Was it that the rights were inexpensive [...]? Was it the subject's inherent interest to English moviegoers, balancing *Rope* which Hitchcock had reshaped to appeal to American audiences? Or was it that Hitchcock had a soft spot for the author, who had contributed to *Murder* and *Sabotage*? (McGilligan 2003: 416)

One major factor must surely have been Ingrid Bergman: in Lady Henrietta Flusky the novel offered the kind of role that could appeal to the film's major star. But it's also intriguing to speculate whether Hitchcock's initial attraction might have been linked to his preparatory work on *The Paradine Case*, adapted from Robert Hichens' 1933 novel. The two books are markedly different in genre and setting – Hichens' a legal drama set largely in contemporary London,

Simpson's a gothic melodrama set in 1830s colonial Australia – but there is also substantial common ground. The cultural context and action of each are dominated by British social hierarchies, so that there's a basic continuity of concern with class, power and gender relationships in those contrasting settings. Marriage is also central to each; and in both a premise of the story is a woman whose actions challenged the traditional social and moral order of British society and led to her killing a man.

These common concerns provide a vital basis for the more detailed relationships between the films that emerged in the successive adaptations of the novels as a result of very significant, though asymmetrical, changes to each.

Following Ed Gallafent's discussion of Helen Simpson, I'll begin – out of chronology – with *Under Capricorn*. It's a reworking that retained the basis of the story, including the events of the past, Hattie's present incapacity and Milly's role in it, but changed the structure, relationships and some episodes of the novel very dramatically.

Under Capricorn

The novel.

- i) We learn that the young Irishman, Charles Adare, is 20 when he arrives in Australia and the disparity between his age and Lady Henrietta Flusky's is emphasised (she is over 40).
- ii) Adare sets himself the task of bringing Henrietta (Hattie) back to life, as it were, to take on her household role and her place in society. But he makes it clear that he is not in love with her.
- iii) In the early stages of their friendship Hattie tells Adare that she murdered her brother but Sam Flusky took the blame and paid for it by being transported to Australia.
- iv) Adare then meets and begins to fall for a young woman, Sue Quaife, daughter of the local barber (previously the colony hangman). They meet in the margins of the St Patrick's Day ball in the town – not the Governor's ball of the film but an event that Adare has helped arrange to reintroduce Hattie to society. Adare and Sue then form a parallel cross-class couple to Flusky and Hattie.
- v) Adare goes away for several months on an expedition for gold and is removed completely for much of the second half of the book.
- vi) During Adare's absence but at his request in a letter he left to be delivered after six months, Hattie seeks out Sue and takes her to live in her house as a companion.

- vii) Hattie also tells Sue that she, not Sam Flusky, killed Hattie's brother.
- viii) Adare is discovered very ill in the outback but is brought back to Sydney; he recovers, and he and Sue become engaged. When they return to the Flusky house together, they're welcomed by both Hattie and Sam; there's a showdown with Milly, who is exposed and leaves.
- ix) Hattie's confession is never made public and the novel ends shortly after the Governor lays the foundation stone for a Mechanics Institute that Flusky will finance.

The film.

- i) A significant age difference between Adare and Hattie is also a given of the film, but the casting certainly doesn't emphasize it: Michael Wilding is definitely not 20. Although he's perfectly plausible as younger than Hattie, he was actually 37 when *Under Capricorn* was made, three years older than Ingrid Bergman.
- ii) The nature of Adare's involvement with Hattie is significantly changed: here he is increasingly set on restoring her to her former *class* position (as Lady Henrietta *Considine* – he even uses her maiden name), and ultimately wants to take her away from Flusky (Joseph Cotten). We might debate whether he falls in love with her but his behaviour is at times emphatically not 'respectful', to use Hattie's term. Suspicion of their adultery becomes a key dimension of the film.
- iii) Sue is completely cut from the film.
- iv) Adare does not go prospecting but is present throughout.
Then a great deal more was invented for the film, including:
- v) The ball for Hattie's reintroduction to society is retained but it becomes the Governor's Ball, with Flusky's jealous interruption at the moment of Hattie's social triumph.
- vi) There's no mention of Hattie's guilt before the scene that follows the ball, which begins with Adare using Flusky's behaviour to demand that Hattie leaves him, and leads to Hattie's confession that it was she who shot her brother. In that very long speech, shot in a single take of over eight minutes, she affirms her commitment to Sam Flusky and their marriage and exposes Adare's class-based failure of understanding.
- vii) Adare being shot and nearly dying.
- viii) Hattie's confession to the Governor and the threat to take her back to Ireland to stand trial.
- ix) Milly (Margaret Leighton) being exposed when Hattie screams for Sam from the

bedroom after seeing her hiding the terrifying shrunken head and poisoning the medicine.

x) The demand for Flusky to corroborate Hattie's story of her guilt and his subsequent arrest for shooting Adare.

xi) Adare arriving from his sick bed in time to say the shooting was an accident.

xii) Adare leaving Australia, with Hattie and Flusky reunited on the quay.

It's a very substantial transformation of the original. Only the Milly dimension of the story remains largely unchanged – parts are redistributed but many of her scenes from the book remain in one form or another. What's notable when we juxtapose the two films is that one effect of the major changes that emerged from the processes of adaptation was to bring *Under Capricorn* strikingly into alignment with aspects of *The Paradine Case* as it had emerged from the adaptation of Hichens' novel.

In outline most of the film closely follows the novel. Sir Malcolm Keane, a distinguished Q.C., takes on the defence of Mrs. Paradine, who is accused of poisoning her husband, Col. Paradine, a distinguished soldier blinded in the Great War. His gradual obsession with Mrs. Paradine (he falls in love with her) puts increasing strain on his wife, Gay, and their marriage. Keane is determined to prove that Mrs. Paradine is innocent. He initially plans to argue in court that Col. Paradine's valet – William Marsh in the book, Andre Latour in the film – helped Col. Paradine to commit suicide but in cross-examination he begins to insinuate that Marsh poisoned the Colonel.

The changes for the film are less dramatic than in *Under Capricorn* but the final movements of the drama are changed very significantly.

The Paradine Case

The novel

i) When Keane visits Mrs. Paradine in the cells after a day in court, she turns on him for trying to incriminate Marsh. She then admits that she loves Marsh and had confessed their adultery to her husband. She's adamant that Keane must not spare her at Marsh's expense but Keane tells her that in order to save her he must persist.

ii) Keane knows after this exchange – though doesn't say – that Mrs. Paradine must be guilty. In court, as part of her defence, she tells a different story, of Marsh trying to make love to her.

iii) Marsh has given evidence earlier but is in court during Mrs. Paradine's questioning by

Keane; he leaps up to deny that he had made sexual advances to her. He is then recalled as a witness and admits their adultery.

iv) The trial proceeds to its conclusion, Keane gives a masterly speech for the defence, there's a long summing-up by the judge, Lord Horfield, and a verdict of guilty. Mrs Paradine speaks only one line of accusation to Keane: simply, 'It is his fault'.

v) Keane is under enormous pressure throughout because of his personal involvement in the case, and it is suggested by other characters that he is on the edge of a breakdown – even that he might break down in court – but he completes the defence.

vi) After the case it is reported that he has given up the law and that the couple are going abroad. There are no further scenes between Keane and Gay.

The film

i) Under pressure of Keane's (Gregory Peck) questioning and his accusation that he tried to make love to Mrs. Paradine (Alida Valli), Latour (Louis Jourdan) admits their adultery and leaves the court in some distress.

ii) During her evidence Mrs. Paradine – refusing to allow Keane to blame Latour – begins to incriminate herself. There is an adjournment and when the court resumes the next day, news arrives that Latour has committed suicide.

iii) Mrs. Paradine is distraught and admits that she loved Latour and killed her husband so that they could be together. She then accuses Keane of murdering Latour and asserts her hatred and contempt for him. Keane is unable to continue his final speech and leaves the court.

v) There's a final scene between Keane and Gay (Ann Todd) – a rather uneasy scene of reconciliation, a tentative remaking of the marriage. Keane's impulse is to give everything up and Gay is gently trying to talk him out of leaving the law. She says, rather charmingly, that she 'wants him back on the job as soon as possible'.

The two adaptations retain a number of the parallel aspects of the books but develop some and introduce others to produce further striking convergence. The main elements can be schematically represented.

i) The questioning and re-making of a marriage.

ii) A woman guilty of a killing.

iii) An upper class male protagonist who falls for and becomes obsessed by the woman.

iv) In both, though for different reasons, the woman is silent about her crime. v) The male

protagonist largely dominates our access to her and he becomes, or attempts to be, the interpreter of her story.

v) The woman's confession, which is added in the adaptation of *The Paradine Case* and completely transformed in *Under Capricorn*. It's the moment in which she breaks her silence – with huge consequences.

vi) As part of her confession the woman also asserts her love for a man other than the male protagonist.

Both films are concerned with who it is that has the standing and power in these societies to speak authoritatively, or with the appearance of authority: essentially, in both these are upper-class men who in effect insist that they can speak for the woman. The films, though, present the drama of a woman who has had to be silent but who finally claims her voice and reclaims her story.

In each, then, what the male protagonist attempts goes very badly wrong – his claim to superior knowledge and insight, rooted in his class position, is utterly demolished. Patrick McGilligan tells us that Hitchcock was very uncertain how to end *The Paradine Case*. When the idea of Mrs Paradine confessing in court came up, with the inevitable focus on Keane's public defeat and humiliation, Hitchcock wrote to James Bridie: 'Do you think this could be written without making Keane too much of an ass?' (McGilligan 2003: 388). Hitchcock was clearly uneasy but as it turned out a central thrust of both adaptations was indeed to make asses (to say the least) of the central male figures.

In their confessions the women definitively refuse what the men want them to be. One significant feature of the two films in the evolution of Hitchcock's interests is this emphasis on the man as a kind of self-deceived obsessive who attempts to impose on the woman an identity other than her own. They're like early versions of the story and the processes of story telling which are definitively expressed in *Vertigo*.

.....

The material condition for the relationships between the films was of course the intersection of the two projects at that significant moment in Hitchcock's career. But what I've wanted to argue is that the intersection produced something more intimate and significant. Planning for Transatlantic Pictures had been going on since 1945 but in April 1946 news of the proposed new company

appeared in the press and *Under Capricorn* was announced as its first production (McGilligan 387), while *The Paradine Case* was still in its early stages. When the detailed work on the script of *Under Capricorn* began in the spring of 1948, after the premiere of *The Paradine Case* in December 1947 and the end of shooting on *Rope*, it was far from straightforward. McGilligan evokes quite a fraught process:

‘... the second half of the story’, he writes, ‘remained thin and lumpy; its sole interest derived from a jealous housekeeper. The story had no real crescendo, so ultimately the writing team turned its attention to the love triangle of Flusky, Lady Flusky and Adare, conjuring a violent altercation in which a gun is fired accidentally, Adare nearly dies, and Flusky is brought to the brink of arrest, scandal and ruin’ (McGilligan 2003: 418-419).

It was in this process of trying to find a way through seemingly intractable story problems that the recent experience of *The Paradine Case* must surely have come into play.

Note

This paper draws on aspects of my 2004 article ‘In and Around *The Paradine Case*: Control, Confession and the Claims of Marriage’. <http://www.rouge.com.au/4/paradine.html>

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Between P and B, Past and the Bottle:

On Ingrid Bergman's acting in Alfred Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn*

Tytti Soila

The film begins with an image of a map, a common feature in the 40s cinematic storytelling. It, and a shrunken head spooking in the lives of the main characters stand as a kind of metaphor for the relationship between the colonized continent and the ruling powers. The head may also be understood as a symbol for the secrets harbored by the leading female character, Lady Henrietta Flusky, played by Ingrid Bergman. It, namely might be understood as a Dorian Greyish portrait of her life. When Lady Henrietta appears in the picture for the first time, she wears a flower in her hair, and the similar kind of flower is attached to the shrunken head. Also, in several pivotal scenes the skull and lady Henrietta's head are juxtaposed close to each other as in a mirror. But the distorted skull may be even perceived as a theatre mask – a sign for a persona performed – and the character development may be understood as a reflection on acting, disguise and performance.

Below, my aim is to discuss the acting style of Ingrid Bergman as it appears in *Under Capricorn*. In the many stories wrapped around Bergman's public persona, a distinguishing feature is one-liners such as "It is not whether you really cry. It's whether the audience thinks you are crying", or stories of how she was told to keep a blank face when insecure of how to express certain feelings. In order to understand her interpretation of the role and the method to achieve it, a walk through the early Swedish theatre and cinema history might be of help.

Sweden, Finland – and Russia

As in many other contexts, it is of value to remember that Sweden has been a small country with confined and heterogeneous cultural sphere, practice and audiences. This means, for instance, that while in Hollywood and in other larger cinema cultures, an actor's education focusing film acting was an established institution already during the silent era. In Sweden, with its small market, the actors and directors in film industry were recruited from theater stages still in the mid-50s. A sort of a breach in acting style may however be distinguished after the middle of 1930s, due to an explosive growth of film production that opened up for artists from lesser stages as well as a generation of younger actors and amateurs.

The central base for education for stage, and later, for the screen namely was the Acting School of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, established at the end of 18th century by the King Gustaf III. It appeared as the dominating, the best and oldest institution that set the standards. One might say that still during the 1940s, the common understanding was that there was no need to chance the style of acting established by a king. This was a European manner of performance, governed by mannerism and conventions established on the, say, 17th century French and Italian stages. It was a style familiar throughout the western world, based on posture, modulation of voice and sophisticated gesture. It was a style that we may see preserved to the posterity in the Swedish films until late 30s and 40s. (1) During the latter half of the century it became harshly criticized by the younger generations of audiences asking for more realistic acting in cinema, informed by the intimate relationship between the camera and the actor. In the background there were discussions arisen by the Italian Neorealism and French New Wave.

In the early days of 20th century in Sweden there did exist even a popular, folksy tradition of entertainment practiced by touring companies. They were the late heirs of early European mime and pantomime troupes. Out of necessity, the stage action demanded improvisation, too, as the touring companies had to adapt to different facilities under their tours. But the acting style even in such companies were regulated according to the traditions of their specific genre: overstated mimics and gestures combined with loud voices. In the kingdom of Sweden such a style was not much appreciated by the recently established middle class of the 20th century – nor in the Swedish speaking population of larger cities in Finland.

Thus, the two theatrical institutions existed side by side, one in the established buildings with permanent ensembles and bourgeois audiences, the other populated by touring companies on the folksy entertainment scenes, “Folk Park houses” for the rural audiences. Beside these two schools a third category might be considered, namely the theatre tradition in Finland under the rule of Russia, but strongly connected to the idea of independence and endorsement of the national language. Sweden and Finland have a long common history. Finland was part of Sweden for many hundred years and there was a considerable Swedish speaking minority in the country at the turn of last century. Swedish touring theater companies and single actors visited the Swedish theatres in Helsinki and other coastal places where the language was spoken. However, the Finnish speaking theatre directors turned their backs to Swedish manner of theatre, looking for inspiration and example from the contemporary avant-garde stages in Germany and Russia. Thus for instance the leading lady of Finnish stages Ida Aalberg, travelled in Russia, Baltic countries and Germany to acquire further training. (2)

Aalberg worked with and was greatly influenced by the Duke of Meiningen who had developed a new experimental style of acting influenced by Konstantin Stanislavsky, the Russian theoretician, actor and critic, and whose theories later would form the concept of Method Acting in the US. Stanislavsky even visited Aalberg in Helsinki 1905, and her Russian speaking husband with others became interested in his ideas and applied them in their work in Helsinki and Turku. (3)

There, the professional Swedish actors met with their Finnish colleagues and exchanged new ideas on art and culture – and especially the new medium of cinema. Among others, Victor Sjöström (Seastrom) and the famous Molander family lived and worked in Finland. Mauritz Stiller –next to Sjöström the most distinguished silent film director in Sweden– was actually born and raised in Helsinki and acted in a few supporting roles before moving to Sweden. Among the most celebrated visiting Swedish stars in Helsinki was Karin Swanström, later the artistic director of Svensk Filmindustri, the largest film production company in Sweden.

Way to stardom

In the story of Ingrid Bergman, Karin Swanström plays an important part. She was an unwavering person with a firm opinion about acting. After her return to Sweden she established a touring company of her own and travelled around for two decades. Besides folksy comedies, she introduced classic plays in the Swedish countryside. But perhaps more interesting is that she educated a number of actors outside the domain of the Dramatic Theatre. These actors were later to be very successful on stage as well as in film. It is not far-fetched to assume that together with the readiness to improvise, the Stanislavsky's ideas learned in Finland did inform the acting of Swanström, her disciples and her peers. Because naturally, Swanström was not the only one to create a change of style in film. *An Actor prepares* was translated into Swedish in 1944, and the Stanislavskian ideas finally reached the Dramatic Theatre as well.

Yet, Karin Swanström was one of the influential persons within the film industry at the time. She had directed a handful of films in the 20s, but the entire branch was in a shaky state and the box office turnouts were not good. Even Svensk Filmindustri was at the verge of bankruptcy, and reorganization became necessary. The desperate owners turned to Swanström and offered her a position as the artistic director of the company, a position she would hold a decade, until her 70th birthday.

Karin Swanström's experience on acting, actors and popular repertoire was inexhaustible and on par with the new conditions. She would appear in a large number of films during the 30s herself, and work close to many directors; especially an old friend from Helsinki-

period, Gustaf Molander. Now and then she would personally—out of an interest of her own, or doing somebody a favor—recruit new aspiring actors for film.

Young Ingrid Bergman was a student at the School of Acting at the Dramatic Theatre but yearned for film. Her family had contacts, and saw to that she was able to meet Mrs Swanström – and the rest is history. Swanström contacted Gustaf Molander, the chief film director who, too, recognized a rare ambition and talent in Bergman and immediately arranged small parts in films for her.

However, the beginning of Ingrid Bergman’s career was not very easy. Critics were not too enthusiastic and wrote that the national film venue already had a Birgit Tengroth and a Birgit Rosengren as “ingenue-types”. So why would the producers insist on presenting yet another theatre school drop-out, they asked. (4) The rivalrous starlets in the corridors of Råsunda studios witnessed later in their autobiographies how they still hated and envied Bergman, hated her privileges –and Swanström who gave her those privileges. (5) Worth noticing is that Ingrid Bergman herself speaks very warmly of Swanström. (6)

As said above, by the end of the 30s, it is possible to discern signs for a new way of acting in front of a camera in Sweden: it was a more subdued, more subtle manner in comparison to the ostentatious mimicry and distinguished pronunciation of the actors of the old school. Ingrid Bergman tells in *My Life* how her private teacher advises her never to be afraid of “large gestures from shoulder and down... but in film, of course, it is quite different”. Even Gustaf Molander who took particular interest in her, advised her to play down, use small gestures and be “quite honest and natural”. Karin Swanström had liked the fact that Bergman was tall (175 cm) and she trained to appear with a controlled stance, her head held high. (7)

Soon enough, Ingrid Bergman was on her way to Hollywood where she became a star. I believe it was not just because of her personality, talent and looks – but also much due to her acting style that she made success. As seen above, she was trained by a number of film directors and producers who were professional actors and had previous experience of the touring companies. Also, her “naturalness”, a feature encouraged by them, possibly made an easy fit with the Hollywood acting style recommended in many instruction books: a low-key performance that that was quite pragmatic at the hectic age of mass production but still came through to the audiences via the all-seeing, magnifying camera lens. Moreover, Hollywood was populated by refugee theatre workers from central Europe, many of whom were acquainted with avant-garde theatre and -culture in their own countries and Bergman’s take on acting came close to precisely such a mode.

Under Capricorn

Alfred Hitchcock and Ingrid Bergman were friends, and *Under Capricorn* was a third Hitchcock film starring Bergman. From the beginning, both knew that their co-operation would be dappled by tantrums. Ingrid Bergman was very opinionated from the very start in her career, and that never changed. Her fourth film *Munkbrogreven* (1935) was directed by a well respected Edvin Adolphson, who at some point said that he believed that Bergman “would go far in her career thanks to her unusual impudence and the way she keeps on criticizing and meddling in the work of the director”.

(8)

Ingrid Bergman has written that an actor has to bring her inner self to use in creating a role in order to become somebody else, but hard work is needed to make the performance credible and real. Today, this is not a very original statement from an actor, but getting back to late 40s, it is a different matter. She had her interpretation of Lady Henrietta’s character clear before they started shooting the film, but Hitchcock was not interested. He wanted to continue developing his ideas of long takes. She did not approve, such a setting made her nervous. In the end of August 1948 she writes in a letter to her friend Ruth Roberts that she has problems with keeping to her role because the camera was following her all over the studio, and the furniture and walls were folding out during the process of shooting. An interesting feature is however, that she actually changed her mind about the idea of long takes later, and writes that in the end it was rewarding to feel the continuity in her character instead of being “chopped into pieces and put together again” as was the case in the traditional shot-countershot editing.

Lady Henrietta – or Hattie, as she also was called – is a woman under distress. The film describes a trajectory of development where Hattie gradually takes control over her life. In the camera use and takes the film might be innovative, but it still follows the pattern of traditional melodrama where the emotional standpoints and tensions are placed “outside” the characters; in music, décor and costumes.

Hattie harbours a frightful secret and a guilt after killing her brother to protect herself, letting her lover to take the blame. Her lover and husband, Sam Flusky (Joseph Cotten) was sentenced to a penalty colony in Australia. To make amends, Hattie had decided to follow him into the exile. However, and in spite of the fact that Sam has been successful in his business, the couple has been shunned by the ruling society in Sydney. Her misery has pulled her into deeper and deeper in alcoholism and drug abuse. She keeps hiding in her room, upstairs in the house. As she appears for the first time in the story, she is clearly intoxicated; acting like a somnambulist; her walk unsteady, eyes half-closed, feet bare. Bergman keeps her eyes half-closed, face slightly lift up – a

characteristic feature for her. She sits down by the table. Her space is confined by two candles in a candlestick. She keeps still, upper arms pressed to her body, but she turns her head slightly as if not being able to control its movements. Throughout the scene she seems to struggle to keep control in spite of her condition.

Such is the initial state where Hattie's development to taking control over her life starts. Gradually, Hattie's secret is revealed for the audience in a process of a "talking cure" as she is prompted by their guest, Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) whom Sam has invited to stay to keep her company. In a later scene, where Hattie remembers and tells parts of her story, her eyes wander from one side to another without her looking at Charles to whom she is talking. Her clothing is dark and her head gear reminds of an old woman. Her changing moods are subdued as they reflect on her face and in a slight rocking movement of her upper body – also that one characteristic feature for Bergman. Her arms are pressed against her sides, only hands are moving.

Hattie's appearance, her exterior self, is improving as the story develops. She wears fancy and fashionable dresses; her hair is done in an elaborate manner. Her confidence is still shaky but slowly, she is reformed. Finally, she lets Charles to take her to a ball where she acts like the gentry woman she has been born to; controlled but radiant, her eyes are shining and her smiles lovely – she lifts her chin in her characteristic manner as if letting the sun warm her face. In the midst Sam turns up, embarrassing her, and she escapes the festivities.

The scene after escape from the ball is the breaking point of the story. It is not interesting only because of its length, but because it is precisely the scene that Bergman writes about when she says that it in the end was a positive experience, not having to cut her monologue into bits and pieces to be edited up later. She tells her story to Charles from the beginning to the end, walking about the room. She hardly rises her voice, her upper arms are still pressed to her sides as she, now and then, underlines her words with a gesture of her hand. She lifts her face up as if she was looking farther away, beyond the walls.

However, at the end of the story, during a confrontation with her husband the Bergmanesque mode is broken as her gestures become ostentatious, she rushes about and her mimics are intense, her voice shrill – but then again, she is fighting for her love.

Aftermath

Between the period when *Under Capricorn* was shot and its release, Ingrid Bergman's life changed totally. She met Roberto Rossellini and while shooting his film *Stromboli* (1950) the couple fell in

love nt in the spring of 1949. Bergman got pregnant and the scandal was uncontrollable, leading all the way to the Senate of the United States of America.

Under Capricorn was released in the US early in December and in Stockholm on Boxing Day in 1949. Following day, a critic of Svenska Dagbladet –one of the most influential dailies in Sweden– writes: “While not being an expert on stellar signs, I still must establish that Alfred Hitchcock, this time, has allowed his film to be born under an unlucky star”. The critic mentions the leading couple of the film only once, stating that they “more or less end up performing themselves in costume” (9). Another critic massacres the film as well, but in doing so he makes an interesting reference to the forthcoming film of Bergman: “How fresh and tempting must *Stromboli* have felt after this stuffy, artificial, glittering misery!”(10) Obviously, the critic refers to Ingrid Bergman’s alleged feelings and the scandal. As Rossellini’s film would not reach the Swedish cinemas until in October 1950, almost a year after the premier of *Under Capricorn*, the critic’s thought reveals how inescapable a back-drop the Bergman-Rossellini liaison was to the reaction of Hitchcock’s film. The revealed scandal became a filter for the reception, alluding that the feelings expressed by Bergman in the breakpoint-scene are her personal feelings for her husband and her lover. Her words: “it is not whether you really cry. It’s whether the audience thinks you are crying” – and in extension one might add: “..and thinks what you are crying for”!

Footnotes:

- 1) Some films of Ingmar Bergman, such as *Smiles of the summer night* and *Sawdust and Tinsels* feature acting at the turn of the 20th century.
- 2) Byckling, L. (2007) ”Ida Aalberg ja Konstantin Stanislavski vuonna 1905: Suomen ja Venäjän teatteriyhteyksiä”. In K. Kalleinen (Ed.), *Venäjä ja Suomi: Juhlakirja professori Timo Vihavaiselle 9.5.2007*. Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki
- 3) Lipponen, T (2018) Alexander Uexkull-Gyllenbladin teatterikäsitys. Akateeminen väitöskirja. Acta Universitas Tamperensis 2389 Tampere university Press, Tampere. p 47-48.
Ida Aalberg’s husband, the theatre director Alexander Uexkull-Gyllenblad and others such as Eino Kalima, became acquainted with Stanislavskijs ideas before systematized his ideas in his famous *An actor prepares*.
- 4) Soila, T. (2019) *Ingrid Bergman*. Svenskt Kvinnobiografiskt lexikon. University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg. <https://skbl.se/en/article/IngridBergman>
- 5) Tengroth, B (1972) *Jag vill ha tillbaka mitt liv*. Bonniers, Stockholm

- 6) Bergman, I. and Burgess, A. (1981) *Ingrid Bergman. Mitt liv*. Norstedts, Stockholm.
This book contains a number of embarrassing mistakes that reveal the fact that she hardly has written parts of the book at all. However, the citations from the diaries should be considered accurate so far.
- 7) Ibid pp50-53.
- 8) Svenska Dagbladet 27 dec 1949.
- 9) Dagens Nyheter 27 dec 1949

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***Under Capricorn* and the Hitchcockian Melodrama of Trauma, Recovery, and Remarriage**

Sidney Gottlieb

Under Capricorn, like many of Hitchcock's best films, and in fact all three of the films that he made with Ingrid Bergman, revolves around the axes of disintegration and reintegration. It is a stunning portrait of (to allude to a later film that glosses it in intriguing ways) a 'woman under the influence' and her uneven and strenuous effort to navigate through and beyond extraordinary pressures: from inside, forces of circumstance, and intimate relationships. The signs of Henrietta's (Ingrid Bergman) disintegration and distress are readily apparent, memorable, and often commented upon. Less so are the signifiers of her recovery, which occur in a roughly linear sequence.

As I move through some of the key images and scenes in the film I'll organise and discuss these signifiers in several categories, which are discrete but also overlapping: changes in the way Henrietta looks and is looked at; her return to visibility, to herself and others; her transition from immobility to animation, passivity to action, including taking control in ways that reflect not coercive power but the restoration of executive functions and compassion; her return to speech, and especially narrativity, that is, the ability to tell and accept her story; her re-entrance into society; and the repair and transformation of her relationship with her husband, through a process that I think qualifies as one of remarriage as outlined in another generic context by Stanley Cavell (1984).

I have several aims in mind in focusing on all this: to be sure that these details and these plots beneath the plot, as it were, are noticed and given proper attention as we analyse the overall design and meaning of the film; to highlight the complexity, subtlety, and artistry but also the accuracy of the presentation of these elements; and also to argue for a particular understanding of what 'recovery' means in the film – the achievement of real health, happiness, mutuality, and self-determination, emphatically not reintegration into or cooptation by an apparatus of conventional structures, codes of conduct, values, and 'rules of the game'.

Recovery from what? In a word: trauma. It is essential to recognise that, as Raymond Bellour points out, 'the question of trauma and of its interpretation' is at the

heart of Hitchcock's films (2007: 254). For Hitchcock trauma is a subject particularly suitable for cinematic representation, dramatization, and analysis, perhaps not least because he identifies it as a fundamental element of human experience, a disturbing fact of life not to be avoided and not to be forgotten. In Hitchcockian terms, trauma is both a sign and result of the eruption of the chaos world, and although his focus on trauma is sometimes taken as evidence of cruelty and misogyny, I think on the contrary that his lifelong interest in presenting images and telling stories of women (and men) under extreme duress is characterised by real sympathy, concern, and insight.

The accuracy, precision, and effectiveness of the presentation of trauma and recovery in *Under Capricorn* are remarkable. Where did this come from? It's worth briefly identifying three sources. The genius of the system is always evident in Hitchcock, and by that I mean the collaborative components of his films. The source novel is not a study of trauma in the way the film is, but sets up much of the scaffolding for and some of the critical events that figure prominently in the film. For all of Hitchcock's criticism of the screenwriters, we can safely assume that James Bridie and Hume Cronyn contributed something substantial to the shaping of this film's portrayal of trauma, a subject certainly worth further study. The contributions of the cinematographer, Jack Cardiff, in visualising Henrietta's state of mind, the details of the traumatic conditions that continue around her, and the stages of her recovery certainly need to be acknowledged and analysed, as Ed Gallafent does so expertly in his essay on the film (2005). And Ingrid Bergman's acting is surely one of the most important reasons why *Under Capricorn* is not 'only a movie', as Hitchcock often archly claimed, but 'more than a movie', one that conveys a vivid impression of a woman succumbing to, resisting, and then finally overcoming numerous soul- and self-breaking experiences, conditions, and impulses.

Then there is the genius of the genre: perhaps most prominently, melodrama – one of the home genres of trauma (so much so that it in fact often makes sense to speak of 'melotrauma') – is a guiding and shaping force for Hitchcock's understanding and representation of Henrietta's past and present circumstances, state of mind, options, and actions (see Wood 2002: 327-28). And he not only relies on but in key ways adapts and transforms melodrama, perhaps in part under the influence of other generic models, like the romance, especially the fairy tale and Shakespearean rather than chivalric romance, and, perhaps most surprisingly, comedy, broadly defined.

Hitchcock always operates across several genres, and *Under Capricorn* shows how, to use Cavell's terms, the melodrama of the unknown woman (1996) – a woman's unknownness to herself and to others – can be overcome by the restorative power and strategies that characterise the comedy of remarriage: these include acknowledgment, conversation, benign exercises of power, interactive play and play-acting, engagement, intelligence, and trust.

And finally, easily overlooked in this age of sometimes excessive anti-auteurism, let's not underestimate the genius of the genius: we should credit Hitchcock properly for his sensitivity, empathy, intuitive understanding, artistic ingenuity, and lifelong determination in artistically grappling with and representing trauma. And while this is meant as deserved personal praise, it is also meant as a way of reinforcing the value of studying Hitchcock's films intertextually, attentive to how his films interconnect and often usefully gloss one another. In trying to understand Henrietta in *Under Capricorn* it is extremely valuable to place her alongside Alice in *Blackmail* and Marnie in a triptych that might well be named *Three Sisters*.

There is no doubt from the very beginning of the film that Henrietta is a traumatised woman, in fact a multiply traumatised woman, someone who has been, as one clinician defines post-traumatic stress disorder, 'exposed to a horrendous event "that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others", causing "intense fear, helplessness, or horror", which results in a variety of manifestations: intrusive reexperiencing of the event . . . persistent and crippling avoidance . . . and increased arousal (insomnia, hypervigilance, or irritability)' (van der Kolk 2014: chapter 10, quoting the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*). The original trauma is from something she did rather than something that was done to her or witnessed others doing: she shot and killed her brother, who was attempting to stop her runaway marriage and was threatening her and Sam (Joseph Cotten) with a gun. Hitchcock recognises that the fact that this action may be legally and morally justifiable does not necessarily lessen its harrowing consequences in, to use Elaine Scarry's relevant terms, 'unmaking' Henrietta's mind and world (1985). You do not have to be a 'guilty' murderer or accomplice like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to suffer the psychological devastation from killing someone, one sign of which is the overall feeling that, in Shakespeare's words, 'Confusion now hath made his masterpiece'. We remember the shrunken head in *Under Capricorn* primarily as it is

weaponised by Milly (Margaret Leighton), used in effect to force flashbacks upon Henrietta that will torture and perhaps kill her. But more broadly it is a Shakespearean touch, an objective correlative of her primal trauma, a powerful signifier reinforcing the horrifying message that David J. Morris describes very precisely as at the core of post-traumatic life: that ‘Trauma is the savagery of the universe made manifest within us’ (2014: chapter 2), a savagery of violence and meaninglessness.

I am not trying to turn trauma into an abstraction, but rather to acknowledge that it is a metaphysical and epistemological as well as physical and emotional wound. And again, Henrietta’s trauma is compound: in addition to her distress over killing someone, she is overwhelmed by the pressures of secrecy and feelings of irresponsibility and empathic pain (I prefer those terms rather than ‘guilt’ or ‘shame’) over the fact that her husband has suffered for taking the blame for her act; years of alienation, ‘hot misery’, insecurity, and other horrors while Sam was in prison that are not specified but are tangible and ravaging; and then new rounds of social prejudice and also humiliation and physical abuse at the hands of Milly. All this leaves her dissociated, distracted, disconnected, lost. She is the archetypal refugee, and the words from Tom Petty’s classic and penetrating rock song ring true: she is left to ‘revel in her abandon’ (1980).

All this is what Henrietta emerges from, and in what follows I briefly highlight key details that chart this recovery. In the memorable words of one of the most insightful commentators on trauma, Bessel van der Kolk, the ‘body keeps the score’ (2014), and tells the story – and much of Henrietta’s story is told by her body, her face and eyes in particular, and revolves around what we might call visuality, which includes several components. We can accurately gauge Henrietta’s state of mind by watching the fluctuations and directions of her gaze. I include a gallery of gazes (figs. 1-9), each of which would be worth analyzing in detail in its specific context and as part of an unfolding pattern in the film, to illustrate some of the many moments when her disturbed mood is shown by an averted gaze (figs. 4, 5, and 9), an upward (figs. 3 and 7) or especially a downward gaze (figs. 2, 6, and 8), or an unfocused look in the distance (fig. 1), all contributing to our awareness that she is, to use Charles Barr’s term, a ‘tranced’ woman (1999: 173), a recurrent figure in Hitchcock’s films. Gallafent (2005: 70-75) discusses these looks insightfully as a foundational element in the structure of *Under Capricorn*, and his essay supports an even broader claim: that

we should never watch any Hitchcock film without recognizing this iconography of looks as one of Hitchcock's characteristic and fundamental expressive techniques.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

But throughout the film there are also looks counterpointed to those shown in the first gallery, and even though I don't have the time here to trace the complex choreography of how they alternate and interact with those looks, the second gallery of illustrations (figs. 10-14) at least shows a sample of moments when Henrietta looks directly into someone's eyes, evoking new-found courage, confidence, and a leap into mutuality.



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

Robin Wood talks movingly about how Ingrid Bergman's films often revolve around somehow getting her to regain her smile (2002: 317-18). *Under Capricorn* is a good example of how a Bergman film also revolves around getting her to regain the ability to look someone directly in the eyes – an accomplishment that we as spectators intuitively recognise and appreciate and that clinical researchers have confirmed has a neurological effect, and is a victory over the disruption of prefrontal cortex functioning that is a result of trauma (van der Kolk 2014: chapter 6). And, as we see several times in *Under Capricorn*, it is truly a magical moment when she looks at someone in the eyes and smiles (see, for example, figs. 10, 11, and 14). Furthermore, as she gains strength and confidence, even gazes and expressions that might earlier be taken as indications of distress can be taken as more positive signs: at key moments as the film progresses, Henrietta's look into the distance is not the 'thousand-yard stare' at nothingness that afflicts her, as seen for example in figure 1, but a more hopeful acknowledgment of a supportive and encouraging past or future (fig. 15) or a new sense of determination (fig. 16); and even a look downward, which is the universal gesture of diffidence, shame, isolation, and dependence, is transformed into a sign of gratefulness and connection – as when near the end of the film she acknowledges Adare's (Michael Wilding) actions to help save Sam (fig. 17).

Henrietta is caught in not only a crisis of visibility but also a crisis of visibility. A major part of the latter involves her unwillingness and inability to look at herself. Trauma involves the dissolution and disappearance of the self (van der Kolk 2014: chapter 3). Adare helps Henrietta overcome this, in ways that may seem trivial and even suspicious or problematic, but turn out to be beneficent. The two mirror



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

sequences in the film are brief but pivotal, not only because of their effect on Harriet, but also because of what they establish about Adare's character and role in the film. The film flirts with presenting Adare as the lover in a love triangle. But he is more interesting and prominent as part of a therapeutic triangle: as an artist helping remake Henrietta – and far from being a rough draft of Scottie Ferguson, he is a Pygmalion gone right, not wrong – and even as a kind of wizard. In Proppian terms, he is a helper or donor, someone with good intentions and a magical object. Adare has a spontaneous and bright idea: in order for Henrietta to be herself, she needs to see herself. He first turns a window into a mirror (fig. 18), which shows her as she is at the moment, and then soon after gives her a mirror, unwrapping it to create a moment of revelation of who she has in the interim become (fig. 19) – remade at least insofar as her appearance has changed markedly, readying her for respect and resocialization.



Figure 18



Figure 19

The quizzical expression on her face and the details of her outfit – there is a stark contrast between her introduction as ‘undressed’ and her sudden emergence as fashionably over-dressed – perhaps indicate that she is not yet entirely comfortable with the process of finding and constructing and adjusting to her self. But the mirror sequences are critical moments of recognition, essential to her further development.

I want to continue to address the theme of her return to visibility, but with what may seem to be a slight digression to address several critical events that happen next in the film under the related category of the reanimation of Henrietta. The film shows a shift in Henrietta from passivity and either immobility or restricted or wayward and



Figure 20

wandering movement to activity and freer and more directed and purposeful motion. (One of the challenges throughout the film is Henrietta's quest to gain the mobility of the camera – with the qualification that some kinds of mobility are better than others.) The second kitchen sequence captures Henrietta's reanimation visually and powerfully conveys its significance as a part of her recovery. Using the rubrics that describe components of trauma and recovery may deepen our sense of what is really happening here: this scene is not as much about the clash between Henrietta and Milly for dominance in the household as it is an illustration of the restoration of Henrietta's executive functions – exactly those functions typically disabled by trauma.

This sequence also displays other motives and strategies that writers on trauma specify as critical in recovery. 'Work, work, work' is one of the mantras of emerging from trauma, and it is enacted here by Henrietta. Asserting one's control is often designated in general as a key element of growth and recovery, but more particularly writers on trauma emphasise that the 'benign use of power' is the 'foundation of the self' post-trauma, and the kitchen sequence dramatises a shift from abusive to benign power, orchestrated by Henrietta. And for all that this sequence seems to be about power, it is ultimately about charity and connection. Among many other commentators, Laurence Gonzales, in his important book on *Surviving Survival*, says that 'helping others is one of the most therapeutic steps you can take . . . Helping someone else is as important as getting help' (2013: chapter 1; chapter 13). What is most striking and should be most memorable about this sequence is not the assertion of her (temporary) victory over Milly and the gaining of the keys, but Henrietta's kindness, her linking with, not lording over the serving women (fig. 20), conveyed by



Figure 21

a tableau of mutual, respectful, and supportive gazes shared with others who are clearly also victims of abuse, and her restoration of beneficent order – all this preceded by her burning of the whip of trauma.

The Governor's Ball illustrates several of the components and movements that I have been tracking. It is of course a kind of watershed moment of her movement away from loneliness and disconnection and toward re-entrance in society, complete with the continuing makeover of her appearance as well as a further reinforcement of her self-confidence and poise visible in her body language (the film oscillates between her being prone and upright), captured memorably even before she arrives at the ball by her grand descent on the staircase (fig. 21). And the ball sequence furthers her reanimation, not only in showing her mobility in leaving the house and walking in a very self-possessed manner at the ball but also by dancing: and specifically dancing a waltz, which is charged with particular meaning as a signifier of something new (a perfect dance for the new Henrietta); unconventional and daring, characterised by free rather than constrained and formal, prearranged movement; and also enacted by couples rather than groups – a slight but perhaps not insignificant part of a cluster of reminders, including the film's final image, that the formation of the couple is a central concern.

But I want to focus briefly how this sequence adds new dimensions to the themes of visibility and visibility. Her self-assurance is evident not only in her body language but in the way she looks directly ahead as she walks and directly into the eyes of the



Figure 22



Figure 23

Governor as they talk (fig. 22). Now for a point that may be a bit more problematic. She is presented as a central part of the spectacle of the ball: in the way that the camera shoots and frames her, and also in the repeated views of her being looked at by people at the ball. These details, as well as others in the film, support what may initially sound like a heretical claim: to-be-looked-atness, to use Laura Mulvey's unforgettable term (1975), can be a good thing, and in the context of Henrietta's recovery from trauma it is at least sometimes emphatically therapeutic. Much depends, of course, on the way one is looked at, and there is not much good to be said about, to adopt Prufrock's words, being 'fixed in a formulating gaze', especially one of manipulation and control – like Milly's gaze at Henrietta (fig. 23). But clinicians agree that one of the 'critical issues' in trauma recovery 'is being truly heard and seen

by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone's mind and heart' (van der Kolk 2014: chapter 5; see also chapter 4). Interpersonal intimacy, as I'll discuss in a moment, is of course essential, and this is often conveyed by one person looking directly at another, and two people looking directly at each other. So is what we might call public intimacy, established by looks of acknowledgment, respect, and connection in a group setting, as seen in figure 22.

The ball ends in a real setback, a moment of disruption and humiliation that is deeply upsetting to Henrietta. But this is immediately followed by a step forward, in the confession sequence – one that in fact initiates a series of confessions and confessions about confessing – which is among other things a stunning illustration of the importance of regaining narrativity and one's voice. Numerous kinds of reconnection are shown in the film. Up to this point the emphasis has been on reconnection in space, by movement and physical activity and contacts with others. Now there is a turn to reconnection in time, specifically by recognizing and reintegrating the past, which is accomplished by Henrietta telling her story, simultaneously to herself and someone else. Reconstructing in a coherent form the history of the trauma is, according to most clinicians, a necessary (although not in itself sufficient) part of reconstructing the traumatised self, and Judith Herman speaks for many in noting that 'sharing the traumatic experience with others is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of a meaningful world' ([1992] 2015: chapter 3).

Hitchcock prepares for this sequence carefully, while still setting it up so that Henrietta's revelation comes as a surprise. Earlier in the film, Sam tells Adare that 'If you can get her talking about old times, that might help', and though what he has in mind are the happy days of Henrietta's youth, his advice about the efficacy of a 'talking cure' is as well-founded as it is ironic. And there are early moments that show Henrietta gradually moving toward regaining her voice and telling her story: for example, in the brief scene where she dictates part of a letter to Adare's sister. But her long monologue after the ball is a breakthrough, and one of the dramatic highlights of the film. Rohmer and Chabrol insightfully point out that 'The fact that the heroine finally speaks is as important as what she tells' (1979: 103). Regaining her voice, moving 'from silence to speech' (1979: 103), is a critical marker of Henrietta's development and recovery. But for all that Rohmer and Chabrol stress the centrality of confession throughout Hitchcock's films as a legacy of his Catholicism, *Under Capricorn* confirms that confessional narrativity can be powerfully therapeutic even

apart from any religious context. As both Gallafent (2005) and Richard Allen (2019) show, there are indeed religious references in the film, but healing in *Under Capricorn* happens without churches and priests – and, I might add, without clinicians of any kind. (In the studies about trauma that I have read, religion is conspicuously absent as a factor in the understanding of and recovery from trauma. Van der Kolk [2014] in particular is adamant about the non-clinical and non-institutional avenues of healing.)

The reestablishment of intimacy is often described as the final stage of recovery from trauma, and in *Under Capricorn* it is both an end and a means – something we seek and something we need to get what we seek. There are different forms of intimacy in the film: Sam and Adare are intimate, perhaps surprisingly so, almost from the very beginning; and the intimacy – physical at times – between Henrietta and Adare is critically important, but is one of love without being set in a relationship of lovers, a distinction with a real difference. Henrietta and Sam are the lovers in the film, and while the film is fundamentally about the restoration of Henrietta's self, it is also about the restoration of her marriage with Sam. Their love and marriage are, to say the least, sorely tested. They are a traumatised couple – not only insofar as interpersonal relationships are inevitably casualties of trauma but also because each one of them is traumatised. Two scenes in particular dramatise the complex and painful process of their recovery and remarriage.

First, the climactic scene in the bedroom with Milly. Unlike the parallel sequence at the end of *Notorious*, this one does not reduce to a completely helpless and vulnerable woman saved by a man who somewhat magically and suddenly is moved to a moment of clarity and conventionally heroic action. Instead, we see Henrietta's remarkable determination and energy, and her partnership with Sam in her rescue and their rescue. Rohmer and Chabrol describe the shot of Henrietta's face during the preparation of Milly's assault on her as 'one of the most significant close-ups in the entire history of cinema' (1979: 99), packed with a Dostoyevskian richness of meaning. Her tears are visible, but to me this is not primarily a scene of weeping, penitential or otherwise. The shot – actually a series of repeated shots – shows Henrietta's pain but also her increasingly clear, knowing, focused, resistant, empowered and empowering gaze and new strength (fig. 24). Her subsequent cry of help to Sam is not one of pathetic inadequacy but a call for him to join in a shared struggle, and when Sam enters, they overcome their moments of doubt and pain



Figure 24

through remarkably courageous, honest, and intelligent declarations and conversation, and are able to recognise the truth, dispel the immediate threat, and reconfirm their love, intimacy, and marriage.

What follows soon after is for me one of the most memorable moments in the film, and what I think of as one of its multiple endings (a structural feature of many of Hitchcock's films). Henrietta comes down the staircase again, but not like before in a display of costume and assured beauty, and certainly not like Alicia at a comparable moment in *Notorious*, unable to even walk to safety without Devlin's aid. She walks down to meet and rejoin Sam, and together they re-define, re-declare, and re-consecrate their relationship. All this is brilliantly conveyed by the entire sequence, but one image can stand as a stunning synecdoche. Here we see the past, immediate, and inevitably ongoing strain transcended without vanishing. They do not look directly at each other, but these are no averted gazes; their effort is to rejoin. Their faces are turned downward, but not in abjection. Although their eyes are closed, their expressions and body language convey intense emotion and deep vision, and although the frame composition is disharmonious, this is a moment of breakthrough and reconnection (fig. 25). Hitchcock's wisdom – here and in other films as well – is like that of the Japanese art of *kintsugi*, whereby precious and fragile artifacts are restored, but rather than being erased, the cracks are highly visible, part of the repaired beauty and strength. The fact that trauma is indelible does not undermine the possibility, the reality of recovery.



Figure 25



Figure 26

If *Vertigo* is arguably the highpoint of Hitchcock's romantic irony, agony, and ecstasy, *Under Capricorn* is arguably his peak illustration of a romanticism that ends up beyond the unpleasure principle. For me, the image of Sam and Henrietta on the staircase seen in figure 25 coexists with, lies beneath, makes possible the concluding image of the film (fig. 26), showing the couple alone in the distance (Adare and the crowd have just pulled away from them), just after waving, a gesture of both goodbye and hello. While this is by no means a 'happy ever after' ending, it is a subdued enunciation of the thrilling and satisfying experience of survival captured wonderfully in the title of an early volume of poems by D.H. Lawrence: *Look! We Have Come Through!*

We desperately need this message. Again, Tom Petty's haunting and insistent words are relevant and moving: 'You don't have to live like a refugee' (1980). Life is love, loss, and – maybe – recovery. Everything else is conversation. This is the stunning dramatisation, lesson, and hope at the heart of *Under Capricorn*.

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An international production but ‘not much Australian’: authenticity and Australianness in *Under Capricorn*

Stephen Morgan

Alfred Hitchcock: ‘I hope to make a film about early Australia called Under Capricorn [...] the chief character goes to Australia and deteriorates out there.’

David Clayton: Deteriorates?

AH: That’s what the book says.

DC: They won’t like that.

AH: Who?

DC: The Australians.

AH: Oh, I’ll put it right by having a man in a stage coach pull the old gag about England being the place convicts come from.

DC: They still won’t like it.

AH: Maybe not. We’ll see.

(Clayton 1947: 59-60)

In mid 1947, Alfred Hitchcock gave an exclusive interview to *Filmindia*, a monthly, English-language periodical published in Bombay. Headed with a declaration that ‘Hitchcock Hates Actors’, this interview features his oft-cited maxim that ‘actors are like cattle’. Although later reprinted in an edition of the *Hitchcock Annual* dedicated to his interactions with India, that the overwhelming emphasis on accounts of this interview focus on the director’s relationship with his stars perhaps says as much about Hitchcock scholarship as it does about the man himself. It is equally telling that relatively few have drawn attention to Hitchcock’s similarly dismissive attitude toward Australia, and how it was borne out in the patchy production that was to follow. Given he expressed this sentiment in an interview with a magazine that was serving a still colonised audience, Hitchcock’s perfunctory remarks offer a valuable insight into the prevalent attitudes that underpinned the production of *Under Capricorn*, and the approaches taken to its nominal setting in another colonial space, Australia. When *Under Capricorn* was announced in 1946, pre-publicity highlighted the international nature of the production. The film was to be the product of Alfred Hitchcock and Sidney Bernstein’s newly established Transatlantic Pictures venture, with Hollywood-based

Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman playing an Irish lead, and plans to shoot in British studios with exteriors filmed in California. Australia seemed to offer little more than mere backdrop, and remained largely absent from any promise of ‘internationality’, despite the film being adapted from Helen Simpson’s novel, set in colonial New South Wales.

In reconciling that ‘Australian’ setting with Transatlantic’s deliberate decision against shooting on location, this article examines a number of the film’s textual artefacts of ‘Australianness’ within the broader context of post-war cinema. In re-centring the film’s setting, I highlight how Australia is ‘discovered’ and introduced, whose perspectives are offered, and how the legacies of British colonialism have shaped the film’s representations of gender, race and nationhood. Doing so might help us understand how ‘Australia’ is configured as a white settler space in abstracted visions of a post-war world, and the particular role of British (and Hollywood) cinema in that abstraction. Building on the work of James Morrison (2004) and Constantine Verevis (2011), among others, it is also possible to further articulate the film’s positioning of an emergent ‘Australia’, and what it might reveal about the presences and absences of (and within) this assemblage of British colonies. In many senses, Hitchcock’s struggle to depict an ‘authentic’ vision of colonial Australia might explain *Under Capricorn*’s relative ‘failure’ for audiences, past and present. At the same time, it also hints at the elusive nature of settler nationhood and cinema’s role in shaping visions of Empire and colonialism.

Locating Australia

In Australia, the announcement of *Under Capricorn* was greeted with a pointed recognition of that primary absence of ‘authenticity’. Relishing the irony that even the exteriors would be shot elsewhere, a *Sydney Morning Herald* headline announced: ‘British to make Australian film in California’, with the paper’s Hollywood correspondent, Lon Jones, noting that:

Hollywood producers who have suffered criticism from Australians for their films with Australian backgrounds made in Hollywood are enjoying a laugh at Australia's expense. [...] Hollywood is laughing, because though the picture is an English production, Hitchcock is planning to shoot the Australian exteriors in California. He thinks it a perfect double for Australia, and more convenient. (Jones 1946a)

There seemed to be very little resistance to this, although it was hardly unusual, given Hollywood’s tendency to make do with Californian scenery or second-unit crews to give a sense of far-flung locales. Ingrid Bergman – who had previously starred in Hitchcock’s Brazil-set, but similarly studio-bound *Notorious* (1946) – made an effort to convince the director to go on location,

telling him: ‘it’s set in Australia. Let’s go to Australia and do it there’ (Bergman & Burgess 1980, 175). Inevitably, however, she accepted the compromise of an English studio, with her interest in a location shoot motivated much less by authenticity, than by a simple desire to ‘get out of the backlot’ (ibid). Once in London, Hitchcock and Bergman tried to add at least a touch of ‘Australianness’ to proceedings when they met with Australian Prime Minister Ben Chifley at the Savoy Hotel, where Chifley signed a copy of Simpson’s novel for Bergman, and they ‘fired a series of questions at each other about Hollywood and Australia’ (AAP 1948). Staged before the press, however, such encounters had little bearing on the film that followed. In June 1948, just before *Under Capricorn* was due on the studio floor at Elstree, British magazine *Picturegoer* confirmed that Hitchcock had ‘already finished location work in Hollywood, in a spot that closely resembles the Australian scenery required’ (1948, 3). By that time, London correspondent Dick Kisch had confirmed earlier fears for his Australian readers, telling them ‘there’s not going to be much Australian in Alfred Hitchcock’s film’ (1948).

Although Hitchcock never had any intention to shoot there, the immediate post-war moment had seen a renewed interest in films made in and about Australia, particularly those producers looking to expand the horizons of what constituted British cinema. A key player in that renewed interest was Ealing Studios, whose own publicity machine had – in the months prior to the announcement of *Under Capricorn* – been drumming up interest in their newly shot Australian cattle drama, *The Overlanders* (1946). The film’s director Harry Watt had just returned from Australia and was to be found regaling all and sundry with tales of adventure and hardship whilst shooting on location in the Australian outback. For this, and subsequent Australian productions, Ealing made a deliberate point of shooting on location, and using the vast landscapes on offer to build up a particular image of the Australian nation as a key ‘White Dominion’ of the emerging British Commonwealth (Morgan 2012). Hollywood had also expressed a renewed interest in Australian settings, with pre-publicity for *Under Capricorn* also noting RKO’s imminent release of the Rosalind Russell-led, bush nurse biopic *Sister Kenny* (Dudley Nichols, 1946), as well as Paramount’s pre-production of *Botany Bay* (John Farrow, 1952) and Metro’s plans (ultimately abandoned) to adapt Australian author Henry Handel Richardson’s sweeping historical novel *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* (Jones 1946b).

A key moment in Richardson’s novel was the 1854 Eureka Rebellion on the goldfields of Ballarat, in the colony of Victoria. And while Metro’s film stalled in development – despite reportedly having Greer Garson and Gregory Peck attached – this nation-building moment was instead the focus of Ealing’s second Australian production, *Eureka Stockade* (Harry Watt, 1949).

Taking some cues from the success of *The Overlanders*, and in sharp contrast to the aforementioned Hollywood productions, Ealing made good on their promise, and returned to Australian locations to recreate a colonial gold mining town, from scratch, in rural New South Wales (Morgan 2012, 169). The contrast between Ealing's insistence on location production, and Hollywood's studio-bound vision of Australia – and the relative positioning of these two contemporaneous costume dramas – provides a useful frame through which to tackle questions of 'authenticity' and 'Australianness' in post-war cinema. As we will see, a comparison of *Eureka Stockade* and *Under Capricorn* might also reveal the tensions, often overlooked, that remain inherent to the latter film's outward claims of 'internationality'.

'Discovering' Australia

Any consideration of *Under Capricorn*'s 'Australianness', however, must begin with the film's own introduction of 'Australia', and the sprawling settlement of Sydney, in the British colony of New South Wales. The opening credits are branded across a map of the Australian continent, which immediately sets up a broader locale with a clearly defined coastline, but a wholly unfamiliar interior.



James Morrison notes that introductory maps such as this might ordinarily offer a ‘territorial version of nationhood, dependent on given zones that foster and dictate colonial discourses’, but *Under Capricorn*’s map – like Australia itself – appears as ‘de-stratified and de-contextualised’ (2004, 200). The simultaneous positioning of Australia as an at once colonized and pre-colonial space is echoed in the film’s opening voiceover, which provides a brief, deliberate curtailment of the continent’s settler colonial complexity:

In Seventeen Hundred and Seventy, Captain Cook discovered Australia. 60 years later, the city of Sydney, the capital of New South Wales, had grown on the edge of 3 million square miles of unknown land. The colony exported raw materials. It imported material even more raw, prisoners, many of them unjustly convicted, who were to be shaped into the pioneers of a great Dominion. In Eighteen Hundred and Thirty One, King William has sent a new governor to rule the colony, and now our story begins.



Accompanied by ‘patently artificial establishing shots’ (Verevis 2011, 179a), this opening voiceover lasts barely thirty seconds, and provides only a cursory, contextual snapshot of this pocket of ‘civilisation’, tenuously positioned on the fringes of a mass of ‘unknown land’. That contrast is framed even more explicitly in the official British tie-in book, where Sydney is described as ‘a small town on the edge of a continent still savage and still unknown’ (Mannon 1949, i). The opening sequence also offers the only wide views of the city in the entire film, although even the trained eye might have trouble identifying it specifically as colonial-era Sydney. The appearance of

the British flag gives some clues to imperial ties, and scholars of early Sydney may well note the historically accurate presence of the windmill, which also features on the cover of Simpson's novel. Generally speaking, however, there is nothing identifiably 'Sydney' about this view, which in turn means there is nothing to stop other filmmakers from re-using the same matte to represent other mid-19th century settler colonial cities, hence *Under Capricorn's* Sydney bearing an uncanny resemblance to the Old Chicago of *Calamity Jane* (Cook 2016).



From the ambiguity of the film's vision of colonial Sydney, and throughout, we are thus invited into a figurative 'Australia' that is at once known and unknowable. Defined wholly by the presence of British colonists (and its future prospects as a British Dominion), the film introduces Australia in abstract, where it remains throughout the duration. Those viewers with little interest in the specificities of Australia may understandably read the opening scene as an example of the historical shorthand typical of romantic costume dramas of the period, which were often less concerned with 'authenticity' than they were with using historical backdrops as a setting for character-driven melodrama (Monk & Sargeant 2002, 2). In reading *Under Capricorn* for 'authenticity' and 'Australianness', however, these details, or the lack thereof, become crucial.

Marking space

Even if we disregard the question of Indigenous sovereignty, the opening voiceover's claim that Cook 'discovered' Australia in 1770 is inherently problematic. From a European perspective, Dutch navigators had charted large portions of the coastline and set foot on the Australian mainland a century and a half earlier. In that sense, 'claimed possession' would be a more suitable word for Cook's actions, but even then, his claim was only to the continent's eastern seaboard (Moreton-

Robinson 2015, 112). Likewise, the act of referring to the entire continent as 'Australia' came somewhat later than Cook, and is typically attributed to Matthew Flinders, who mapped the southern coastline and circumnavigated the continent at the beginning of the 19th century (Morris 1898, 10-11).

Historical semantics aside, the film's brief introduction to Sydney (and thus ostensibly to the colony of New South Wales) does provide some inkling towards broader narratives about a nation in formation, namely via those 'wrongly convicted' prisoners 'who would be shaped into the pioneers of a great Dominion'. Almost immediately, however, it becomes clear that the film's focus will not be a collective narrative of gradually emerging nationhood, as the viewer's attention is immediately drawn to two central figures, the new Governor, Sir Richard Bourke (Cecil Parker), and his distant cousin, Charles Adare (Michael Wilding). In doing so, the film also undermines any sense of colonial authority, not least by invoking those 'unjustly convicted' men whose pioneering life - and thus the life of the nation - begins in a state of abjection (Morrison 2004, 201).

In a more practical sense, the preference for character over context (and the film's disinterest in Australia as a subject) is made even clearer by the manner in which Bourke and Adare are introduced. Whilst the Governor arrives and immediately begins inspecting the assembled troops, his foppish cousin conspicuously positions himself front and centre of the assembled crowd. When Bourke begins a speech, in which he sets out his plans for the colony, his admission that 'I know very little of your country, you know very little of me' serves as a cue for the film to shift, both visually and audibly, away from him, and away from questions of governance and / or emergent nationhood. As Bourke's speech trails off, with an ominous suggestion that 'some of you have no very good record in the past', our attention is drawn to an encounter between Adare and Cedric Potter (John Ruddock), the manager of the Bank of New South Wales. It is this conversation that instigates the narrative chain that will lead to Adare's encounter with Sam Flusky (Joseph Cotton), and then his wife, Lady Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman).

The ambiguity of the film's initial vision of colonial Australia, along with its subsequent preference for interior melodrama, might be extended to its difficulty in depicting the kind of outdoor action that is key to so many postwar Australian-set films. Like the film's setting on the edge of 'unknown land', *Under Capricorn's* exterior set-pieces are rendered similarly unknowable, with its most blatant concealment involving a key climactic moment late in the film. Confronted by Flusky, Adare steals his horse, falls off and limps back, requiring Flusky to take his pistol and shoot the horse, before returning to the house and shooting Adare in the midst of a scuffle. Shot in a single take, the camera remains indoors, with any exterior action concealed from the viewer. Where other

Australian-set films of the period made copious use of the adventurous possibilities of horses amid wide open spaces, this single moment encapsulates the stage-bound conceit of the film – already enforced by the dialogue of playwright James Bridie, and Hitchcock’s insistence on the stagey long-takes – forcing key dramatic action, and thus key opportunities for ‘authenticity’, offstage.

The relative intimacy of the narrative in *Under Capricorn* – and its existence as a studio-bound film that is more interested in the colony’s ‘interior’ life, than in its vast exteriors – is specifically linked to formal choices such as these. Hume Cronyn – who worked on the screenplays for both *Rope* and *Under Capricorn* – later reflected on the relative fate of the two films. Noting the redeployment of *Rope*’s fluid, long-take style ‘to cover the vast panorama of colonial life in Australia’, Cronyn concluded that ‘the difference in the quality of the two stories was the difference between a miniature and an enormous landscape’ (quoted in Spoto 1991, 175). For Cronyn, Hitchcock’s decision to adapt the long-take approach to his Australian drama was ‘a mistake and got him into trouble’ (ibid). Of course, Cronyn was talking more broadly about the relative merits of the two films, but his remarks also reveal something about the film’s treatment of Australia. For Cronyn, the insistence on long takes limits one to the miniature, to the contained, and makes wrestling with this ‘enormous landscape’ almost impossible. Formally, then, the film’s dominant style requires a human drama, and a focus on character, above and beyond the landscape (and outdoor action) for which Australia has so often been cinematically exploited.

Visualising Australia

In terms of narrational alignment, the film’s preference for character over landscape also raises questions of perspective, and of whose vision of Australia we are given in *Under Capricorn*. By ignoring the Governor (and colonial authority) in that opening scene, we are invited to identify specifically with the character of Charles Adare, and his role as outsider and colonial fortune-seeker. Robin Wood has argued that ‘He, like us, is a stranger trying to understand an unfamiliar culture; we learn with him about Australian society and its customs’ (2002, 328). Leaving aside those for whom this culture is not necessarily ‘unfamiliar’, however, there remains significant doubt as to whether we do actually learn anything, at all, about Australian society or Australian customs in the film that follows. This ‘unfamiliarity’ might then be linked to an overall disinterest in Australia as a subject, and this might extend further to a consideration of the kinds of perspectives offered by the film’s very limited use of exteriors, and its relative inability to account for the ‘enormous landscapes’ noted by Cronyn.

There were, of course, numerous reference points available to Hitchcock and his production team in considering the landscapes around colonial Sydney, or colonial landscapes more broadly, not least the library of colonial artworks made in the decades either side of the film's 1830s setting. Paintings like *A Direct North General View of Sydney Cove* (1794) based on a sketch by Thomas Watling, and Eugene Von Guérard's *Warrenheip Hills near Ballarat* (1854) offer carefully composed and neatly framed visions of colonial splendor.



Watling and his early colonial contemporaries worked in the British landscape tradition to emphasise colonial endurance and survival, rather than revel in newfound lands (Radford 2013, 92). Arriving in the 1850s, Von Guérard imbued his more Arcadian landscapes with symbolism and

melancholy, thus becoming colonial Australia's foremost exponent of the German Romantic tradition (ibid, 98). Occupying a space somewhere between those two traditions, the exteriors of *Under Capricorn* – themselves 'more-than-usually-obvious' matte paintings (Whitty 2016, 475) – are similarly composed and framed, offering up a colonial landscape that is ordered, and 'knowable', but which often retain more than a tinge of melancholy.

Rather than capturing natural landscapes, however, all of these exteriors feature key colonial buildings, once again maintaining that focus on character and 'civilisation'. The most notable, perhaps, is the Flusky homestead at Minyago Yugilla, which itself provides the locus of the film's own symbolism and melancholy.



Steven Jacobs notes the resemblance of these matte paintings to the work of 17th century artist Claude, whereby the pictorial light effects not only serve to mask their artificiality, but also contribute to the house's blend of exotic and uncanny (2007, 252). It seems entirely apt, then, that similar visions have seeped into the house itself, with a brooding, Claudean or Von Guérard-esque landscape overseeing several key dramatic moments in Minyago Yugilla's drawing room.



Equally reminiscent of the work of Welsh artist Richard Wilson, whose mid-18th century work saw him dubbed ‘the father of British landscape painting’ (Solkin 1982, 7), this image is similarly framed, offering an ordered landscape, with man at the centre of all things. A vision of colonial splendor in the hands of Von Guérard, thus doubles – via Wilson – as a reminder of the old world that the Flusky’s (and, by extension, all settlers) have left behind.

Indeed, one of the later criticisms of colonial artists like Von Guérard and Watling is that they offered a very ‘European’ image of Australia, one that was entirely shaped by a particular vision of the English idyll and / or wider trends in European romanticism. A similar criticism might be leveled at *Under Capricorn* itself, with its inability to offer an ‘authentic’ vision of Australia tied, in no small part, to its offer of a distinctly distant version of Australia, albeit from the dual perspectives of Britain and Hollywood. As highlighted earlier, that fundamental disinterest in the Australian landscape places *Under Capricorn* in stark contrast to Ealing’s contemporaneous efforts to capture Australia on film. With Harry Watt at the helm, the initial phase of Ealing’s Australian project was understandably rooted in documentary approaches to narrative – both on-screen and off. The physicality of Watt’s research – and his insistence on ‘getting a sense’ of the country before shooting there – fundamentally shapes Ealing’s Australian productions. And his research extended to a survey of the visual repertoire of Australian images, most notably painting, in order to bring added verisimilitude to his renditions of the Australian past, both recent and colonial.

Unsurprisingly, whilst *Under Capricorn* seemed particularly inspired by the romantic, mid-colonial art that was very much in keeping with its temporal setting, Watt’s main touchstone were artists working either side of Australia’s Federation in 1901. Unlike their early and mid colonial counterparts, this first generation of Australian-trained artists were celebrated for their ability to accurately capture the particular Australian light, and for their contributions to a growing sense of Australian nationalism (Speck 2019, 310). Making their mark alongside writers and poets, at a moment of high cultural nationalism, they were able to capture Australian landscapes in a manner that conveyed its danger and harsh beauty. Drawing on such imagery, it is equally unsurprising perhaps, that Ealing’s Australian films might reflect similar visions of emergent nationhood in the face of natural adversity. This occurs most coherently in their first Australian production, *The Overlanders*, which met with significant success in Australia and beyond, and heralded a renewed interest, from both British and American quarters, in putting Australia on the big screen.

Competing colonial visions

Ealing's second Australian production, however, was a slightly different story. A costume drama set on the colonial goldfields, *Eureka Stockade* offers an indicative counterpoint on the relative merits of shooting on location in this period, and provides an interesting parallel to *Under Capricorn*. As with each of the initial trio of Ealing's Australian productions, *Eureka Stockade* is particularly interested in depictions of nation building in this White Dominion. Set against the backdrop of that 1850s goldfields rebellion, it focuses on a diverse cohort of new and old Australians banding together to fight against mining licenses, which are viewed as a form of taxation without representation.

Like *Under Capricorn*, *Eureka Stockade* opens with a voiceover that sets a historical context for the drama to follow. Grandeur, and altogether more pompous, it actively establishes a narrative with a much clearer investment in that 'great dominion' that is invoked (and then abandoned) at the start of *Under Capricorn*. Appearing before the opening credits, it makes a clear effort to cement Australian history within the broader context of liberal democracy:

The story of the world is the story of man's fight for freedom. In that fight England had her Magna Carta, France her Revolution, America her Declaration of Independence, and Australia...Eureka Stockade!

Following the opening credits, that rhetoric is matched by an equally sweeping opening sequence, which depicts (white) Australians racing from all quarters to find their fortunes on the goldfields.



Ostensibly there to provoke the kind of colonial authority so clearly lacking in *Under Capricorn*, this opening montage also demonstrates a clear interest in landscape as an important locus of the supposedly egalitarian formulation of Australia's burgeoning nationhood.

Unlike Hitchcock's vision of Australia 'in miniature', reliant on mattes and studio sets, Watt's Australia makes copious use of locations and landscape. Not only does this provide a sense of physical scope that is entirely absent from *Under Capricorn*, but it frames it within a much more deliberate sense of a nation in formation, with a narrative that is driven by that formation as a collective act.

Whilst *Eureka Stockade* offers a collective vision of Australia, *Under Capricorn* is entirely focused on individuals, and it is within this tension that we might also begin to unpick the gendered nature of these contrasting colonial narratives. Both films are, to some extent, about the kinds of men needed to build a settler nation, but whilst Watt's *Eureka Stockade* displays an almost singular obsession with that idea, it merely serves as colourful background in the case of Hitchcock's film. *Eureka Stockade* focuses on its men as prospective citizens of a vaguely socialist, white settler utopia, with the many Chinese diggers conspicuous by their absence. In doing so, it taps into dominant cultural conceptions of the Anglo-Celtic 'bushman' as a key pioneer of Australia's national mythology (Ward 1958). In contrast, *Under Capricorn* is consistently glancing backwards, dwelling on personal histories in spite of repeated warnings that, in the colonies, 'a man's past is his own business'.

The past lives of the two central male figures in *Under Capricorn* – Sam Flusky and Charles Adare – are intimately entangled with the life of Lady Henrietta Flusky. As such, their role as 'pioneering men' is circumscribed by the film's melodramatic framework, which is built entirely around Bergman's star performance. Narratives of the colonial frontier – of which *The Overlanders* and *Eureka Stockade* are prime examples – are typically coded, especially in British cinema, via a highly masculine engagement with open spaces and realist adventure. By contrast, *Under Capricorn*'s enclosed, melodramatic approach to colonial life marks its domestic interiors out as wholly feminine, with open space existing only in abstract. In *Eureka Stockade*, that general focus on the masculine process of 'nation building', is brought into sharp relief by the addition of a romantic subplot. Contemporary critics were particularly scathing about this aspect of the film, partly due to Watt's perceived inability to handle human drama, but also because it was deemed unconvincing (Morgan 2017, 152). Implicit in this, however, is a criticism of melodrama (and the feminine) as an unacceptable imposition upon narratives of the masculine frontier. In this sense, where Ealing's Australian films were bound up in an older vision of the (settler) colonial frontier,

Under Capricorn aligns more closely with the feminised cinematic versions of Empire that become more prevalent in its precise moment of post-war crisis (Webster 2003, 88). As a successful settler colony, however, Australia was entirely free from the rigours and trials of decolonisation, or even any genuine effort to reckon with its ongoing imperial realities, thus leaving *Under Capricorn*'s particular version of white femininity unshackled by the 'inconvenience' of dealing with the colonial other.

Imperial melodrama

Most post-war cinematic visions of Australia are likewise content to ignore First Nations populations. Even when Indigenous people do figure, they are always a 'problem' to be overcome by (white) nationhood, as the successful final stage of British settler colonialism. An useful counterpoint to both *Eureka Stockade*'s white settler masculinity and *Under Capricorn*'s white settler femininity, is provided by *Jedda* (1955), the final feature by Australia's most significant mid-century filmmakers, Charles and Elsa Chauvel. *Jedda* is a 'bastardised melodrama' about an Aboriginal girl (Rosalie Kunoth-Monks), who is adopted by a white woman (Betty Suttor) in Central Australia, and grows up expecting to marry a respectable, mixed-race stockman (Paul Reynall), but who is lured away by a 'primitive', full-blooded 'savage' named Marbuk (Robert Tudawali) (Mills 2012, 13). Echoing the dominant framework of Indigenous-settler engagement in mid-century Australia – itself in the process of shifting from 'protection' to 'assimilation', but inflected by the ongoing, forced removal of Aboriginal children (see Rowse 1998) – the film narrativises the white feminine ideal specifically through its contrasting of 'safe' domestic interiors, and the 'savage' dangers of the open spaces beyond.

Like *Under Capricorn*, *Jedda* makes extensive use of mattes and painted backdrops, although these are interspersed with scenes shot on location. *Jedda* also opens with a map of Australia, with necessary background context provided via an introductory voiceover by Joe, the half-caste cattle man and Jedda's prospective suitor. A contemporary narrative, set a century or so after *Under Capricorn*, *Jedda*'s map necessarily conveys some knowledge of the continent's interior, and more fully represents that 'territorial version of nationhood' and the dictation of 'colonial discourses', as noted by Morrison (2004, 200). There remains, however, a constant tension between the film's 'authenticity', and its melodramatic mode of address. As Stuart Cunningham has argued, the unique approach to high melodrama taken in the Chauvel films is actually borne of nationalist / realist impulses, including their insistence on 'locationism' via 'authentic' location shoots. This nationalist / realist framework is subsequently 'redeployed and assumed into the

melodramatic “vision” of nationality which *is* the the generating mechanism of the films’ (1986, 47) [emphasis his]. This is certainly the case in *Jedda*, where the strict delineation between civilised / white and savage / black lives (and bodies) reaches an emotional apex that is framed in explicitly melodramatic terms.

In one key moment, a teenage Jedda – who grew up consistently drawn to her ‘black’ side – gazes longingly from a window thinking about her tribal relatives, who are ‘free’ to wander the landscape ‘on Walkabout’. Her adoptive mother, however, is on hand to talk her out of the ‘primitive’ urge to join them, echoing her consistent efforts to ‘domesticise’ Jedda’s blackness, and educate her in the ways of the ‘civilised’ white woman. Insisting that she ‘go on living like a white girl, like my own daughter’, the mother attempts to break Jedda free from such thinking by reminding her that it is time for her music lesson. Seated at the piano, however, Jedda’s calm recital of a European classical work is quickly overcome by the ‘primitive call’ of her people. In a flurry of dischordant notes and rapid editing that cross cuts between Jedda’s face and the Aboriginal shields that adorn the wall above the piano, this moment offers precisely the kind of emotional excess that we tend to associate with the melodramatic form (Walsh 2005, 56). At the same time, it encapsulates the film’s consistent concern with the ‘return of the repressed’, a familiar trope from both melodramas and Hitchcock.



Erasures and absences

Whilst Jedda is unable to suppress (or escape) her ‘savage’ past, the film’s melodramatic impulse is also contingent on the existence of forbidden relationships, something that is set in tragic motion when she meets the ‘wild black’, Marbuk. This intersection of the return of the repressed and forbidden relationships is also central to *Under Capricorn*, which is likewise framed not only by the tryst between Adare and Henrietta, but by Hitchcock’s use of ‘savage’ iconography as a tool of horror and abjection. Henrietta’s dipsomania is aggravated, in part, by the mysterious presence of ‘shrunk heads’. They appear in her bedroom at opportune moments, having been gratuitously introduced to the audience earlier via one of the film’s very few single-shot close-ups. Although their narrative convenience is sufficiently explained later in the film, their precise origin, and their existence as imperialist trophies, is consistently obscured, and never explained.

These colonial artefacts – which exist not only as a key visual motif both within the film, but also figure in some of its marketing – are not a cinematic contrivance, although their presence did cause some confusion among critics. In Simpson’s novel their provenance lies with the Māori of New Zealand (1938, 70), but without adequate explanation, their presence in the film often wrongly attributed to Australia’s own Indigenous population. A review in *Variety*, for example, notes their presence as emblematic of the film’s lacklustre pace, claiming that ‘Hitchcock plants [the] fact that Australian aborigines shrink the heads of their victims. One hundred minutes later he uses a mummified head as the single shocker in the footage’ (Brogdon 1949, 8). Like Marbuk’s ‘wild savagery’ in *Jedda*, these shrunk heads function as a reminder of colonial peril, and of the supposed depravity of pre-colonial societies.

If we take their provenance as Aotearoa / New Zealand, however, these ‘shrunk heads’ (or *mokomokai*) are not the result of savagery, but an integral aspect of cultural preservation within Māori society. The tattooed (*moko*) heads of chiefs, *rangatira* (esteemed people) and *whānau* (family) members were dried and smoked to preserve them from decay, and retained by families as personal remembrances of the dead, and important tools in rituals of both war and peace (Palmer & Tano 2004, 3). Devoid of cultural context in both the novel and the film, where they lack the distinctive tattoos, they are instead rendered gruesome symbols of cross-imperial trade. The first European to obtain a *mokomokai* was Joseph Banks, naturalist on Cook’s first voyage, just months before he claimed possession of the east coast of Australia. The earliest record of *mokomokai* being traded in Sydney is 1811, and by the 1820s the trade in these tattooed heads was so common that they had their own entry, as ‘baked heads’, in the customs books (ibid, 4). During New Zealand’s Musket Wars (1807-1837), trade in *mokomokai* increased dramatically, with the heads of defeated

enemies traded for muskets, and slaves often given fake *moko* (tattoos) and killed for the same purpose. Trade in *mokomokai* also increased in the early 17th century due to the colonial collection of human remains for both scientific and decorative purposes, with significant demand driven by European museums and private collectors (where many examples remain to this day). Needless to say, this rapid commercialisation had the combined effect of denigrating *moko* and desacralising *mokomokai*, and destroying their aesthetic and cultural value in the process, a significant trend aligned with western demands on Indigenous art and culture across the world (ibid, 5).

In Sydney, the trade in *mokomokai* was prohibited in early 1831, shortly before the arrival of Governor Pierce, as depicted at the beginning of Hitchcock's film version of *Under Capricorn*. The illicit trade that followed is merely hinted at in the film, where they are used by the Flusky's jealous housekeeper Milly (Margaret Leighton), in order to keep Lady Henrietta under control, and in the hope of winning the affections of her husband. In Simpson's novel, however, it is Flusky himself who collects the gruesome trophies, showing them off to an exasperated Adare, and telling him 'it does them no harm, the blacks. They're dead enough' (Simpson 1938, 70). Although they contribute to Henrietta's distress in the novel, their presence is largely benign. In the hands of the film's Milly, however, they become an active tool of torment, and one that – devoid of context – implies an aspect of colonial guilt, not least when considering their use by an ostensibly English housekeeper to keep an Irish woman 'in line'.

The biggest questions about Indigenous cultures and colonial guilt in Hitchcock's rendition of *Under Capricorn* come not from its presences, but from its absences. Rendered, problematically, on the margins of colonial life in Simpson's novel, Aboriginal characters are completely absent from the film. In contrasting the two texts, Constantine Verevis highlights a number of key alterations and excisions, including a sub-plot in the novel detailing Adare's journey into the interior in search of gold, accompanied by 'Ketch', an Aboriginal man he meets near the Flusky household and hires as a guide (2011, 176). As Verevis notes, such depictions contribute to the novel's 'colourful engagement with antipodean attitudes (and issues of colonialism and race)', and their removal has the effect of 'emptying Hitchcock's film of much of the book's local specificity' (ibid). Whether this is an issue of not going on location is debatable. After all, in the novel, Simpson can afford to complicate matters by addressing – however problematically – the Indigenous presence. The film, in keeping with its depiction of civilization on 'the edge of unknown land', offers up Australia as a blank canvas, much in keeping with settler colonialism itself. For all the historical records and narratives about frontier conflict – of which, in the context of post-war cinema, Ealing's third Australian production *Bitter Springs* (Ralph Smart, 1950) is a notable exception – the

overwhelming depiction of Australia is that of a ‘white colony’ of the British Empire, transformed into a ‘white Dominion’, and – eventually – a key ‘white nation’ within the Commonwealth. Indeed, the lack of Indigenous presence is significant precisely because settler colonies (and nations) like Australia are entirely predicated on such erasures. A truly successful settler colony is one that has removed all trace of Indigenous inhabitants, and as cultural texts, films are part and parcel of that process.

Furthermore, the fact that settler societies are predicated on the dispossession of Indigenous lands is no coincidence when it comes to the acquisition of property and the allocation of ‘crown lands’, which serve as key plot points in *Under Capricorn*. In this light, the film’s recurring social motif of ‘not talking about the past’ – so often read in terms of class and criminality, and as a comment on Australia’s egalitarian ideals – takes on an unwitting resonance. Although its First Nations people have long carried cultural memories of dispossession, massacre and maltreatment, Australia more broadly has consistently struggled to reconcile this past within conceptions of the contemporary nation and narratives of nationhood. So whilst it may be possible to talk about ‘original sin’ in *Under Capricorn* in terms of the Magdalen-esque nature of Hattie’s suffering and penitence (Gallefant 2005, 70) or in the rigid system of social status that overshadows the protagonists (Allen 2019, 123), the colonial setting itself also has a significant role to play. In accounting for the film’s final scene, a return to the dockside setting of the opening as *Adare* departs back to the ‘Old World’, Richard Allen posits that the Flusky’s are ‘finally liberated from original sin, that is, from the accumulated prejudices of the class system of the Old World, to embrace a future in which the love between two human beings is freely entered into and universally honored’ (ibid, 127). And yet they do so, in the context of the film’s setting, on the unceded land of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and standing beneath the British flag. In this sense, the true ‘original sin’ of *Under Capricorn*, and of the society it depicts, might actually be settler colonialism itself.



Conclusion

As with any ‘minor’ Hitchcock, *Under Capricorn* is rarely allowed to stand on its own merits – a fact that this collection of essays, and the *Under Capricorn at 70* symposium from which they emerged – has hopefully gone some way to rectifying. For many Hitchcock scholars, and for Hitchcock himself, the film’s setting seems almost irrelevant, and it is typically positioned as a mid-career experiment, in terms of both the Transatlantic Pictures partnership, and the extended long take. In other accounts, it is held up as an example of Hitchcockian high melodrama and / or as a star vehicle for Ingrid Bergman, or an example of gothic romance. This is not to say that the fault necessarily lies with Hitchcock scholarship. Indeed, I would argue that the neglected fact of its Australian setting lies squarely with the film itself.

Hitchcock’s struggle to depict an ‘authentic’ vision of colonial Australia in *Under Capricorn* may, after all, be just another contributor to its overall ‘failure’ for audiences, past and present. Amidst the litany of regrets that he shares with Truffaut regarding *Under Capricorn*, it is telling, I think, that none of them involve his decision not to shoot on location in Australia. A troubled, uneven production from the outset, Robin Wood has argued that ‘the particular richness of *Under Capricorn* derives partly from the multiplicity of its influences, determinants, and anticipations’ (2002, 326). As recent interest in the film has shown, even if not always successful, it is undeniably rich. And of those multiplicities of riches, it’s unique, often problematic, representation of Australia is but one that I think bears closer scrutiny.

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After Thomas Watling, *A direct north general view of Sydney Cove ... 1794*

oil on canvas, 91 x 121 cm

Dixson Galleries, State Library of New South Wales [DG 60]. (Out of Copyright)

Eugene von Guérard, *Warrenheip Hills near Ballarat 1854*

oil on canvas on plywood, 46.0 × 75.5 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1977

Photo: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (Out of Copyright)

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IMAGE CAPTIONS

Figure 1 – *An introductory map sets up the contrast between known and unknown.*

Figure 2 – *Under Capricorn: Sydney is established in the opening sequence*

Figure 3 – *Remarkable similarities between the Sydney of Under Capricorn, and the Chicago of Calamity Jane*

Figure 4 – *After Thomas Watling, A direct north general view of Sydney Cove ... 1794 (State Library of New South Wales)*

Figure 5 – *Eugene von Guérard, Warrenheip Hills near Ballarat 1854 (National Gallery of Victoria)*

Figure 6 – *Matte paintings of the Flusky home at Minyago Yugilla, order with a tinge of melancholy.*

Figure 7 – *A romantic landscape adorns the Drawing Room of the Flusky home.*

Figure 8 – *Landscape and nationhood are intimately linked in the opening montage of Eureka Stockade*

Figure 9 – *Jedda: A flurry of discordant notes and rapid editing creates a moment of emotional excess for Jedda (Rosalie Kunothe Monks)*

Figure 10 – *Under Capricorn: Sam Flusky (Joseph Cotton) and Lady Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman) farewell Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) beneath the British flag.*

Humiliation Finery in George Cukor's *Gaslight* (1944) and Alfred Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn* (1949)

George Toles

“A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.”

- Wittgenstein (115)

An extended comparative analysis of George Cukor's *Gaslight* (1944) and Alfred Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn* (1949) will enrich our understanding of the formal experiments, perverse psychological terrain, and variations on extremes of confinement common to both works. Although my discussion will range widely over the narrative structure of the two films, which diverge in many significant ways, the sequences which seem to me most crucially linked, and which provide the centerpiece of my critical investigation, are Lady Dalroy's musical soiree in *Gaslight* and the Governor's Ball sequence in *Under Capricorn*. Both sequences break the pattern of the female protagonist's fear of facing the outside world. Ingrid Bergman, who plays Paula Anton in *Gaslight* and Henrietta Flusky in *Under Capricorn*, sets out bravely to reclaim a long stifled sense of self, leaving a haunted bedroom in which she has been treacherously preyed upon and immobilized by a mixture of guilt and madness-tinged anxiety. What begins in each case as a nearly miraculous social triumph culminates in a public humiliation of Ingrid Bergman's character, and a return to her “gaslit” isolation in an opulent domestic prison.

Gaslight was adapted from a successful Patrick Hamilton melodrama, which had been first filmed in 1940 by Thorold Dickinson. Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), made the year before *Under Capricorn*, was also adapted from a famous Patrick Hamilton play. Ingrid Bergman's performance in *Gaslight*, her first American characterization of a woman whose primary attributes were her inner torment and mental fragility, preceded her three collaborations with Hitchcock. It is likely that Hitchcock was drawn to Helen Simpson's novel, *Under Capricorn*, and its 1830 New South Wales period setting in part because the story had numerous superficial parallels with Bergman's Academy Award winning tour-de-force in *Gaslight*. Complicating the ways in which the two films draw sustenance from each other is the fact that the Lady Dalroy soiree sequence, which has no counterpart in Hamilton's play or the earlier film adaptation, is a deliberate variation on one of Hitchcock's most recognizable suspense scenarios: a safe public setting turning sinister and unmanageable, with an uninformed crowd oscillating between social approval and cold judgment. In *Gaslight*, Joseph Cotten plays Scotland Yard inspector Brian Cameron, the protective male figure in the humiliation scene, who is nevertheless unable to disrupt Charles Boyer's insidious plan to precipitate his wife's hysterical outburst in the sight of the assembled guests. In *Under Capricorn*, Cotten's Sam Flusky, tortured by jealousy and a sense of social inferiority, not only precipitates the humiliation scene, but partakes of the public shame. Although still equivocally in love with Henrietta, he robs her of her right to "show herself" in polite society. The collapse of Bergman's confidence, which mirrors that of her Paula in *Gaslight*, severs her ties with the outside world and drives her back into the jail cell of her disoriented condition and the domestic hiding place which amplifies it.

Gaslight benefits enormously from its fierce situational compression, and unwavering concentration on Bergman's victimization by an adroit manipulator. *Under Capricorn* is more sprawling, and all of its principal characters are driven, in intricately mysterious ways, by related compulsions to undo the past or efface it. Class conflict is prominent in both films, but in *Gaslight* the power of the scheming outsider is undeniably monstrous, however cunning and grotesquely witty his machinations. Class

consciousness is a seething, unruly component at every stage of *Under Capricorn*'s unfolding, and even in the case of Milly (Margaret Leighton), the film's implacable, eventually murderous housekeeper, Hitchcock encourages emotional investment in the logic of her point-of-view. It is interesting to note how jewels are transformed from the blinding obstacle to marital attachment in *Gaslight* into the hidden expression of thwarted love (as well as undischageable debts) in *Under Capricorn*. Cukor and Hitchcock are both preoccupied with the terror of being seen, and the difficulty of entering domestic spaces and penetrating the morbid isolation of their occupants. The two films are equally narratives of stifled desire. In *Gaslight*, Bergman's Paula eventually discovers that "from the beginning there was nothing." Since her aunt's murder in childhood, she has had no real relationships, none that allow her to advance an inch from the traumatic associations of that loss. She ends the film wondering how to commence a history that is either plausibly of her own making or trustfully linked to another person. In *Under Capricorn*, Bergman's Henrietta is mired in a history that is based on a real attachment, but one that has grown stagnant, increasingly dependent on lies, guilt, bondage, and sterile fantasy in order to stay fitfully alive. Both films are very much about protagonists caught in what one might term "frozen time."

Hitchcock is determined to create a more layered humiliation scene at the Governor's Ball than the *Gaslight* predecessor, one in which the outcome of abasement is not only devastating, but also a consummation devoutly to be wished. My analysis of the two public humiliation scenes, and their surrounding context, will demonstrate how the apparent disaster of the *Gaslight* party lays the groundwork for a return to firm moral distinctions and psychological clarity, while the *Under Capricorn* ballroom scene compounds not only Bergman's affliction but the ambiguities of everyone's untenable position.

In the opening shots of *Gaslight*, public space and private domestic space are established as equally menacing and alien. A house in Thornton Square is instantly marked as the scene of a violent crime. The lamplighter on the street begins by providing illumination for the nocturnal setting, but goes on to create the glare of

exposure for a throng of thrill-hungry gawkers. A famous opera singer, Alice Alquist, has been murdered. Her young, orphaned niece, Paula, who discovered her strangled corpse, is being led out of the house to a waiting carriage by an elderly lawyer (Halliwell Hobbes). Despite a bobby's command to the assembled onlookers to "Stand back," they remain frozen in place, training their silent, rapacious gaze on the ghostly child victim, clad in a mourning dress and hat. The girl seems to face the street with nearly as much dread as she feels for the home she vacates. Her silence as she walks out and then sits, stunned, in the hansom that takes her away, eerily matches that of the sinister row of observers. Her one visible initiative in this prologue is to glance back at Thornton Square through the carriage window. The lawyer, who sits beside her, immediately interrupts her action with a stern command: "No, no, Paula. Don't look back."

They are his first words in the film, and the first attempt by anyone to assess Paula's position and give her advice---speaking in place of her murdered guardian. Like other figures Paula encounters early on, he is confident, well-intentioned, and obtuse. His character's name in the screenplay, never spoken aloud, is the apt Mr. Muffin. He goes on to insist that Paula has "got to forget everything that happened here. That's why you're going to Italy, to see Signor Guardi. He was the best friend your aunt ever had, and he'll be yours too. Perhaps Signor Guardi will make you into a great singer as she was. Wouldn't you like that?" We recall the actions Mr. Muffin performed before joining Paula in the carriage: turning off the gaslight in the house entranceway which plunges the interior in blackness, and then closing and locking the front door. His counsel that she forget "everything that happened here" is the memory equivalent of his sealing the house up, preventing further inspection of its contents and associations. Yet the future he outlines for Paula as she fearfully steps out into the larger world points her directly to the past he urges her to lose sight of. He plans to leave her in the hands of her murdered aunt's best friend and singing teacher, Maestro Guardi. And the wish he hopes she will see the sense of is to be made into a perfect imitation of her relative. Her professional fate, if she is lucky, will mirror that of Alice Alquist. An understandably non-plussed Paula finds no place to fix her gaze as the scene fades out.

Cukor's next scene gives partly achieved shape to the lawyer's proposal for Paula's future. A transition is made from hansom darkness, childhood, and the motion of flight to Italian daylight, settledness, and apparent stability. We are led to wonder whether Paula has found a secure refuge and has grown up in a place far removed—geographically—from the gloom, uncertainty, and sorrow of Thornton Square. There are few settings in the film that offer an alternative to the Alquist house, and that permit us to entertain, however briefly, the possibility of escape from the immobilizing dread of Paula's starting point. The later musical evening hosted by Lady Dalroy will be the most significant, willed departure by Paula from her desperate triple confinement: in her marriage, in her advancing madness, and in the shadow-filled chambers of her unresolvable past. But this escape to the outside, as I previously noted, results in a hysterical breakdown in public, a swift return to her domestic enslavement, and a fuller capitulation to the allure of madness.

I will be examining this breakdown sequence comprehensively at a later point, but for now let us preliminarily note its parallels to the early "safe haven" scene at Maestro Guardi's. The more we dwell on the particulars of Paula's situation there, the more her first sanctuary seems to forecast the dread that will overwhelm her at Lady Dalroy's party. As with the Dalroy soiree, we are ushered into Maestro Guardi's studio through the sound of a musical performance in progress. The camera moves toward a window bearing a sign "Signor Guardi, Teacher of Singing" as if drawn by the sound of the voice inside, a thin female voice failing to meet the powerful demands of the Act One love duet from Donizetti's opera, *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Lucia and Edgardo in this episode are exchanging vows of eternal fidelity just before Edgardo's forced departure. Edgardo's life is in danger. Lucia has dreamed of a "ghostly" woman appearing to warn her by a fountain whose waters turned red. The atmosphere of the duet is an apprehensive, uncertain farewell. Lucia's future (akin to Paula's) will include a collapse into madness after Lucia's doomed arranged marriage. She will make a spectacle of herself in a crowd at court—similar to Paula's wild outpouring at the Lady Dalroy party. Lucia, near the end of her tragedy, retains no sense of how to control herself. She

becomes, in the collective mind watching her silent and aghast, a pitiful wraith in a bloodstained white dress, singing herself into a frenzy of dissociation.

Paula, performing her part of the love duet at her lesson for Maestro Guardi, seems entirely dissociated from the mood of the aria, and the death-defying pathos of its avowals. Before revealing Paula singing in front of her baton-wielding instructor, Cukor lingers on the hands of an otherwise hidden accompanist at the piano. A pan from these hands to Paula 's standing figure pointedly suggests a secret link between them. The fact that the accompanist's hands precede Paula's introduction allows, briefly, the secondary performer to take precedence over the struggling vocalist. The odd fact of his overall hiddenness further accentuates his power in abeyance. The accompanist's task is generally to give unobtrusive support to the singer's choices. In this instance, in spite of scant confirming evidence, the pianist's hands appear to subtly influence her approach and control her. Because the performance is weak, we might well regard the mysterious accompanist as having some role to play in the singer's dazed blundering.

Cukor introduces adult Paula singing in what she will soon describe as helpless happiness. Her disconnected interpretation is a subliminal declaration of love to the man who is seated behind her, guiding the melodic line while maintaining a secret relationship with her. Paula's searching eyes and outstretched arms during her brief display of her vocal talent cannot find the man she seeks, as if he, like the lover bidding her farewell in the aria, were already a ghost. Another ghostly presence in the music room is Alice Alquist, who peerlessly played the role of Lucia onstage, years before Paula, in this pallid reenactment, "lost" contact with the role. Paula vainly attempts to revive some portion of Alicia's spirit with her own defective rendition. Maestro Guardi's (Emil Rameau) response to Paula's effort explicitly echoes that of Mr. Muffin in the previous scene. The apparent benevolence of both men commingles with a troubling lack of discernment. Guardi's first interjection "No.no.no" duplicates the lawyer's emphatic "No" when young Paula turns her head to gaze back at Thornton Square. The music teacher goes on to chide her for not concentrating, and for having no notion of what tragedy is. He needlessly, perhaps woundingly, reminds her (hardly for the first time) that

she looks very much like her famous aunt, but does not sound like her. We try to form an impression of the years Paula has spent under his disappointed tutelage. He has no doubt been well paid to supervise her musical education and give her a sense of purpose in the strange city she occupies. Out of kindness (he perhaps believes) he has refrained from telling her that her voice is unremarkable and that she will not have a career on the stage. How long has he spent attempting to bring Alice back—for himself—using this childlike vessel as a medium for restoration? Every endeavor on her part to replicate her aunt's achievements reduces her claim to a separate standing or identity.

On this occasion Guardi apologizes to her for his “cruel” and false charge that she has no acquaintance with tragedy. Everything in her stymied, past-encircled struggle to be her own person attests to tragedy's enduring grip. Her onerous inheritance from Alice has been this superhuman relation's terrible, inexplicable, seemingly unending murder. We hear little of Paula's actual mother. Alice, in addition to being her adoptive mother, perhaps was her birth mother as well. As Paula and Maestro Guardi continue their friendly altercation, Gregory (Charles Boyer)--the accompanist's identity finally revealed,--begs to be excused. His opening line expresses his concern with the time. (He consults the pocket watch that he will later accuse Paula of having stolen from him at the Dalroy party.) Gregory's calling attention to time sharpens the scene's emphasis on Paula's frozenness in time. She is being kept from any contact with the larger world that might loosen the bonds that tie her to her aunt's broken intentions and the unresolved mystery of Alice Alquist's fate. Gregory also relinquishes control of a scene in which Paula seems to be making a decision on her own, something he will not allow to happen again until Paula expresses her determination to go to Lady Dalroy's late in the film, whether he chooses to accompany her or not.

Paula's euphoria when she was singing led her to separate Lucia's farewell to Edgardo from any intimation of the disaster that would soon befall her. Paula's exultant, carefree mood made her think it was possible to have love in a purified state. She spontaneously severs the ties with Lucia's own anxiety—forgetting entirely the character's inescapable appointment with madness and death. Her absentmindedness

during the aria produces a joy that is also a form of vertigo. Ingrid Bergman has a beautifully realized moment in her talk with Maestro Guardi when she declares how love has taken her by surprise, and displaced all other sense of things. A light transfigures her as she offers this revelation. She then turns away and leans into a shadow space, which seems to hold the memory of past sorrows, and her long, deep confinement in them. Guardi repeats the directive of the lawyer as she lies bent in shadow. "You must forget the past." (How would these words be felt by 1944 spectators, still in the midst of war?) Guardi next urges Paula to forsake her art, and encourages her to believe in the pursuit of happiness above everything. She clings to his words and raises herself up again into the light. Within moments she is ready to abandon her teacher of many years along with his his constricting version of security. As they embrace by the door, Paula tells him that she has no idea when (or if) they will see each other again. Paula puts on a small hat that enhances her childlike appearance and happily extricates herself from a studio that feels now as much like a prison as a place promoting growth and protection. Maestro Guardi makes no attempt to detain her and watches her descend the steps to the city street with seeming equanimity.

Paula appears to have achieved a lightness and an eagerness to wander on her own, unobserved, through the crowded streets. (She will return to this rare mood of lightness during her arrival at Lady Dalroy's musical soiree.) No sooner has she chosen a direction and taken a few steps than the off-screen voice of Gregory interrupts her movement and intercepts her. Paula must reverse course to join him inside a courtyard gate, whose metal work grid includes spikes softened by a repeated clover leaf pattern. Gregory resumes his initial preoccupation with time and haste. Paula has not decided to marry him (they have known each other for only a few weeks) and she requests for a short time apart in another city to collect her thoughts. She needs to discover who she is, now that she has given up singing, and what she will put in place of her forsaken dreams of being onstage. Gregory appears to relent in his pressure for an immediate answer, but presents his own fully settled love as a contrast and gentle reproach to her wavering. He consents to let her go, but counts on her uncertainty as she walks away. She responds in

the manner he hopes, turning around and coming back to him in the cage –like courtyard. Once there she gives him a reassuring farewell kiss and a pledge of her love.

Paula's freedom to move, to claim any portion of the outside world for herself is repeatedly blocked in *Gaslight*'s introductory scenes. The cluttered Guardi studio is no sooner left behind than she is imprisoned (though she cannot see the cage) in a tight enclosure with a supplicating lover, who insists that the time she asks for herself is time stolen from him. When he waves goodbye to her from behind the barred gate, his face dissolves into hers in a cramped railway car compartment. He is the content of her thoughts; she is filled with him. She dreamily ponders her future prospects with Gregory as an initially concealed fellow passenger, Miss Thwaites (May Whitty) breaks into Paula's reverie (another offscreen voice, like Gregory's in the previous scene) with exclamations that echo those of Mr. Muffin and Maestro Guardi. "Oh,oh,oh" is a sharp interjection like the earlier "No, no, no" and introduces another figure who instantly dominates Paula in conversation, further restricting Paula's as yet scarcely achieved mental and physical freedom. She is intent on telling Paula of the delicious nastiness of a murderous husband in a Grand Guignol novel she's reading, whose wife is entirely deceived about his past crimes and present air of virtue. As Miss Thwaites proceeds, with very little encouragement, to reveal more about herself, Paula learns that she is a long time resident of Thornton Square, and had lived there at the time of Alice Alquist's killing. These revelations further shrink the space of possibility that travel to a new city had promised. Miss Thwaites reverses the lawyer's insistence that Paula "forget everything" that happened to her in her forsaken house. Now Paula must confront her past directly in the sordid details offered in this elderly woman's gossipy reminiscence. The old tragedy feels inescapable even in Paula's determined flight to an "untried" place. She is barricaded in not only by Gregory's unreasonable pressure, but by the cumulative harm provided by the well-meaning. Friend and stranger alike are complicit in denying her the opportunity to think her own thoughts.

By the time of the Dalroy Musical Evening sequence, late in *Gaslight*, the system of blockage of Paula's movements outside Thornton Square has been firmly established.

No neighbors, servants, or neutral observers can advise her on how to seek elsewhere than her own menacing, unintelligible domestic space for self-awareness and deliverance from her past. Every gaze that Paula encounters reinforces the incomprehension and suspicion of the crowd of onlookers who watched her nocturnal departure from Thornton Square as a child, shortly after her aunt's murder. Before she can find the strength to face the internalized judgment of the city streets (which even in sunlight carries the fearful disequilibrium of fog), she must compose herself sufficiently to recognize what she wants for herself, and believe that she is entitled to it. She cannot endure the inspection of others if she cannot trust her perceptions, or if she feels the infection of madness. Paula's surprising decision to overrule Gregory's objections, and attend the Dalroy party whether or not he accompanies her yields the first significant defeat of his control of her. He appears (at least initially) staggered, uncertain, and disoriented as she exhibits a powerful readiness to leave the Thornton Square residence, where she is continually under surveillance.

Without his knowledge, Paula has attired herself magnificently and flawlessly in a white evening gown. When Gregory capitulates to her desire to attend and revokes his demand that she go by herself, we note a marked increase in Paula's self-assurance and poise. She has a brief confrontation with her impertinent maidservant, Nancy (Angela Lansbury) ---similar to Henrietta's power struggle with her housekeeper, Milly, in *Under Capricorn*---in which Paula refuses to be intimidated and calmly asserts her authority. We are alerted that Gregory has already hit upon a plan to undermine her at the social gathering as he gets dressed near his upstairs bedroom mirror. He visibly makes calculations and seems, as he approvingly glances at his reflection, to imitate Paula's smiling contentment in the downstairs room where she awaits him. Gregory briefly takes out (once again) his watch chain and considers it, which we might interpret as his recognition that time remains on his side.

The introduction of Paula to her hostess, Lady Dalroy (Heather Thatcher) and the revelation of Paula's attitude to the assembled guests closely resembles Hitchcock's method of setting up a suspense sequence. We are apprehensive about her chances of

proving herself on her own in a socially challenging milieu after years of removal from this domain. Subtle rules of deportment and likely judgments of small infractions abound in a space teeming with wealth and upper class privileges. Cukor, like Hitchcock, alternates between general views from a safe distance and shots connecting us intimately with Paula's perspective and responses. By slow degrees we are cunningly ensnared in Paula's point-of-view, with minimal protective separation. From the outset we alternate—depending on how the situation seems to be developing—between faith in Paula's power to prevail in this public test and fear that Gregory will once more find unexpected ways to shame her. What gives us early impetus for hopefulness is Paula's unanticipated lack of diffidence and tension. Ingrid Bergman draws upon all her resources for depicting an invincible queenly bearing and radiant self-possession. She refers during her brief exchange with Lady Dalroy to a party she remembers attending in this home as a young girl, where she was dazzled by a magician's performance. What is noteworthy about Paula's shared childhood memory is that it carries no taint of the darkness which until now has so completely dictated her sense of her early life. During this entrance Paula herself seems like the astonishing magician of her anecdote, having achieved so convincing a transformation of her fragile mental state. Soon it will be Gregory's turn to play the magician, at her expense.

Gregory loses some of the stature he possesses as the master of his household when he moves with Paula into this alien sphere. His self-command is a bit reduced at a party where he is known by no one except as Paula's mysterious foreign spouse. He has no class distinction to draw upon, and Paula's aristocratic manner and glowing appearance entirely overshadow him. Paula's anecdote about the childhood party deftly reclaims a longstanding connection to the world in which the other guests comfortably move. It is a return to a familiar place, not a beginning. Paula is not only at ease, but shows every sign of being able to sustain and amplify her charming ebullience. Cukor has not encouraged us to think about Gregory's dubious social rank since the time of his wedding to Paula. But we are forcibly reminded of it at this soiree. He must overcome the stigma of his felt position as a social inferior. The gifted piano virtuosos who are

performing at Lady Dalroy's cause him to slip backward in the spectator's estimation to his original position as a menial, financially strapped accompanist. (All of these shifts of power and emotional alignment will be present again in in the *Under Capricorn* ball scene.)

Another prominent figure whose discreet presence at the musical evening augurs well for Paula's success there is Brian Cameron (Joseph Cotten). It is he who has secretly arranged for her invitation to the party. As a Scotland Yard inspector, he is fully apprised of the facts pertaining to Alice Alquist's death, as well as Paula's more recent peculiar confinement at Thornton Square. He has cause to watch Gregory's actions closely, and with already aroused distrust. Most significantly, he shares a personal childhood attachment of his own to Alice Alquist. He was innocently enamored of her many years ago, and was given a glove by her as a keepsake when introduced to her following an opera performance. The glove, which he still possesses, is a kind of magic antidote to Gregory's deceitful play with objects. Gregory has persuaded Paula that a variety of household items have been taken and hidden by her in fits of mad behavior that she has no ability to recall. The chief sign of her weakness and culpable incompetence (in Gregory's version of their married life) is that she cannot keep track of precious gifts that he is given her, and is a compulsive thief into the bargain. At the very least, he repeatedly informs her, she is someone who is impossible to trust and incapable of assuming any adult responsibility. Every time a domestic object goes "missing" Paula is accused of being the culprit—the one who senselessly needs to make things disappear. In a scene close to the climactic exposure of Gregory, Cameron shows Paula her aunt's "missing" glove, which can be reunited with the solitary glove that Paula has faithfully preserved. The idea of missing objects and pieces of the mystery-filled past is reinterpreted by Cameron to cleanse Paula of defilement and guilt. In effect, her house and her pathetically confined history have been manipulated by Gregory to incriminate her, over and over, so that she will bear the burden of his own concealed crimes, past and present. The Thornton Square dwelling, scene of the ancient, inexplicable crime, seems to have the power to watch Paula hide "guilty" objects that have some

undisclosed connection to Alice's fate. And each gap of knowledge that she confesses to pushes her back to the childhood fear that she had played an obscure part in her aunt's destruction. Gregory is intent, above all, to coerce Paula into being the traumatized child again, that and nothing else. Cameron's own romantic childhood memory of Alice—presented in the film as a positive fixation—and his presentation of the restored glove to Paula (an unpoisoned early memory for her as well) moves both of their experiences with Alice into the realm of light. The missing glove embodies a lucid innocence. It is a gift twice over from Alice, first to commemorate Brian's unblemished devotion to her, and then to rescue her "lost" niece, Paula, supplying a restored sense of kinship and devotion. The glove is the first tangible sign that things can "fit together" in Paula's favor.

We don't know all of this, of course, at the start of Lady Dalroy's party, but Cameron has been convincingly established as a sympathetic, watchful protector. He is seated in the audience for the musical program not far away from the seats reserved for Paula and Gregory. He is advantageously placed behind them, allowing him to freely observe without being continually visible to the couple himself. Several close-ups of Brian scrutinizing Gregory at rather close range persuades us that nothing consequential will escape his notice. Reinforcing our sense of Brian's power as witness is Gregory's acute awareness of this unidentified spectator behind him. More than once Gregory turns his head around to determine whether Brian's attention is still centered on Paula and himself. The rest of the audience for the classical music pieces is immaculately groomed, polite, and engaged by the performance. One might infer that they are constrained to appear appreciative.

Hitchcock would say that such a group possesses a great, behavior-regulating authority. If you abide by the rules of this decorous, well-defined social occasion, as everything in the surrounding environment instructs you to do, you will find safety and blend in. The easy path for Paula to follow, if she wishes to succeed as invited guest and listener, is to focus her gaze on the concert pianist in front of her playing Beethoven and Chopin. Securing acceptance within this gathering demands nothing but respectful

silence. The crowd, because of subtly acknowledged class ties and Paula's resplendent style and calm, appears to be Paula's ally. Gregory is the interloper who needs to rein himself in if he is to pass muster. If Paula wishes, she is free to discreetly survey those seated near her. Nothing prevents her from pursuing her own thoughts and feelings, for which the music supplies a cover. Whatever is on her mind need not be exposed to the audience. She might also be the object of admiring glances from members of the audience, and could very well prove to be the most inviting presence within the chamber, exciting more curiosity and excitement than the pianist onstage.

Identification with characters in film is a much more slippery business than is generally assumed. It is by no means automatically consistent or continuous, even if a viewer's assessment of a central character's behavior remains approving. Identification can be interrupted for short or lengthy periods and then resumed again when the emotional circumstances of a character become more tantalizing and charged with interest. The fickle spectator can, without penalty, secretly shift, his or her affiliation to any other figure onscreen whose actions or point-of-view temporarily acquires story "allure." With a protagonist like Paula in *Gaslight*, full identification would entail enmeshment in her torment and escalating victimization. Viewer sympathy is not synonymous with identification. One can find a character's predicament blameless and emotionally absorbing, yet maintain (self-protectively) a degree of detachment from her. Power and superior knowledge of what is going on, even if possessed by characters with no moral credentials, tend to determine the flow of identification within a scene. Because we know Gregory is a scoundrel and Paula does not, we not only witness his duplicitous schemes but, to some hard to quantify extent, collaborate with him. We need not approve of Gregory in the least in order to take a certain unacknowledged pleasure in his cleverness and abuse of power. His power is repellent, but imaginative involvement with it is not wounding. We can be entranced by Bergman's depiction of Paula's suffering and eager for Paula to discover Gregory's machinations, while at the same time deriving satisfaction from our privileged (if partial) inside knowledge of what Gregory is up to. It

is necessary to recognize this division of identification within *Gaslight* to grasp how the complex dynamics of the Lady Dalroy humiliation scene work.

The viewer is encouraged to delight in Gregory's apparently reduced control, and to savor the signs of the more resourceful, efficacious attributes of the Ingrid Bergman star persona being released. Her smile, innate strength, and ability to read a situation accurately (with typically quick penetration) are all tantalizingly on display. As a result, Cukor lures us into intensifying our identification with her. It is not that we are certain of her making lasting gains here, but she seems at last to be breathing the air of freedom. Brian Cameron's presence in the scene counts immensely in our reassessment of her chances for success in her first public outing. Gregory is caught off guard by his calm, persistent surveillance of him, and he has no knowledge himself (unlike the viewer) of what Cameron has figured out or intends to do in the course of the evening. We are confident that Gregory must proceed more cautiously here than in his domestic citadel. We also regard Lady Dalroy's guests as further reinforcements for Paula's thus far impressive advance in self-reclamation.

Cukor cannily misleads us in our reading of the crowd as a reliably supportive force, which will take Paula's side in a crisis. We momentarily forget how fragile the alliance is and how little real cover this refined social group provides for Paula. Although reluctant to grant much approval to the unknown outsider, Gregory, the crowd at the soiree possesses little direct knowledge of Paula beyond the fact that she cuts a striking figure in their midst, and that she has a connection (because of her celebrated aunt) to Lady Dalroy. A musical performance is a safe realm only as long as the protocols of spectator conduct are observed. Hitchcock's films consistently examine the ways in which reliable social circumstances can be disrupted with frightful consequences. Conversely, Hitchcock is equally interested in showing how ordinary, seemingly insubstantial social elements can afford surprising safeguards from threat. A definitive example of the latter situation appears at the end of another Ingrid Bergman film, *Notorious* (1946). It is astonishing how the mere act of walking down a staircase in full view of deadly adversaries can be a plausible solution to a dangerous plight because a

particular sort of social awareness and decorum is in play. The Nazis have known for some time about Bergman's Alicia (the wife of one of their colleagues) being ill, and it makes sense to them that if her condition has deteriorated she should be taken to a hospital. In *Gaslight*, Paula is a member in good standing in the assembled concert audience if she is able to perform the comparatively simple role of listener successfully. She can remain the focus of sympathetic awareness in the audience (a magnet for stolen glances) as long as her conspicuousness does not *amplify*. She can be an "integrated" presence while her conduct is kept within certain bounds; she must exemplify proper proportion.

Film possesses the extraordinary ability to magnify any visual or sound component at any time. Close-ups, by themselves, are not automatically disruptive magnifiers. If Cukor's camera fastens on Paula's face as she "surrenders" to the spell of Chopin's "Ballade number 1", she can express private emotions without her privacy seeming to be violated. Film convention dictates that we share what she is feeling without our intrusion "breaking into" her sense of being by herself. Because Paula's vitality and our sense of her formidableness have steadily increased until the Chopin performance gets underway, I would contend that viewers accept the invitation to identify more strongly with her new position. And that fresh onset of vulnerable identification becomes a snare for us. We are *inside* Paula to an unsettling degree when Gregory finally springs his malevolent magic trick. He removes his watch chain from his vest pocket as if to check the time, and reveals that the watch normally attached to it is missing. We may recall how Gregory urged Paula in their first scene alone together in the courtyard to accept his proposal of marriage immediately. To hesitate would be to use time against him, to be deficient in impulsiveness, to make "waiting time" a selfish barrier to love. The watch chain he now produces for his own theatrical scrutiny may remind us, in passing, that Paula's penal enclosure in Thornton Square condemns her to a sort of timeless time, where the normal daily progression from light to dark has been displaced by the hallucinatory rise and dimming of interior gaslight. Her fixation on this recurring

sorcery of illumination , commencing with the twin arrivals of aloneness and night, builds Paula's belief in the dire substitute clock of madness.

As Gregory registers the loss of his watch during the performance, he conveys to Paula by whisper what has happened, then looks to her for a possible explanation. Paula's reaction to the watch's disappearance and Gregory's implicit accusation precipitates, with a staggering swiftness, the collapse of her briefly regained idea of herself as a separate person. If identification with Paula is forcefully operative here (as it is in my case) we experience the collapse with her. She is bereft of defenses, and can appeal to no one around her to shield her from a mounting panic. Our close-up view of her—in a sustained two-shot with Gregory, who stares at her without let up—communicates an asphyxiating isolation, akin to those distraught childhood moments when we were exposed completely to an adult's power to mortify (in the presence of others). Paula attempts to deny any responsibility (“No”) but the effort to protest even a little is suppressed by the silence demanded by the intimate concert and the proximity of the pianist. The chain of pearls on the top of Paula's gown bears an incriminating resemblance to Gregory's watch chain, and creates a kind of arrow pointing in the direction of her ornately feathered handbag. Gregory's white gloved hand (immaculate) reaches into Paula's lap and withdraws the purse. She is unable to remonstrate with him at this point. His furtive action is attuned to the prevailing edict of audience quiet. Paula is granted a short, anguished close-up, glancing down to Gregory's hands, which perform their search beneath the sight lines of the surrounding spectators. We next watch with Paula—in a Hitchcock-style point-of-view shot—as the gloved hands feel around the handbag to determine its contents. The hands briefly resemble those of a physician probing the skin surface of a patient for a lump. The purse is sexualized as Gregory at last forces it open and thrusts in a hand, which emerges with the accusing watch. By extension Gregory appears to be brutalizing her person, and Paula's body reacts as though he is grasping and tearing at her. She helplessly issues another sound, which draws a reproving “Hush” from a woman seated in front of her. Her responses are now the focus of a widening circle of censoring audience attention.

It is important to consider what the music being performed during this collapse (Chopin's Ballade no. 1 in G minor) adds to the emotional tourniquet. As the piece begins, Paula is a grateful, enraptured auditor. She appears to surrender to the mood that the searching opening to the Ballade establishes. Paula's relation to music since she gave up her singing lessons has been dormant, smothered—like so much else brought to a standstill in her marriage. On one occasion Gregory coaxes her into believing that an excursion to the city is imminent as he plays a Strauss waltz. She instantly begins dancing to it in a transport of elation. He rapidly crushes her dance release with another “discovery” of her wrongdoing, and cancels the trip. Music also links Paula to her aunt Alice. Not only does Paula contend with guilt about the crime that destroyed her, but her aunt's immense stature enhances Paula's feeling that she is “shrinking to nothing” as she attempts to take her place in her old home. One might also connect the fact of her aunt's “strangling” as a curse leveled against female vocal expression in music.

The power of the Chopin piece is at first a liberating prospect for Paula, connecting her to areas of her psyche that she has damagingly cut herself off from. But as the anxious promenade of the Ballade's first theme is played—a waltz that fails to find its rhythm in 6/4 time—the music begins its own separate assault on Paula's frail inner state. Once Gregory uncovers the watch in her purse, the music pours its own agitation into her, enlarging it and making it impossible to press down. As the pianist reaches the place where the Ballade becomes more thunderously painful and wrought up, it seems to break in waves over Paula's struggle not to speak or weep—pressuring her at last to wail uncontrollably. She strives to return to prudent, polite silence after her initial eruption, but the Ballade, which seems to have taken possession of her, like Alice's still restive spirit, propels her to a cadenza of frantic sobs. In her music lesson scene at the beginning of the film, Paula gives up her attempt to sing any longer after failing to perform the Donizetti Lucia aria with any comprehension of its tragic spirit. Being lost in newfound love made her mind wander away from what she was required to express of Lucia's pain. The “voice” that she lacked then overtakes her now, producing a spectacle of authentic hysteria, worthy of Lucia, for the shocked audience encircling her. Gregory raises his

own status as he endeavors to subdue her noise. It is he, and only he, who can advise her to “Please control yourself,” , and who can expeditiously guide her out of this freshly created danger zone, to the relief of all bewildered observers. Gregory removes the sight and sound “calamity” that he has summoned into existence with his magic trick. He even finds an opportunity to express regret to Lady Dalroy, for both himself and Paula, as he plays the role of the long-suffering, disappointed caregiver.

What has become of the anticipated protector, Brian Cameron, during this ordeal? Our initial confidence in his ability to intervene if Gregory were to inflict harm on Paula unravels as the scene draws to a close. His seat in the audience—far enough away from the couple so that he is unable to observe Gregory’s tactics or to assist Paula in any way once her distress grows audible—in certain respects mirrors the film viewer’s own position, helpless and disoriented as the situation so swiftly explodes. To the extent that we identify, at the start of the scene, with Brian’s originally powerful position and secret knowledge, the return to his vantage point through close-ups late in the episode may augment our own sense of paralysis. It is noteworthy that the viewer is maneuvered into sharing the mindset of the concert audience as well. We too crave that Paula will suppress her weeping and find her way back to the decorum that the Chopin performance in progress deserves. We may be dismayed by Gregory’s whispered demands that she get control of herself and not show this aspect of herself to the public, but we share his stated wish (however insincere) for her immediate self-regulation. Once Gregory has extricated his wife from the gathering and leaves the Dalroy home, we cut back to Brian’s seat at the concert. Momentarily sharing the point-of-view of the flirtatious woman who had been sitting beside him, we discover that he has executed a magic trick of his own by disappearing.

Having demolished Paula’s standing in polite London society, Gregory brings her back to the house-fortress where she has been captive. It would appear that he is close to his goal of having her committed to an asylum and thus removed from the prison at Thornton Square, where he is her jailer. He is willing to relinquish control of her because she obstructs his plans to search for Alice’s hidden jewels without interference.

As the description of his plan would indicate, the moral and emotional demarcations in the narrative are becoming steadily more clear and firm. The plot shifts from its emphasis on Paula's internal miasma and Gregory's demented manipulation of her to a concern with an external puzzle and its unambiguous resolution. "There is an explanation for everything," Scottie Ferguson declares in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, just as all certainty slips away from him. In *Gaslight*, Brian Cameron becomes central not only to solving a case, but to making every psychological impasse give way. Gregory begins to disintegrate, losing his control and cleverness, shortly after the Dalroy party, when Paula seems to be utterly broken and bereft. He recoils in fear as he takes time to consider what Brian's presence at the party signified, and Paula's keeping a secret from him about their relationship. Paula's last outcry, in what might appear to be the boundless fantasy field of her isolation, occurs that same night, as she screams repeatedly, and without a shred of self-possession, for Elizabeth (a servant whose near total deafness is unknown to her)—hoping in vain that she will be able to confirm the sounds that "invade" her bedroom.

When Brian materializes within the house, he seems as much benign ghost as concerned Scotland Yard inspector, there to counteract all of the real and occult terrors of the past, which haunt Thornton Square. As a result of his explanations and demonstrations to Paula, she becomes legible to herself for the first time. In short order, Gregory's mystique and insidious power are disposed of in a brawl with the Inspector. He too becomes knowable in his entirety, to Paula and the viewer. Paula is given a final opportunity to perform madness for her husband in the attic, where he sits bound by rope to a chair, a literal captive audience. The attic is laden with all the detritus and disarray associated with Alice's tragedy. After Paula's victimization ends, she acquires the near-miraculous power in the attic theatre to retrace her steps—before Gregory's eyes—in all the stages of his grand deception, finding the incriminating missing objects as she needs them for her "mad" reenactment. In the course of her performance, she is able to demonstrate conclusively and irrefutably that her own version of the marriage story is correct in every particular. Madness strangely becomes a vehicle for the absolute restoration of rationality and objective interpretive knowledge. Gregory assents to her

mesmerizing, full-voiced “operatic “ attack on him and claims (by the film’s lights, credibly) that all of his dreadful misdeeds can be accounted for by his greed. He was spellbound, he avows, by the glitter of Alice’s jewels—hidden from him during his months of searching, in plain sight. When the jewels are located and Gregory is apprehended, the ghosts afflicting both Paula and Gregory are gone, and with them all the tribulation caused by their haunting. Nearly everything, in the final scenes of *Gaslight* imitates the jewels’ action of emerging from hiding (as daylight penetrates the house) and gleaming in plain sight with adamant clarity. The doors of the Alquist house—upstairs and down—suddenly appear to be unlocked and open to general inspection. Even Miss Thwaites, the inquisitive, gossip-driven next door neighbor, is no longer denied entry. “Is anybody home?” she asks as she enters by the front door, mystified by the ease of access. Significantly, she then proceeds to move from the front hall all the way up to the attic without interference. She is the spirit of comedy in this snooping search, standing in for the “social machinery” of the outer world that has created so much anxiety for Paula. The judging, wondering, easily disturbed social world has somehow been cleansed of its power to work harm by Miss Thwaites’ free passage through the dwelling.

The film ends with Brian leading Paula outside onto a small attached balcony near the roof. At this point a residue of fog is once again (as in the film’s opening) made visible. It is perhaps the film’s acknowledgment that in the 1944 space-time world outside the resolved structure of the film, a massive war continues, unresolved. Brian is willing to take on the powers of night (and, by implication, war) in his last words of rational reassurance to Paula. He assures her that the night will end: “It’s starting to clear.” Then he ventures a hope for still greater, more enduring clarity: “Sometimes, when the morning comes, it’s hard to believe there ever was night.”

So many domestic dramas, what we might term dramas of the interior, present their “adventure,” in Henry James’s phrase, through “the fact of a *relation*” (1909, 425) And romantic/sexual desire is more often than not what gives sharpness, mobility, and interest to the relation. Narration itself is thickly entwined with the progress of desire—what James, in another context, has famously described “the beautiful circuit and

subterfuge of our thought and desire” (1932, 32). It is worth stressing, as we turn to *Under Capricorn*, that although a love story of a kind is being told, it is one in which overt desire (marked by passion), plays a very minor part. Here is another link between *Gaslight* and *Under Capricorn*. Although *Gaslight* for most of its length is a study of a marriage, almost from the outset desire---whether as something to be pursued or thwarted---does not loom large for either Gregory or Paula. Late in the film, when Gregory’s plot has been laid bare to her by Brian, Paula delivers the following extraordinary lines: “If that were true, then from the beginning there would have been nothing. Nothing real from the beginning.” We have by this time watched one pressure-filled encounter after another, repeatedly yielding Gregory’s sadistic reproaches and tests followed by Paula’s fear and misery, but the final verdict on all the tension resulting from failed communication is that nothing that transpired between this pair counted as “real.” Paula slowly realizes that the desire for restored connection or genuine intimacy never played any part in Gregory’s dealings with her. The person she strove so hard to appease and convince had never really been present to her. Her struggle to become visible as a worthy wife, and to make herself known to Gregory as something other than a pitiful incompetent, had been performed for a mocking phantom.

The narrative situation in *Gaslight* is stuck in an unchanging present. Paula remains throughout the traumatized young girl we meet in the opening scene, one who could barely speak or feel or think her own thoughts. All sense of narrative movement seems to involve winding backwards---removing one by one Paula’s tenuous claims to adulthood and selfhood. She sheds all the guises of growth, continually obliged to turn back and face the inexplicable horror of the crime she discovered in her “adopted” home. The Alquist house seems to deny her right to live within it as a self-aware individual. She seems to consent to Gregory’s and the house’s view that she must feel overwhelmingly small.

“From the beginning there was nothing.” As Paula completes this reflection, Cukor cuts to Gregory in the attic, at long last finding his way to the reality of the lost jewels, sewed into Alice’s dusty old costume. As he loosens the jewels one by one from

the dress fabric and holds them in his hands, his desire is finally unmistakably visible to us. The jewels were “a fire in my brain,” as he puts it in his last exchange with Paula, “that separated us.” All the desire withheld from the narrative becomes concentrated, for a few, intense moments, in these cold, sparkling stones. And no sooner is desire released than it runs aground, empty. This monomania of Gregory’s seems to reduce to nothing all the dramatization of previously hoped-for connections between people that preceded it. Because its narrative denies any channel for desire (among its principal characters) other than Gregory’s “fire” for the diamonds, *Gaslight* is not ultimately about human becoming through emotional involvement with others. Yes, Gregory has relentlessly tormented Paula, and produced many ill effects in the process, but not as someone inside the relationship. Brian Cameron shows Paula that whatever was seemingly at stake in Paula’s painful marital education was counterfeit, a sham. The rational solution to the puzzle of Gregory’s elaborate, furtive skullduggery is obliged to substitute for the central character’s psyche enlarging its dimensions. Paula acquires no residual self to take hold of once the unmasking of her husband is completed. Her vehement re-enactment of the mad role that Gregory has concocted for her does seem to grant her full retrospective command of the role’s poisonous deception. But to “see through” the bars of one’s former cage and to turn the language of entrapment knowingly against one’s defeated persecutor is not to arrive at a voice or a room of one’s own. The darkness starting to “clear” in the closing scene allows Paula to cling, at Brian’s behest, to the light of reason as salvation. Yet she leaves the narrative still occupying the same home in which her trauma and captivity took place, still very much in the dark about where and who she is. She is part of a puzzle that has been resolved, but in effect that puzzle is *nothing* but a painted picture in relation to her own development. At film’s end this development has not yet begun in its own right. We cannot fathom what Paula’s present desires and needs might be, and in what direction they might lead her.

Just prior to the Irish Ball hosted by the New South Wales Governor in *Under Capricorn*, Hitchcock introduces desire-saturated jewels of his own. He provides an extended close-up of Sam Flusky (Joseph Cotten) holding a gift necklace of rubies

intended for his wife behind his back. He imagines that they could be the ideal completing ornament for Henrietta's sumptuous evening gown. He awaits her descent of the staircase in their lavish home to make his presentation, reconciled to the fact that she will be attending the ball without him. The scene proper begins with the camera tracking behind Sam, at a level with the ruby collar, as he moves toward the grand staircase. He and Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) anxiously await Henrietta's appearance. She might emerge from her upstairs bedroom looking like either an empress or a bedraggled drunk. Charles, who Sam has grown to dislike, is a visiting Irish layabout from a good family (he is a relative of the Governor) who has taken up the task of rehabilitating Henrietta, like an amateur Pygmalion. He has falsely assured Sam that he and Henrietta have both received invitations to the Ball. In fact, neither of them has. The Ball, if Henrietta proves that she is capable of pulling herself together, will mark her challenging return to polite society. The setup, therefore, is similar in a number of ways to that preceding the Lady Dalroy party in *Gaslight*. Hitchcock manages to make the jewels, in their concealed-behind-the-back position (which only the film spectator is privy to) a powerful expression of all the complex feelings, including stymied passion, which Sam holds for his wife, and has such difficulty conveying in words.

Once Henrietta makes her resplendent entrance, descending part way down the staircase with dispatch and resolve, she is immediately greeted by a relieved Charles with a series of rapturous poetic analogies. He is positioned at the base of the staircase which seems to give him ownership of the view of Henrietta descending. Sam stands off to one side. Hitchcock now grants us a second close-up examination of the rubies that Sam clutches, emphasizing his trepidation and uncertainty as he nervously fingers the jewels before presenting them. While we witness his covert hand activity, we hear his voice suggesting that Henrietta's gown might be enhanced with the addition of some accessory, and offhandedly mentions rubies as a possibility. Charles, when asked by Henrietta for his opinion on the matter, promptly declares that the dress is enough. Adding a necklace, and especially a ruby one would be vulgar and ostentatious. On numerous occasions in *Under Capricorn*, Charles delivers a judgment with no awareness

of Sam's precarious, nearly defenseless state of mind. It does not occur to either Charles or Henrietta that he holds a gift that he intends to bestow.

Throughout the short exchange of requests and recommendations, we remain in close visual contact with the rubies. The hurt is received by the hands clinging to the necklace rather than, say, Sam's exposed face. Following Charles's innocently disparaging remarks, Sam's fingers grow still. It becomes clear that he lacks the courage, or sense of what might be socially fitting, to bring his gift out in the open. One of Sam's hands, continuing to function as the agent of his shame, burrows into the space beneath his jacket and stows the rubies in his pocket. Henrietta happily departs the house in Charles's company, with no notion that Sam craved to make a contribution to the impending celebration—one that expressed the "opulence" of his regard for her. The rubies will never complete their journey to their intended recipient. Like so much that counts as feeling in Hitchcock's narrative, they remain buried, after this episode of heartsick constraint, in the realm of the "unspeakable."

Gregory's discovery of his long-sought jewels in *Gaslight* causes a vivid release of pent-up desire. *Under Capricorn*'s ruby necklace becomes the repository of all that is doubt-plagued, stymied, and mortified in Sam's love for his wife. What is most pressing for the film's major characters cannot—even in the midst of grand confession scenes—be brought fully out in the open. The "behind the back" rubies is subtly linked to other key moments of "behind" and hidden placement of figures in the film. When Sam tells Charles the story of his courtship and depleted marriage during Charles' first visit to the Flusky estate, there is a long take with a complex tracking of their evening walk as they move around the portico beside the house. When Sam reaches the point in his confession having to do with his crime of murder and subsequent punishment he turns his back to the camera, and briefly takes refuge in the shadows behind Charles. He refrains from telling him his life-defining secret, which has to do with assuming the guilt for his wife's killing of her brother. Later in this same discussion, the camera parts company with Sam and Charles and lifts up to reveal Henrietta standing alone on a balcony behind them. It is a most unusual revelation, since Henrietta is paying no attention to the voices

discussing her below. She seems isolated in a torment of her own, which her movement to the small, metal barred balcony has neither reduced nor clarified for her.

The most impressive “behind the back” episode involving Henrietta takes place during her first appearance in the film. Her entrance is directly preceded by another of Hitchcock’s elaborate tracking shots —filled with reframings and sinuous camera movement —as Sam, Charles Adare, and a set of exclusively male dinner guests gradually make their way to the dining room, then take their seats and bow their heads to say grace. Table conversation begins and within moments abruptly breaks off. A discordant element that resists inclusion in the capacious visual field built up in the shot delineating social protocol suddenly commands the attention of the dinner guests. The lengthy shot ends by closing in on Sam’s face as his awareness catches up with those around him. He turns his head to look behind him and there is a cut—startling in itself due to the length of the shot just ended—which reveals (as if from Sam’s point-of-view) the bare feet of a woman and the bottom half of her dress and shawl as she hesitantly enters the dining area. The camera moves ahead of her, not revealing her face, as she goes behind Sam’s chair and places her hands on his shoulders. It is difficult to interpret his response to her presence behind him: the late arriving, still hidden “gift”, as it were, of her willingness to be seen and judged. Henrietta briefly addresses this group from this stationary position in an enervated fashion. Her face is still unrevealed. She continues to hold Sam’s shoulders as if to give herself strength to continue. Sam, without turning again to gaze at her, reaches one hand up to cover the hand that wears her wedding ring, in what seems a mixture of concerned tenderness and embarrassed concealment. Henrietta’s voice is slow and wavery as she urges the gentlemen to be seated. We have no evidence, given the camera’s focus on Sam and her, whether in fact the men have stood up to honor her arrival. “I hope I’m not too late” she continues, before a slightly tense pause in which we may detect mild defiance, “to take a glass of wine with you.” It is here that we become conscious that her unsteadiness is due to drink. Having missed the proper moment for introducing her, Sam awkwardly interjects now, “My wife, gentlemen. Lady Henrietta Flusky.” His employment of the word “Lady” sounds like a

plea to grant her dignity. He does not succeed in covering up his own uneasiness with this attempt at formality. While Sam tries not to appear shamefaced, the camera pans up to reveal Henrietta to us. Once more, we behold Ingrid Bergman in extremis. She appears dazed and somewhat disheveled, with wild roses and leaves pinned to her hair. If she is abashed by her odd, shoeless state and her shaky self-command, Henrietta still achieves majesty in her recklessness. She seems like a naiad swept in from the sea. We may well think back at this juncture to the name of the Flusky home—Munyago Yugilla—which a coachman translates for Charles earlier that evening, at the commencement of his first visit: “Why weepst thou?” We can readily imagine unfathomed tears preceding the bewildered hostess’s late arrival behind Sam’s chair.

After she has been introduced and (by implication) stared at, though there is no cutaway to a reaction from the group, she leaves Sam behind and, staggering slightly in her intoxicated state, she walks the lengthy gauntlet of the dining room table, passing behind some of the male guests whose faces turn somberly in the direction she travels. I think Hitchcock would have us, briefly and involuntarily, assume the position of one of these judging spectators, wondering why Henrietta is so unable to present herself to full advantage and “save” a painful situation. We can, however, almost simultaneously applaud her disregard for the encumbrances of stodgy, well-bred society. (The men’s exchange of pleasantries in the previous scene was laboured, tedious and inert.) When Henrietta at last reaches the far end of the large table, further prolonging the shot in which she makes her first appearance, she is joined by Charles, who graciously pulls out a chair for her, sits beside her when she invites him to, and makes a significant effort to alleviate her isolation and its accompanying tension.

The length of this shot has as its most crucial function an initial joining of Henrietta and Sam (though compromised by Henrietta’s hidden placement behind him), followed by an immediate separation. As Henrietta makes her way to the end of the table reserved for invited wives who failed to show up for the dinner party, the viewer (as well as Henrietta) loses touch with Sam. We do not quickly cut back to him, as movie convention dictates, to evaluate his manner of observing his wife. It is as though he is

emotionally left behind and cannot find a way to traverse the resulting gap and recapture her attention. The place and duty that we feel rightfully belong to Sam are taken over by a younger surrogate, Charles, who helps Henrietta overcome her discomfort, and reduces the ignominy of her distance from the invited dinner guests. We notice the carefully arranged place settings for the many vacant seats at the lower half of the table. Before Charles sits beside her and engages her in conversation, Henrietta has a wide stretch of the table entirely to herself. Her face is framed by a candlestick with two glowing candles, which accentuates her solitariness. As the lengthy first shot of Henrietta continues to unfold, Charles's *tete-a-tete* with her becomes the dramatic focus, an exchange dominated by his childhood memories of her in Ireland. Henrietta recalls him fondly, noting that he was a "bad horseman" as a boy". He "lamed" her favorite hunter, and Sam, who was then a family stable groom, was obliged to kill it.

As in *Gaslight*, the figure with the potential to become the romantic rival of the foundering couple's deficient husband has an almost fetishized association with the Bergman character, based on incidents from his childhood. Brian Cameron, from his first glimpse of Paula, confuses her with Alice Alquist, the performer he idolized as a boy, who once gave him a keepsake. Charles, to a possibly even greater extent than Brian, sees Bergman's Henrietta through a veil of youthful idealization. From very early on, Charles lost his way in life. Henrietta is connected with a period when he still felt joined to his world, and all things seemed possible to him. Charles and Brian are both eager to have Bergman's character reanimate in the present some fixed memory impression from long ago.

In her dinner meeting with Charles in *Under Capricorn*, Henrietta smiles as past images of her family life in Ireland return to her, but the prominent silver candelabra whose candles enclose her suggests a space of reverie that is hers alone. She talks agreeably with Charles, but he cannot successfully penetrate the emotional space that she inhabits. The barrier of the candle keeps him at a certain remove. (Hitchcock further stresses this remove by keeping our view of the conversation from a somewhat unsettled high angle.) Sam, still unseen by the camera, is also not included in what she inwardly

dwells on. The shot finally concludes with Henrietta recalling to Charles how Sam, the stable groom “never forgave you” for laming the horse. A cut to Sam in medium close-up shows him staring, adrift, in a reverie of his own. He too is framed by two candles in a candelabra, identical to those hemming in his wife. We may notice how the metal holder twists and curls at the center. Sam appears mournful, and profoundly alone within his group of guests.

Hitchcock cuts again, after a few seconds, to a close-up of Henrietta’s hands clasping a delicate wine glass. We hear Charles’s voice asking (from off-screen) if she would like more wine, at which point one of her hands, trembling, covers the glass in refusal, an acknowledgment of her “weakness” for alcohol. Hitchcock repeats the panning, upward movement that first revealed Bergman’s face in the film. This reintroduction emphasizes the collapse of her brave front. Her attitude now seems one of pained resignation to a life that has closed down, in a manner beyond her control. She speaks about Sam in the third person, as though she can only locate him in the past rather than at the opposite end of the dining table where both of them presently sit. She seems to be communing more with herself than addressing Charles. “I married Sam Flusky, but that must have been a long time after...” [Henrietta’s initial acquaintance with Charles]. The camera pulls back to a two-shot, which restores Charles to visibility beside her, coinciding with his return as a live presence to her conscious awareness. She talks a bit more sadly of marriage, and its impenetrability to any but those inside it. We are able to observe three empty wine glasses at the bottom of the frame, forming a row with the one Henrietta still holds. A wine decanter is placed almost in a watching position beside the glasses. The prominence of these items further emphasizes Henrietta’s addiction and the shame (as well as the accusation) it engenders.

Henrietta indicates to Charles that she isn’t feeling well and needs to withdraw from the gathering. She takes his arm and again passes along the length of the table, making her excuses to the gentlemen in a voice that is lightly mocking of the formalities. I am reminded of the doctor who presides “safe” escort for Blanche DuBois as she leaves the Kowalski household (full of uncomprehending witnesses) at the end of *A Streetcar*

Named Desire (1951). The shot of her departure returns before completion to helpless, aggrieved Sam, who has been ignored by Henrietta since she entered the room and stood behind him. Instead of looking to her husband for assistance, she requests it from Charles, a man she barely knows but appears to trust more. It is apparently he alone who can give aid and comfort in this dinner party debacle. When she finally releases Charles's arm in exchange for steady contact with the stairway balustrade, which she calls her "good old" friend, her back is turned to us. Along with Charles, we watch her swaying climb upward. What do we make of Charles's attitude in this encounter with Henrietta? Throughout it, he boldly assumes the prerogatives of his host, with no sense of infringement or indiscretion. Knowing almost nothing of the marital situation, he nevertheless calmly stakes a claim as a rescuer, or (as he might prefer to describe it) one entitled, by class affiliation, to intercede. What can the former stable groom Sam be expected to understand and do in complex social circumstances of this sort?

Immediately after arriving at her room, Henrietta will cry out. We hear this cry from our position on the lower floor, without any access to what has prompted it, adding yet another layer to the enigmatic goings on in the Flusky household. It is once again Charles to whom she appeals to deal with her distress. Sam gives the young man permission to extend his authority and influence further. When Charles goes up to find her in the intimate realm of her bedchamber, Henrietta fearfully claims to have seen something on her bed, though her erratic, hazy condition invites disbelief. Charles strangely elects to fire a pistol at the fireplace while she stands, distraught, outside the door. It is a melodramatic means of allowing her to save face. This extreme ploy, as he sees it, will lead her to believe that he has rid the room of its imaginary intruders. While Charles's action is conceived as a courtly gesture, there is also something absurd about it. Charles is struck by Henrietta's vulnerable, perhaps hallucination-prone condition, but (unlike Paula's intercessor, Brian, in *Gaslight*) he does not believe her version of what transpired. He is sympathetic to her, but his conception of her seems to be severely limited, overlaid with romantic mist. And what of suffering Charles, downstairs? One is led to wonder, at this stage of the narrative, if Charles has organized his dinner party for

the reasons he declares: to rescue Henrietta from ostracism and to restore the social rank and general respect she possessed in Ireland. Perhaps his true motivation (kept secret even from himself) is to plunge her more deeply into ostracism, and thus make her choose continued seclusion over further trials within the public gaze. Possibly he longs for her humiliation and failure. Possibly he has only limited access to his own intentions.

Hitchcock directed Ingrid Bergman in three films, from 1945 to 1949: *Spellbound* (1945); *Notorious* (1946); and *Under Capricorn* (1949). We can trace a progression in these three narratives, all of them treacherous romances. Hitchcock creates ever more formidable obstacles to understanding between the man and woman in the central couple, ending—in *Under Capricorn*—in a peculiar diffusion, as well as arresting, of desire. In *Spellbound*, Bergman's Constance Peterson, a gifted psychiatrist, remains unshakably in love with John Ballantyne (Gregory Peck), whether she thinks him to be a brilliant colleague or later, when that role collapses, a haunted amnesiac "patient." The suspicion that he may in fact be a murderer, widely held by others, does not reduce either her commitment or passionate devotion to him. Neither the constancy of her romantic faith in Ballantyne nor her frequent reliance on intuitive powers in *believing* his extravagant stories are treated in the film with skepticism. The revelation of Ballantyne's disabling trauma, when it comes, poses no significant barrier to the love relationship.

In *Notorious*, Bergman's Alicia Huberman—the daughter of a convicted Nazi spy with both a complicated sexual history and a problem with alcohol—falls in love with Devlin (Cary Grant), an American government agent. From the start, his desire for her is accompanied by jealousy and resentment of her previous "escapades." He appears unable to believe that enduring "change" is possible for her. Alicia's desire for the agent is crucially linked to her father's suicide in prison, for which Alicia feels some guilt. She finds an adept, substitute tormentor in Devlin: his passion for her is ringed round with recriminations, sadistic withholding, and punishment. There is another love relationship in *Notorious* which in certain respects prefigures the Henrietta-Sam marriage in *Under Capricorn*. When we remove the spy vs. Nazi justification for Alicia's decision to marry Alex Sebastian (Claude Rains), what we confront is a besotted, jealous, but eager to trust

husband whose wife violates what Hawthorne once described as the sanctity of the human heart. It eventually becomes clear to Alex, when he discovers Alicia's betrayal of him, that every word and gesture which pointed in the direction of affection was a lie, a cunning, unfeeling masquerade. He could legitimately utter the words that are given to Paula in *Gaslight*: "Then from the beginning there would have been nothing. Nothing real from the beginning." Alicia was using marriage to destroy him, and it would not seem to matter to her in the least if he was defeated and killed. Hitchcock does not require us to think about Sebastian's point-of-view too often or carefully (Alicia is unquestionably the film's center of identification and sympathy) but the film includes enough scenes of Sebastian's obsessive attachment and suffering—including the film's ending—so that this line of inquiry proves feasible.

One of the major interpretive challenges of *Under Capricorn* is figuring out the internal dynamics of the Flusky marriage. In an impressive essay, "The Dandy and the Magdalen: interpreting the long take in Hitchcock's *Under Capricorn*," Ed Gallafent considers Henrietta as a Mary Magdalene figure, citing the "Why weepest thou?" name of the Flusky estate as a scriptural question put to Mary in the Gospel of John when she arrives at Christ's sepulchre. He also identifies Henrietta's bare feet introduction and numerous images associated with her, including a flail and the shrunken head skull, as iconography of religious penitence. Gallafent compares Bergman's Henrietta with her Paula in *Gaslight*, as I have been doing, arguing that Henrietta is a character driven by shame, and Paula one possessed by guilt. He regards Henrietta's self-abasing statement about her urge to "go down, down, down, to where I can go no farther down," as illuminating her core need in the film. Henrietta's alcoholism and subservient state in her own home (whose entire governance is transferred to her housekeeper, Milly) are her attempt to gain healing and forgiveness for her shame, through a long, self-inflicted humiliation ordeal. Like Bergman's Alicia in *Notorious*, Henrietta appears to believe that punishment for past sins is warranted, and she half-consciously seeks it out.

I am not convinced, however, that shame rather than guilt is the determining force in her self-torture. In my view Henrietta's marriage has run aground because she cannot

rekindle the desire she felt for Sam during the impetuous time of her elopement in Ireland. (We may note in passing that the marriages in both *Gaslight* and *Under Capricorn* were both entered into hastily, on the wind of rash impulse.) The elopement decision culminated in Henrietta's brother Dermot's ferocious effort to end the relationship, by any means at his disposal. When Sam was directly threatened, Henrietta killed him. Sam confessed to the crime in her place (becoming another of Hitchcock's "wrong men"), and was sentenced to transportation to Australia. Henrietta dutifully followed him there, and awaited his release from prison. I think that Hitchcock shares Henry James's fascination with the prospect of guilty indebtedness, which somehow stands in the way of desire's revival. Henrietta can no longer fulfill, internally, the terms of an agreement she regards as morally binding. The impulsive marriage has become an entombment in responsibilities that cannot be carried out authentically. It is another turn of the screw to the deception-riven Sebastian marriage in *Notorious*—that one having been initiated in pretense (on one side) and ending with a double betrayal involving both partners. *Notorious*, like *Under Capricorn*, eventually settles on images of poison offered in the guise of care, so devotion and abhorrence intermingle in the quiet container of a drinking glass.

After Sam has lived out his time of penal servitude (descending lower than his original status as a stable groom), his marriage to Henrietta commences in earnest. Without meaning to or understanding why, Sam brings the prison and the logic of prisons home with him. After the Governor's Ball sequence, during Henrietta's fervid, spellbound confession to Charles, she tries to disabuse him of the notion that her relationship with Sam is founded on nothing but a misconceived sense of duty and sacrifice. Henrietta angrily asserts that Charles cannot begin to comprehend how completely "part of one another" and bound together they are. She cannot admit, however, that the person she became in her years of waiting was one whose desire faded away. Desire lost not only its force but its meaning for her. Henrietta guiltily believes that she is unworthy of the immense sacrifice Sam has made for her. He insisted—in the act of "taking on" her guilt for the murder of her brother—that she never speak of her

buried crime to anyone. What she seemingly fails to recognize is that it is Sam's sacrifice itself and the enforced silence that accompanies it that she truly hates. And so much that Sam aspires to be—in his ascent to the status of a wealthy landowner—is in his wife's eyes tied to his pride in sacrifice. She is revolted, to a degree that she can neither articulate nor even recognize, by the bondage brought about by her "rescue."

Sam, in turn, continues on the course set by Devlin and Alex Sebastian in *Notorious*. He presents us with a striking fusion of the two men's dilemmas: a husband who is at once unloved, deceived, and tormented by the wife he strives to trust (and whose interests he believes he serves), and a man who encourages the attention and passion of a rival, to prove to himself that his beloved has no capacity for fidelity or for the transformation of a reckless, weak-willed character. Sam shares Henrietta's deep attachment to the fairy tale of their improbable courtship: her high-born family's generous treatment of him in the early days when as a groom he taught her to ride, and then the overwhelming impact of the wooing time initiated by Henrietta.. This "blessed angel" miraculously offered to "save" him when he confessed that his unexpressed feelings were "killing" him. In the beginning, he gloried in her placement so far above him, and could not conceive that he might ever enter on equal terms the plane she deservedly inhabited. Sam's seven years as a New South Wales convict and his subsequent attainment of wealth and power are an epic scale attempt to undo the debt she took on in "saving" him. He does not recognize the extent of the rage he continues to bear for "Lady Henrietta", due to her still unsevered ties with the aristocracy. He does not know that his desire to restore her respectable position, to have her become again what she was before when he first met (and served) her masks an even stronger desire to bring her down—down not only to his former ignoble station as groom, but below it. He is saddened by her drinking, her wandering mind, her bedridden state, her failure to be the mistress of the house, but at the same time regards her depleted condition with a barely acknowledged sense of vindication and triumph. As long as she cannot do anything to free herself from paralysis, the chain (a prison chain) of his saving actions can continue. All of this double mindedness seals him into a guilt-ridden blindness.

Sam brings Charles into her world in the twisted hope of tempting her with a real, if impoverished, gentleman, feeding his conviction that her desire can only flow toward someone who revives her memory of herself in the time before she “threw herself away” on him. Someone with mirroring Irish lineage. The final piece in his need of Charles is to have this suitor fail, as Sam has failed, to rehabilitate Henrietta, though Charles has been given vast leeway to court her and every chance to alter her haunted perspective. The housekeeper, Milly, is the sole significant character in the film whose desire operates intensely in the present tense, though veiled from its object, Sam (as Sam in his youth veiled his passion for Henrietta). Sam uses his madly devoted housekeeper, again without more than flickering self-awareness, to serve his purpose of keeping Henrietta “down,” sick, beyond self-repair. A fellow servant in a seemingly indestructible hierarchy of the acceptable and the excluded, Milly can become a trusted intimate of Sam, a secret sharer, but not a lover. For he is condemned to cling to the old dream: love beyond his station. It is a dream that forever binds him, long after his brief fulfillment of it. For Sam and Henrietta, a tender, lost dream has dissolved their power to desire one another or anyone else.

Before taking up the humiliation scene at the Governor’s Ball, in which all these hidden forces are unleashed, I shall speak a little more of the “Why Weepest Thou?” Flusky house, and its instructive differences from the Thornton Square “prison” of *Gaslight*. Hitchcock provides numerous establishing shots of the Flusky home exterior at night and during the day. Whenever the house is shown, its dream-like character is emphasized. It seems almost afloat, eerily detached from its surroundings, a building that is more figment than substantial fact. Our perspective on the distant house is initially a matte painting, which is to say an artist’s rendering of a place, thwarting the eye’s attempt to quite believe in it. The dwelling’s wide ground floor—viewed at night when Charles first approaches it—offers a remarkable number of lighted entrances. The broad front door is flanked on a walkway by a series of French doors, which supply plentiful visual access from the outside to all domestic activities. A high, circular, windowed tower rises above the main entry way, giving expression to its owner’s upward aspirations. To the

left of of the tower, and cut off from it, we see a complicated arrangement of separate upper story structures. None of this upper level busyness interferes with our sense of the home's dominant horizontality. As Charles, on his first visit, draws close to the scenes that each ground level door or lighted window frames, he—and by proxy the spectator—is granted ample spying opportunities. I am reminded of the different kinds of access to other lives available for Jeffries' voyeuristic inspection in *Rear Window* (1954).

The production design of the film sets up a recurring pattern of misleading openness—a freedom to come in, observe and explore without obvious prohibition—contrasting with a surprising resistance to accurate reading. The Biblical phrase Sam quotes to Charles early on—in an effort to characterize his current marital plight—is “a great gulf fixed.” These words apply equally to the gap between seemingly accessible action and its hidden sense. Charles passes from one open entry point to another on the portico, claiming later that he had some difficulty “finding his way in,” despite the fact none of the entry alternatives directly block him. His attention is most forcefully engaged by what appears to be a torture scene transpiring in the servants' kitchen area. A woman is being pressed down by the neck on a table against her will by two other women, in the midst of screams and yelling. All three are shabbily attired. At first it seems to be a terrible assault of major consequence. No sooner have we arrived at this judgment than Milly enters the kitchen and commences whipping the three women indiscriminately with a belt, doing so in an almost dispassionate, by rote manner. The frightening initial scene of aggression re-configures for us into a “familiar,” though still distressing altercation among the kitchen staff, prone to outbreaks of wildness because of their recent status as convicts. A further disorientation occurs when Sam, the apparent master of the house, walks into the kitchen, observes the whipping in progress without intervening, and then demands that all three involved in the struggle be promptly dismissed. Housekeeper Milly treats the order as ill-conceived and dismissible. She calmly notes that she “can manage them’ and Sam accepts without protest her countermanding decision. Charles finds his way into the house after witnessing this fray, then is instantly required to shift his focus and obligations to the arriving guests at Sam's dinner party which, as my

previous analysis demonstrates, is rife with discordant, hard-to-parse elements. Charles and the spectator penetrate the house together, are treated to a lavish display of embarrassing, “out in the open” conflicts and tensions which—though Sam appears ready (in their after dinner walk and conversation) to interpret them for Charles without excuses or defensiveness, remain steeped in a residual obscurity. In *Gaslight*, by contrast, Thornton Square is kept strictly off limits to outsiders. Paula has no freedom to venture outside or to challenge the domestic arrangements within, and Gregory is guided by a single, overriding, loveless purpose.

What I find especially arresting about the mysteries that remain concealed from us in *Under Capricorn* is that they are not (even in Milly’s case) the result of a plot with a clear basis in someone’s fully grasped intention. The reasons for most of the actions that take place are only dimly comprehended by their perpetrators. “Minyago Yugilla” (“Why weepst thou?”) is an appropriate, questioning name for the confounding “open house” of the Fluskys. “Why weepst thou?” is a reference, as I previously noted, to an encounter between Mary Magdalene, two angels and the risen Christ, described in Chapter 20 of the Gospel According to John. Mary Magdalene weeps because she is grieving for the loss of the crucified Christ. She is standing just outside his mysteriously open sepulchre, uncertain of what has happened. She does not know that Christ has left the place of death. Two angels in white seated within the tomb ask her why she weeps. Their query carries with it a curious element of reproach in John’s account, as though Mary is not only misguided in her weeping, but wrong in some deeper sense. She cries because of what her heart and spirit do not yet understand. To say “Why weepst thou?” rather than “There is no cause for weeping” is a decision to prolong her uncertainty, with an additional test of faith, as though Christ’s public suffering and execution were not warrant enough for belief in his *ending*. Still baffled, Mary turns around and encounters Christ, unrecognized, who repeats the angels’ question. “Woman, why weepst thou?” And then, “Whom seekest thou?” In her confusion, she at first identifies Christ as a gardener, and asks where the body has been taken to. One may well side with Mary in this exchange, during the threshold moments before Christ allows her to recognize Him.

Surely there is ample justification for lamentation in Mary's recent experience, and in her current sense of utter desolation. Mary is wholly a creature of earth, and it seems as though neither Christ nor the seated pair of angels recall that earthly life is a vale of tears. We are confronted with a Christ who, in the aftermath of Resurrection, has not only passed beyond the realm of suffering, but has forgotten it. He sees Mary's tears, and may not any longer know—in his exalted state—what they are for, what they signify. The encounter can be construed as a double recognition scene. Mary does not immediately see in the risen Christ the man she has known. Similarly, Christ does not regard her as he did within the frailty and limitations of his mortal life. A distance has interposed itself between them, analogous to that between Sam and Henrietta after his release from prison. They have turned alien to each other in their reunion. Do Mary's tears permit Christ to recognize, after a mystifying pause, the vulnerability of humanness, of which He has been so recently divested?

Further questions arise when we compare the account of Magdalene at the tomb in John with the other Gospel versions, where the revelation of Christ's return is presented in strikingly different terms. Was the question "Why weepest thou?" ever put to her? Did Christ appear to Mary in the tomb at all? Did they speak to each other upon meeting with a greater sense of restored connection? In *Under Capricorn*, the words "Why weepest thou?" are concealed in a language Charles Adare does not speak. He is at the mercy of a coachman translator. For Charles and the film's spectator, the question, shorn of context, remains locked in the present tense. Whoever is being addressed has not desisted from weeping. Nor has the cause of tears been adequately explained. And there is also the implied possibility that whatever reasons are offered for the surfeit of tears, there may be no remedy or cure. Grief persists, defying all the powers of interpretation.

As Charles prepares to escort Lady Henrietta to the Governor's Ball, he seems on the verge of completing his reconstruction of his childhood vision of Henrietta Considine. It is a version of her in competition with Sam's past memories as well as her own. In an earlier presentation of her to a "desired image," Charles's hand removes wrapping paper

from the entire film frame to reveal a living portrait of Hattie Considine in maiden finery against a painted natural background. At this juncture he resembles Scottie Ferguson attempting to transform Judy back into an exact replica of Madeleine in *Vertigo*. He asks Henrietta “Who’s this?” after removing the paper covering from what we assume is a standing mirror. “Is that the reflection of Lady Henrietta Considine, or is it not?” As Henrietta tentatively replies “It looks like her,” Charles steps into the mirror’s artificial portrait frame and kisses her, speaking now as an aspiring suitor (“I’m proud of you, my dear”) rather than as the clumsy Irish boy who couldn’t ride a horse when he met Henrietta, lamed the first one he mounted (trying to prove himself to her). This tragic accident obliged Sam the groom to rectify Charles’s blunder by shooting it. Charles has replaced that “long ago” failure for a scene in which he pays tribute to a shadow-free “reincarnation.” He calls his remaking of Henrietta’s image the “first work of art I’ve ever done,” as both of them step away from the mirror reflection and she briefly enters his fantasy and smilingly accepts a second kiss from him. Here and at the Governor’s Ball proving ground, with its manifest Irish theme, Charles is attempting to find a fantasy shape for Henrietta’s future life in lieu of finding a shape for his own. He is a dandy, forever on the brink of committing himself to any real enterprise. Restoring Henrietta to the full, blazing promise of her youth is a circuitous means of magically recapturing the youthful promise he once possessed: a vivid dream of all that once was, back at the beginning. Henrietta breaking her dismal pattern of blockage and false commitment will possibly supply an escape route for him as well. His desire—like Scottie’s in *Vertigo*—is irretrievably bound to the past. It depends for its full reactivation on a perfectly “groomed” living image of a time before—for Charles the only real time.

How strangely dependent all of Charles’s yearning is on childhood regained. The weak will he often exhibits to love Henrietta in the present pales in comparison to the passion for “lost possibility” that her dream image represents. Wordsworth’s “Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey” (1798) poignantly conveys the memory of ecstasy which Charles, Henrietta, and Sam, equally paralyzed, cannot retrieve in the somehow buried present. “That time is past,/and all its aching joys are now no more,/And

all its dizzy raptures...I cannot paint what then I was.” There is only a meager, cold remnant of “the language of my former heart.” In place of affirming ecstasies, there are frozen time and ecstasies of abasement, which Sam and Henrietta do and don’t want to be devoured by. Paula in *Gaslight* is similarly drawn to ecstasies of penitential abasement. (The idea of devouring ecstasies is discussed by Frank Bidart in a recent interview in *The Paris Review* [206].)

As Henrietta descends the staircase, prepared at last for her public appearance at the Governor’s Ball, the shade of the wall she passes in her glowing white gown makes her look like an angel, passing through clouds en route to earth. As I noted earlier, Charles, who seems chiefly entranced by his own art creation of her, chides Sam for not being overwhelmed by this floating vision. The rubies Sam secretly clutches, and is prepared to offer as a gift finer than Charles’s florid speech in praise of her, is linked to Henrietta’s past sacrifice of all her own jewels in order to accompany him to his convict exile in Australia. But Charles has no room in his fantasy for Henrietta’s betrayal of the bright privileges that were hers in Ireland. Charles assures her (off-camera) that Henrietta looks “perfect as you are.” Any supplement from another quarter would mar the effect. Henrietta looks back at Sam briefly and says “Goodbye” to him in a manner that suggests, without conscious emphasis, finality. As she speaks her farewell, Charles enjoins her to “Hurry,” as though the ties binding her to the house and marriage had snapped, and she is truly free to disappear. Sam stands uncertainly in the doorway of a room adjoining the foyer as we hear (without seeing) a horse drawn carriage spiriting her away, in the company of her newfound rescuer. Sam strides close to the camera—in what can only strike us as a state of utter aloneness—and stands in profile, turned away from the house entrance, as his thoughts seem to be voiced aloud by an unseen woman. “Very pretty she looks, I must say.”

Hitchcock cuts to the open door to reveal Milly, wearing a funereal black shawl and a blue bonnet similar to that which Charles gave Henrietta to wear in her mirror portrait. She walks into the room, with an air of performed repentance, mindful of the fact that there is something shameful in the return of one dismissed from service. She quickly

makes clear that she has only returned for her box and that she has a new position elsewhere, commencing tomorrow. Charles, dominating the right foreground of the composition, has his back turned to us, a position which, as we have seen, Hitchcock frequently employs with this character, whose motives are so often veiled, and beyond his own grasp. Milly's voice rises as she asks "Can I stay the night?", combining in her entreaty the request of a small favor (the brief use of her old room) and an almost involuntary avowal of her love for Sam. In this film of misted over intentions, Milly alone has unimpeded access to strong passion, which burns with Walter Pater's "hard, gem-like flame." She does not declare it unequivocally, but it is conspicuous enough to be easily recognized, if Sam only chose to let himself acknowledge it. As in his double minded conception of Henrietta, he seems simultaneously to know and not know of Milly's feeling for him. The "not knowing" is conveyed to us visually by Sam's turned back; she stands close behind him, as Henrietta did during her first entrance at the dinner party. He is almost baiting her with a half-acceptance that allows, indeed encourages, her voracious wanting to flourish. But unlike Gregory in *Gaslight* we are never able to read him completely. Maybe he is not conscious of his power. Sam's face, denied to Milly, is shown to the spectator. It seems blindly distracted, but we gain no insight into how Milly herself (as opposed to her poisonous utterances) affects him. When he moves, Milly trails behind him like a shadow, proposing that she might possibly "bring [him] something hot, the way I used to." Hitchcock presents us with another extremely lengthy shot of choreographed figures in a kind of slow motion—advance and retreat—dance. The framing alternates between "two shots" of Sam and Milly in "shared thinking" alignment and Milly in isolation, intoxicated with rancor for her rival, Henrietta. She pours out her suspicions of Charles and Henrietta conducting an affair, acting as though she were not merely giving voice to the anxious burden of her own observations but reporting fully the public mind as well-- the snobbish, jeering attitudes of the "elite" gentry. This is Milly's occasion to be Iago to Sam's pacing, brooding Othello. What enriches the flow of carefully phrased provocation on many fronts is the sight of her quivering face and form, as one possessed by the torment of unreciprocated obsession.

When Sam completely succumbs to her jealousy seduction and stands transfixed, overflowing with the rage that his *fellow* servant has made him see as his own thoughts, Hitchcock dissolves from his agitated face (in close-up) to the Governor's Ball in progress. The effect of this transition is to make the actual ball an emanation of Sam's fevered imagination of it. Though he is physically absent, he is, by implication, a secret sharer of what unfolds there. Henrietta's positive advances in this exclusive gathering are coated, ahead of his arrival on the scene, with the trepidation of loss and the fear of public ridicule that they engender in him.

The Ball scene proper begins, like the musical soiree in *Gaslight*, with Bergman's entrance. In *Gaslight*, Paula is accompanied by her husband adversary, Gregory, who appears socially unsure in this novel setting, in contrast to Paula who appears (almost for the first time in the film) entirely at ease. Charles Adare leads Henrietta toward the large, high ceilinged ballroom in *Under Capricorn*. He is unquestionably her staunch ally, in no way opposed to her re-introduction to Sydney's polite society, or the Irish affiliation being celebrated. In effect, he is assigned the Brian Cameron role as benign protector and observer. He is equipped with more knowledge of the woman he brings to this elaborate social event (and place of judgment) than *Gaslight's* Scotland Yard inspector possesses, and he has direct, intimate access to her from the beginning of the scene. He is not obliged, as Brian is, to examine Bergman's mesmerizing figure from a distance. Charles is initially in control of her actions, but is eager to grant her the freedom to make her own way through the field of obstacles confronting her. He is perhaps unduly confident that she will pass every test, and be generally acclaimed. His plans strike us as a bit makeshift and reckless, when we realize he has no invitation to the Ball. He thinks that his genial style and effrontery will somehow safeguard Henrietta from a humiliating ostracism.

Intriguingly, Charles does not himself believe in the social order he is attempting to "take by storm." When we first notice him in the film, he is listening with weary, impudent amusement to his second cousin, the newly appointed Governor of the territory, make a tedious speech presenting himself to the assembled troops and citizenry of

Sydney. He approves of the fact that the Governor's laborious greeting ceremony is poorly received. Shortly afterward, Charles has a conversation with the Governor in the latter's mansion while his relative bathes himself in a wooden tub. Charles seems persuaded that all social forms are an arbitrary façade, deserving neither respect nor serious belief. Nonetheless, it matters to him greatly that the Cinderella masquerade he has organized result in Henrietta's social vindication. He wants her to be so richly saturated with approval by those who look down on her husband, as Charles himself does, that she will be *cleansed* of her association with him. She will be free to start afresh, as though everything that damaged and deformed her from the time she left Ireland, in thrall to a convict murderer, never happened. Her long captivity—obscurely connected to his sense of his own hazy life purpose, stymied by waste, passivity, and meager inducements to strive—will end. Solidity will replace phantoms and worn-out excuses.

Brian Cameron secretly secured an invitation from Lady Dalroy for Paula and her husband. Charles Adare has no such power to smooth Henrietta's way in advance. He has crudely forged an invitation, which he blithely hands to an elderly gatekeeper just outside the ballroom. Charles is swiftly informed that neither his name nor his partner's appear on the list of authorized guests. Charles adopts a lofty tone, dismisses the objections of the man seeking to bar his entrance, and bluffs his way through. Hitchcock gives us no shots during this brief altercation of Henrietta's reaction. We are granted only a view from behind her, suggesting that she is oblivious to the potential obstruction. She seems entirely reliant on Charles's magician's ability to turn fear into irresistible force at this stage of the scene.

A distinction is established at the outset between Henrietta's rather narrow conception of the proceedings and Charles's more informed perspective—as mediator and buffer. Hitchcock does not allow us to follow Charles and Henrietta into the ballroom immediately. We remain with the gatekeeper and his younger assistant at the entrance table as they discover that Charles's invitation is bogus. The absence of permission to

enter becomes an initial source of suspense, and we are alerted to further complications arising from the men's revised awareness of Charles's deceptive maneuver.

We cut to the interior of the ballroom where Henrietta is asked to dance by a major in uniform, whom we may recognize as one of the guests at Sam's earlier disastrous dinner party. Henrietta manages this approach perfectly. It serves much the same dramatic function as Paula's brief exchange with Lady Dalroy after her arrival at the concert evening in *Gaslight*. Henrietta is both poised and gracious, and capable of comfortably navigating the immediate request to perform as a dancer. She charmingly apologizes for "being out of practice" before demonstrating proficiency. Cukor chooses to frame his party introductions in *Gaslight* at close range. Hitchcock's vantage point is further back. We are still behind Henrietta, and she is placed within a crowd that includes the major, with Charles looking on in profile. One might wonder why Hitchcock deprives us of Henrietta's point of view at this crucial phase of the scene. Instead he returns us to Charles, watching from the dance floor periphery. As the camera passes along a row of other observers of Henrietta, it seems aligned with his probing gaze. He notes with approval, and correctly, that she is already the center of attention. There seems to be a pronounced division of opinion among the male and female spectators. The wives of the gentry, we recall, refused to attend Flusky's dinner party. At this point they seem more concerned with furtively amused exchange of gossip than with "giving in" to admiration. The men, including the Governor (Cecil Parker), who has never formally met Henrietta, appear enthralled by Henrietta's appearance and deportment. The camera's survey of group reaction concludes with the Governor, who asks an aide for information about this "exquisite creature." Again, quite unusually, Hitchcock denies the viewer any cutaway to Henrietta dancing. We have no direct sense of how the crowd and the atmosphere on the dance floor, where a waltz is in progress, are affecting her.

The delayed suspense element instigated by the forged invitation returns to prominence as the gatekeeper and a more imposing authority figure inform the governor that his ball has been "crashed" by his second cousin and Mrs. Flusky. The Governor angrily asks "Where is the infernal fellow?" No sooner is the question raised than

Hitchcock ends his long take of the dance spectators and their reactions (the cold accretion of society) to show Charles, affably unruffled, walking toward the governor to announce his presence. The fear of negative consequences is instantly dispelled by Charles's style of banter with his relative. He is not in the least apprehensive about being forced to leave. The Governor lightly chastises Charles for his deplorable behavior, but is not seriously upset with him. By now it is beginning to seem likely that Henrietta will enjoy an unqualified social victory at the Irish Society festivities. The Governor does not yet know who Henrietta is, but it is clear from his earlier remark about her and his visual appraisal that he is smitten. Charles's relaxed assurance as he continues both to control the obstacles and encourage Henrietta's free mingling and self-expression suggests that Henrietta may be rising to a height in this company where Sam cannot easily reach her and bring her down. But the stew of jealous rage that Milly has brought to a boil in Sam supplies an enduring line of tension in the Ball's steadily upward curve.

As the Governor issues an idle threat to Charles to vacate the building in two minutes, we are at last presented with a shot of Henrietta, radiantly approaching the governor in close-up. Hitchcock ends the previous shot of the Governor by moving the camera in closer to his face, as though this increase in proximity signaled the force of what suddenly dispelled his peevish mood and filled him with delight. The reason for Hitchcock's prolonged withholding of a view of Bergman is so that the the impact of her walk toward the governor would be more surprising and intense. Henrietta annihilates all lingering uncertainty with the power of her beauty and regal equanimity. The Governor instantly sets aside his former prejudice against her as Henrietta (repeating Paula's storytelling gambit with Lady Dalroy) recounts a childhood incident in which she was dazzled by his military bearing. A three shot of the Governor, Charles and Henrietta shows Charles zestfully reaping the rewards of his Pygmalion transformation of beleaguered, crazed, and drunken Mrs. Flusky. For a short interval he pretends to be preparing to leave the Ball at once, respecting the Governor's former command that he do so. As he plays this game, we detect a momentary break in Henrietta's self-possession and a return of worrisome anxiety. We are reminded of Henrietta's dependence on

Charles and the threat to her ability to continue her masquerade that is posed by the prospect of his abandonment of her.

Her high spirits are restored once she catches on to his jesting tone. The Governor, having invited Henrietta to dine with him privately, extends his arm to her. She takes it and Hitchcock dollies with them at close range, then gradually fails to keep pace. We watch the pair move away in the direction of towering light curtains in the background, which provides a mild theatrical cast to their departure, and an oblique reminder of Henrietta's role playing.

We are then given another view of Charles, reveling in what he has brought off. (The comparable moment in *Gaslight* occurs when Paula, relaxed in her seat in the audience, gratefully listens to the concert pianist performing Beethoven's Appassionata sonata, and feels that the world of music, from which she has been exiled, is once again open to her.) Henrietta allows herself, as Charles does, to be absolutely convinced of her security. Charles turns his head, holding a complacent smile, and we are then given a quietly disturbing point of view shot of Sam Flusky making his way toward him through the crowd. He is advancing from the opposite direction of the trajectory established by the Governor's walk with Henrietta. In a brilliantly conceived close-up of Charles, Hitchcock first presents him absorbing (along with the viewer) the shock of Sam's sudden, disruptive appearance. We then see him turn his head again, as he notes the distance of Henrietta and the Governor behind him, at the same time briskly calculating his most effective course of action. Finally his head pivots rapidly to face the camera, where we watch him perform a delighted grin, the most expressive release of joy (however feigned) that Michael Wilding is permitted in the entire narrative. The extreme closeness of the camera to Charles's face as the grin suffuses his features produces a jolt in the viewer, of the sort normally reserved for a look of terror. Charles moves toward Sam before the interloper is conscious of his presence, declaring his pleasure that Sam has "changed his mind" and come to the Ball, even though Sam—like Charles—has received no invitation. The fact that Sam is equally unwelcome is reinforced by the presence of the anxious gatekeeper behind him. Charles returns to his earlier jocular tone

with the gatekeeper, hastily assuring him that “It’s all right. Sam is a friend of mine.” This is Charles’s last opportunity to steer the rising crisis in the direction of comedy. His customarily piquant, detached tone is no longer equal to what now confronts him.

At this stage of the action, we might well pause to consider the logic of exclusion at work in this Irish Society gala. When Charles deviously forced his way in with Henrietta, minutes ago, we likely applauded Charles’s scornful disregard for arbitrary social barriers. But Sam’s similar act of barging in, which we appraise from Charles’s perspective, feels like a much more serious transgression. He is dressed improperly, as Charles soon reminds him, and he has no skill at blending in. His appearance and unruly manner brand him as someone who in no sense belongs here: one glaringly out of place. I think we become temporary allies of Charles as he attempts to bring Sam to heel and contain his potentially explosive behavior. Charles is both a witty commentator on those who slavishly submit to propriety and an unmitigated snob. He has grown to hate Sam for his uncouthness, his oafish inability to estimate Henrietta’s aristocratic credentials correctly, and his persistent efforts to drag her down to his own “man of the stables” level. We are likely eager—as the scene heads toward disaster—to protect Henrietta’s Cinderella fantasy of transformation, since she is experiencing public esteem for the first time in many years.

Upon closer examination, however, Henrietta’s ability to recruit admirers in the New South Wales gentry and “pass inspection” at an exclusive party does not seem a test of her best qualities. Charles believes that she can only be rescued by remembering her former status as an “Earl’s daughter.” She must renounce her false sense of indebtedness to Sam, and purify herself of his besmirching influence. She has confused and degraded herself, as Charles sees it, by a prolonged, disordered mingling with the “wrong sort.” It is that welter of dirty circumstances that have combined to break her spirit. Charles has finally brought her to the freedom of an aristocratic celebration (even if located in the ill-sorted backwater of this Australian frontier), where she dazzles everyone in a perfectly white gown. It is crucial to Charles that her outer effect be flawless. There must not be a single, disfiguring mark on her.

Lesley Brill argues in *The Hitchcock Romance: Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films*, that Charles and Milly are paired in *Under Capricorn* as anti-nurses. (161) They are both obsessively committed to damaging, false healing. Milly aspires to help Sam rid himself of the fallen “lady” who deludes him with dreams of social grandeur. He can unite more appropriately and productively with Milly if he remembers his authentic, low born origin. He should accept his servant (and subsequent convict) history without shame. Charles, of course, wants Henrietta to excise from memory her meaningless period of self-imposed exile and rise up as one reborn: Hattie Constantine, a paragon of grace, daring, and self-determination. He controls, as fully as he can, her vision of what liberty entails. Brill evinces considerable sympathy for Charles’s misguided project of healing, but regards Milly’s, because of her increasingly demented schemes to destroy Henrietta, as wholly monstrous.

Our most balanced response to Sam’s arrival at the Ball necessitates being on everyone’s side at once. It is certainly understandable if we are of two minds about Charles’s attempt to dissuade Sam from interfering in Henrietta’s burgeoning social triumph. He is an active, resourceful benefactor—unlike immobilized Brian Cameron in *Gaslight*. Nevertheless, the violent “scene” he determined to prevent may well be what both Sam and Henrietta, without quite knowing why, require. Charles is absurdly proud of his success in pimping out Henrietta for a private supper with the sexually excited Governor, Sir Richard. Sam is enraged by Charles’s warning that his appearance at the supper would “spoil” it. He accurately interprets Charles’s implication that he is not “good enough to stand beside quality.” When Charles urges Sam to be “sensible” and restrain himself, we may find ourselves converted, on the instant, to the side of Sam’s outrage and urge to go too far. In *Gaslight*, Gregory’s orchestration of Paula’s fit of hysterics is achieved with unflinching, quiet control. There is nothing at stake for him in the relationship he relentlessly exploits. In *Under Capricorn*’s humiliation scene Sam takes over Paula’s exhibition of a public breakdown, brought on by his sense that his wife regards him, in his very essence, as an embarrassment. He believes, not without some

grounds, that she seeks to exclude him utterly from any portion of her life that is restored to health and gaiety.

Hitchcock frames Sam grimly walking forward (as the camera dollies back, making way for him) in the direction of Henrietta's offscreen voice. She is not yet conscious of Sam's presence in the ballroom, which we discover through her animated speech about her equestrienne youth, in which she claims to have broken every bone in her body. Hitchcock once more withholds the expected image of Henrietta until Sam, guiding the camera's progress, is directly beside her. Even when he is practically brushing against her, Henrietta does not immediately sense him, as though he has been rendered invisible by her renewed attempt to climb. (This is, of course, Sam's view of the servant's fate in the company of 'swells.') She notices him only after the Governor makes joking reference to her husband's familiarity with horses. She is midway through an amused description of Sam's love of horses, having "grown up with them," when Sam materializes in her gaze. Hitchcock executes another stunning revelation of Henrietta in close-up at the moment Sam's "being there" penetrates her perception. She confesses that seeing him is a shock, but her gaze somehow manages to combine alarm with an almost tearful sympathy. It is difficult to interpret her attitude toward him in his ensuing confrontation of the Governor in her presence. She is afraid of his rising anger, but as she "presents" Sam to the stony-visaged Sir Richard, it is hard to determine if she is more ashamed or protective of him. She holds a plate of salad as she and Sam talk together, under the weight of the Governor's displeasure. The salad makes a startling contrast to her majestic attire: its humble, untidy appearance links it to wrongly dressed, discordant Sam, whom she feels obliged to lift up somehow as he prepares to disgrace them both.

Sam was wholly attuned to the meaning of Charles's condescending civility in their just completed encounter. With Henrietta, whom he knows far better and is "bound to" by deeply complicated ties, he appears emotionally deaf. He catches her light tone (before she notices him) as she mentions Sam's lifelong love of horses, but he pushes too hard when he insists that she was inviting Sir Richard to share her mocking amusement over the fact that he was "born in a stable." When Sam utters this phrase, indignantly, the

dance music ceases and muffled applause is heard. It is a moment of paranoid projection, as though the unseen crowd is greeting Sam's self-definition with taunting agreement. As the three-shot of Henrietta, Sam, and the turned away from the camera Sir Richard continues, Henrietta endeavors to shift the topic to Rogue's Pride, a horse whose name applies almost equally to both partners in the marriage. Henrietta talks of the time back in Ireland when she lamed him, and how Sam managed to save the horse and set him right. The horse ultimately was sold to the Governor, which makes the entire anecdote an affirmation of Sir Richard's property and his alien authority. Sam retorts that he did far more than "set him right." He begins to list, with his own rogue's pride, all the ways he tended to the creature's well-being, ending with the self-deflating, loud-voiced announcement that he cleaned out the horse's stalls, "being only a groom." Somewhere in this futile confession is the self-pitying plea of all that he has sacrificed for Henrietta, from the time she first "lamed herself" by loving him. As he harshly declares "She married beneath her"—to which Sir Richard curtly replies "No doubt"—he loses the ability to distinguish at all between the Governor's and Henrietta's state of mind. He cannot perceive, as the viewer can, that her assured social bearing and air of self-possession are extremely fragile and are collapsing as he presses on, fiercely articulate, out of control, and blind, in equal measure.

Sam refers to the charity aspect of the Governor's Ball, all the while feeling the sting of his own pathetic position in the collective gaze of this society. He casts an unseen fistful of coins onto the dance floor (we hear the clatter), in an effort to demonstrate how little money means to him, and how unintimidated he is by the airs and finery of those stationed above him. His gesture miscarries. The money he tosses seems diminished in the same way he is: he acts like a criminal divesting himself of ill-gotten gains. He dishonors himself further by his attempt to force Henrietta to share his humiliation. He coarsely shouts that the coins he had flung like chicken feed will pay for his wife's supper, as well as that of the penniless "spark", Charles. (Sam eradicates his former generosity to Charles by announcing that his rival is indebted to his largesse, and is nothing without it.) Sam has by now become conspicuous through his violent outburst to

everyone in the massive ballroom. It seems that a gigantic consensus of silent repugnance encloses the Fluskys (Henrietta has at last fused with her “keeper” and been contaminated once more by the affiliation.) In *Gaslight*, of course, no such fusion happens. Gregory elicits sympathetic understanding as he tries to lead his mad, convulsing wife out of the crowd’s sight and hearing. The loss of control he has engineered in no way touches him. His control is, in fact, reinforced by his handling of the one whose social mask has disintegrated.

Before Sam has concluded his rant, Henrietta, open-mouthed and aghast by the mortifying demolition of her briefly permissible happiness, as well as Sam’s claims to public respect, walks, and then runs from the scene, fighting tears. Rows of guests on either side of her watch her departure intently. The internalized disgrace and the ritualized banishment feel as devastating as Paula’s loss of standing in the *Gaslight* concert. Unlike Paula, Henrietta leaves the setting alone, the camera inescapably fixed on her as she follows the course of its backward tracking movement. In the first, slow section of Henrietta’s lengthy exit, Henrietta’s demeanor strongly reminds me of Alicia’s face in *Notorious*, just after realizing she has been poisoned. Alicia’s depleted energy and sense of dizziness as she tries to leave the vast Sebastian living room is echoed in Henrietta’s flushed, breathless retreat from this ballroom without end. What deepens the power of this spectacle of a couple being brought down is our sense, from what has preceded it, that they (half-knowingly) crave the ruin that they enact. There is a dimension of ecstasy in their marital abasement at the Ball, what Frank Bidart terms the sort that “one both wants and does not want to be devoured by.” (206) They are by no means inured to public degradation. They fear its recurrence, yet at the same time wallow in an expiation “that no fury can wipe clean.” (221)

When Henrietta returns to Minyago Yugilla in the company of Charles after the debacle, she performs for him an exquisitely theatrical account (one that feels committed to memory) of her romantic history with Sam including the revelation of his great sacrifice (taking upon himself her murder of her brother) which “marred” all. Charles had hoped—in the face of Sam’s wretched scene making at the Irish Ball—that Henrietta

had been awakened from her strangely voluntary dream of necessary servitude to her unworthy spouse. Public shaming, however, far from loosening her bond, has made it tighter. Although Henrietta confesses her past sins to Charles with complete sincerity and somehow resuscitates, in the trance of telling, all her old devotion to Sam and a keen awareness of her deep, undischageable debt to him, it is reasonable for us to hear throughout this recitation a trauma-based repetition. Hal Foster, writing about Andy Warhol's motto "I want to be a machine," refers to a subject in a state of shock "who takes on the nature of what shocks him [or her] as a mimetic defense against this shock." (Smith, 373) Something of this sort takes place in Henrietta's act of unburdening herself. Her narration, attempting to divulge "the real" at last, seems rather, in trauma terms, "a missed encounter with the real." In Zadie Smith's elegant formulation of the faulty psychic aim, Henrietta "mechanically repeat(s) the trauma to obscure and control the reality of the trauma, but in doing so reproduce(s), obliquely, some element of it" which she is compelled to misapprehend. (373-74)

Charles believes that Sam and Henrietta have failed at their "second chance" because the first chance was already a grievous error. The couple, on the contrary, are convinced that being 'buried alive' in their history is their only chance at exoneration. Curiously, Charles's arguably partial success at breaking the stalemate is achieved by becoming an unwitting player in the Fluskys' trauma reenactment. He begins by laming a horse once again, a repetition of the accident he partook of when he met Henrietta as a boy. Flusky must remedy what he sees as a careless "crime" against the horse by shooting it. Shortly after, Sam and Charles become embroiled in a physical struggle, witnessed by Henrietta, during which Charles is inadvertently wounded. This time Sam actually performs the shooting that Henrietta had been guilty of in the past. Charles then adopts Sam's role of silence about Sam's "guiltless" behavior in the fight so that Henrietta can achieve her undeclared need to be honorably free of him. Finally, he relents and speaks publicly about the truth of Sam's innocence of the shooting, so that Henrietta is not obliged to be tried for her past crime, which she has confessed to without being believed.

Milly, as the film's parallel anti-nurse (with Charles), makes her own major contribution to leading Sam and Henrietta out of the trauma labyrinth. Just as Charles does what lies within his power, after falling in love with a fantasy image of Henrietta, to heighten Sam's torment, punishment, and conviction of "rightful" exclusion, so too does Milly become the scourge of her seeming friend and mistress, Henrietta. She is not operating strictly out of demonic malice, as Lesley Brill contends. She intuits, no doubt with some measure of accuracy, that Sam wishes his wife to be humiliated, kept prisoner, weakened in her domestic authority, and degraded by being brought down to a servant's level. Hitchcock's films contain many surrogate oppressors. The collusion of the so-called moral protagonists with the "unthinkable" crimes of the designated evil doers are never fully brought to light in the narratives. We are given suggestions of their entwinement, but no explicit exposure of it. In the films directly preceding *Under Capricorn*, we have a number of instructive examples. Devlin in *Notorious*, as I noted earlier, uses Alex Sebastian as a surrogate persecutor of Alicia, one who ultimately literalizes the poison of Devlin's own raging jealousy and his toxic fixation on her sexual history. In *The Paradine Case* (1947), barrister Anthony Keane becomes the legally ordained tormentor of the (to him) unendurable Andre Latour, whom Anna Paradine, another accused poisoner, has been in love with. Anna, at film's climax, condemns Keane, in court, of being responsible—by his persecution of Latour in the trial—for the suicide of her lover. In *Rope* (1948) Rupert refuses to acknowledge the significance of his crucial role as professor mentor in the Nietzschean "superman" murder committed by his former students, Brandon and Philip. Milly's final effort to drive Henrietta to a Paula-like insane collapse and to kill her are an out of control amplification of Sam's own maddening impasse. It is Sam's plan, before Milly's intervention as facilitator, to secure Henrietta's old love on a different basis by domestic captivity (resembling his own lengthy imprisonment) and steady shrinkage of her imagined sovereignty. Hence, appropriately, the shrunken head appearing on her bedspread. Charles and Milly are agents of desired punishment that Sam and Henrietta are too paralyzed by guilt to openly acknowledge and pursue.

The artificial mending of Sam and Henrietta's marriage in the brief closing scenes demand the double banishment or exile of Milly and Charles as a pre-condition for success. Just as *Gaslight* ends its machinery of degrading humiliation with Joseph Cotten and Ingrid Bergman on an attic balcony, attempting to persuade themselves that the nocturnal fog is beginning to clear, and that there is something (rather than nothing) for Bergman to build upon in from her squelched life experience following her aunt's murder. In *Under Capricorn*, Cotten and Bergman stand alone together on an elevated dock above a descending stairway to the lonely sea. They have been part of a group tableau as the epilogue begins, but those gathered around them have drifted away. They are bidding farewell to Charles, who has decided to return to Ireland, since, as he romantically phrases it, Australia is not large enough to stay in if Henrietta is there too, but denied to him. A Union Jack flag flies above the reunited couple. We note the camera's retreating distance from them on their precarious perch, removed from the confines of their somber home, with an open sky behind them. The steps leading down to the sea have more solidity and weight than the viewing platform where they stand together. We are invited to hope that the Fluskys are finally lifting themselves, with the aid of legal dispensation and honorable gestures by Charles and Henrietta, from the long, painful siege of their marriage. In *Gaslight*, Bergman seems to end her struggle with no history to call her own. Bergman's Henrietta and Cotten's Sam seem to be a pair drowning in history from which there may be no "third chance" for escape. History is altogether too much for them. For the moment, they look outward together, at someone making his own farewell and escape, sailing for a distant home that was once theirs. It is most unusual, in final movie scenes of farewell embarkations to concentrate on those left behind than the one privileged to sail forth,. Hitchcock's camera does not permit us to stay close to the reunited couple. We watch their tentative togetherness from a growing distance. They seem to be pledging to regard their Irish past, with all of its imprisoning associations , as a vanquished dream, too dangerous to hold any longer .in their minds And so it is with Paula in *Gaslight*, trying to breathe the air in the morning fog, standing uncertain, with no past to call her own, on the Thornton Square balcony.

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Minyago Yugilla: Architecture in Hitchcock's Under Capricorn

Steven Jacobs

Nineteenth-century domestic architecture plays a crucial part in Hitchcock's entire oeuvre (Jacobs 2007). Victorian mansions are inherently connected to his Gothic melodramas of the 1940s and early 1950s, such as *Rebecca* (1940), *Suspicion* (1941), *Notorious* (1946), *The Paradine Case* (1947) and *Strangers on a Train* (1951), as well as later works such as *Psycho* (1960). In these films, instead of places of safety and domestic bliss, houses become places of confinement and disturbance.

Under Capricorn (1949) is completely in line with these films, dealing with tensions in a marriage and its spatial expression, the home. But being one of Hitchcock's rare historical costume dramas with a story taking place in New South Wales in 1831, the story required sets that denote a specific historic context. Two sets, or two houses, in particular, should be mentioned. The first one is that of the Sydney palace of the new governor, which is a white neoclassical building marked by a central portico with six Ionic columns carrying a pediment. For the exterior shots showing the central section of the building, the filmmakers used the pillared front of the Canoga Park High School in Los Angeles.¹ These exterior shots also include the scene at the arrival at the mansion, which contains the obligatory Hitchcock cameo appearance. The palace's interior, which was entirely created in the studio, contains an impressive hall surrounded by fluted Ionic columns that support a gallery upstairs. The elegant interior is extensively explored by the camera in one of the film's famous long takes, which follows Charles Adare (Michael Wilding), one of the protagonists. After he has crossed



The Sydney Governor's Palace, *Under Capricorn*



The Canoga Park High School in Los Angeles standing for the Governor's Palace, *Under Capricorn*

the main hall and ascended the staircase, the camera follows him along a second-story corridor, striding through the governor's bedroom until he finally reaches a room where the governor (Cecil Parker) is taking a bath. Built in a Grand neoclassical style, the palace's architecture, its decoration and colour scheme are reminiscent of the works by John Soane and particularly Robert Adam, who advocated a neoclassicist architecture and interior decoration that favoured dramatic contrasts and diversity of form. Neoclassicism was, indeed, the predominant style in the early decades of New South Wales. (Irwin 1997: 351-54) One of its most refined neoclassical mansions, designed by Henry Kitchen, a London architect newly arrived in the colony, was called, in a twist of fate here, 'Villa Henrietta,' after governor's Macquarie's wife. It had two large domed rooms and one of these was used as a ball room – in the film, a ball at the governor's palace provides the context for an important scene. Though marked by neoclassicism, 'Villa Henrietta' was definitely less monumental, lacking the Grand style that marks the Governor's house in the film. Instead, the villa was equipped with a veranda – something which could relate to governor Macquarie's familiarity with



The Sydney Governor's Palace, *Under Capricorn*



Robert Adam, Kenwood House, Hampstead, London,



Point Piper House (Villa Henrietta), Sidney, 1820s-1840s

English colonial architecture in India. In so doing, this actual early villa is less related to the governor's palace created by the filmmakers than to other house featuring in the film.

Minyago Yugilla: the Flusky Home

The second, and most important, house in the film is the mansion of Sam Flusky (Joseph Cotten) and Lady Henrietta, 'Hattie,' Considine (Ingrid Bergman), the most important location and most impressive set piece of the film. During his first visit, Charles Adare describes the place as 'a handsome establishment.' The coachman who brings Adare to the Flusky mansion, however, does not agree and states that there is 'something queer about that place.' Adhering to the romantic Gothic convention of named houses (as Manderley in *Rebecca*), the house is already ominous by its name, Minyago Yugilla, which means 'Why Weepest Thou' in the aboriginal language. Although evoking a 'primitive' and pagan Australia, the name refers to the New Testament story of Christ's resurrection, in which an angel appears at Christ's tomb and asks Mary Magdalene 'Woman, why weepest thou?' (John: 20:12-13; see also Morisson 2004: 203)

The architecture of Minyago Yugilla, too, seems a hybrid construction borrowing from a strange combination of sources. For an architectural historian, no doubt, Minyago Yugilla is a somewhat preposterous construction, a grotesque fantasy of the production designers, probably of art director Thomas Morahan, who had also worked on Hitchcock's *Jamaica Inn* (1939) and *The Paradine Case* (1947), in collaboration with Kenneth McCallum Tait (uncredited). Nonetheless, paradoxically, it seems historically more correct than the neoclassical governor's mansion, both in size and spirit as many idiosyncratic houses were



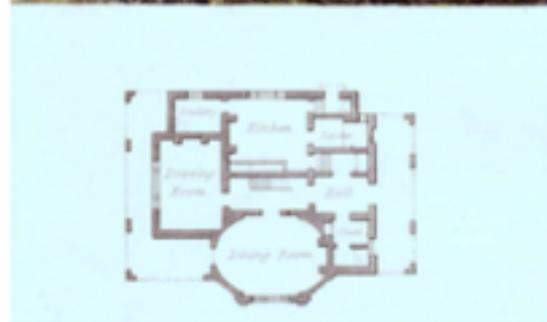
Minyago Yugilla, *Under Capricorn*

actually built in the colonies in the early nineteenth century. As many other early Australian architectural design forms, Minyago Yugilla shows vague similarities with the English Georgian country house. A release campaign leaflet of *Under Capricorn* claims that ‘it is right to state that the English made their colonial towns as living reflections of their own metropolitan cities. Maybe this is one of the reasons why the director thought it was not necessary to take his entire crew to Australia. However, it is in England and not in the United States that he shot his film, using two properties in the County of Suffolk and surveying with painstaking attention the authenticity of the costumes and props.’²

Despite the fact that this statement is false as Minyago Yugilla is entirely an invention and construction by the production department, its architecture denotes a kind of ‘Britishness’ by its unmistakable references to the picturesque country houses designed by architects such as John Soane and, particularly, John Nash in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like Nash’s villas in Cronkhil, Sandridge Park or his Houghton Lodge, Minyago Yugilla consists of an irregular volume provided with a cylindrical element. Although its entirety is marked by a certain compactness, the horizontality of the roofline and its close connection to the surrounding garden landscape are emphasized.



John Soane, *Sketches in Architecture Containing Plans and Elevations of Cottages, Villas, and Other Useful Buildings with Characteristic Scenery* (1793)



Cottage orné, Ackermann’s Repository (November, 1816)

An elongated mansion with a central rounded hall, the Flusky house also evokes the Anglo-Palladian tradition, which was very popular in the British Empire and the United States in the early nineteenth century. Minyago Yugilla's design could have been influenced by one of the more than hundred pattern books for cottages or small villas that were published between 1775 and 1840. Most of these books addressed aristocratic patrons but their real clients were from the new emergent middle classes, who built houses in the suburbs in Britain as well as in North America and Australia. As John Macarthur has noted, these pattern books contributed to the normalization of the single-family house: the reduction of servants resulted in a reduction of rooms and there were no spaces for large-scale entertainment such as balls, which were, of course, still prominently present in grander mansions. In addition, these books presented designs that somewhat crudely wrapped together a classicist elegance, a picturesque taste and the social engineering of tied housing for laborers or farm buildings. Minyago Yugilla is somewhat reminiscent of the drawings of highly idiosyncratic designs that can be found in the pattern books by James Malton, John Buonarotti Papworth and John Claudius Loudon among others.

Furthermore, Minyago Yugilla combines characteristics of the British Georgian villa with elements of the Indian bungalow as interpreted by the British (King 1995: 231). With its extended portico, Minyago Yugilla acquired a key feature of British colonial architecture: a veranda, often extending round several sides of the house. Taken to Australia from India via England or, more directly, by British army officers in Sydney who had served in India, verandas supported by thin wooden columns characterized the homesteads in New South Wales from the 1820s. Minyago Yugilla can therefore be seen as a fictitious example of the Australian bungalow, which, according to Robert Fermor Hesketh (1986: 194-95), 'achieved a level of sophistication never seen in India.'

Its exotic portico, the ample use of open loggias, fragile columns, and French doors also make a connection with the garden and the surrounding landscape possible. Strikingly, Hitchcock made rewardingly use of these architectural characteristics. In the film, we approach the house, together with the Charles Adare character, through the windows. This creates not only a striking contrast with the almost ritual entrance in the Governor's mansion, it is also in line with the early-nineteenth-century picturesque ideas of Humphry Repton, who disliked mansions in the Grand Style with their major rooms elevated and detached from the

garden because they sit on top of a full floor (or half basement) of services. Instead, Repton advocated ground-floor rooms where one can go out to the garden through the newly fashionable sash windows reaching to the floor. (Macarthur 2007: 129)

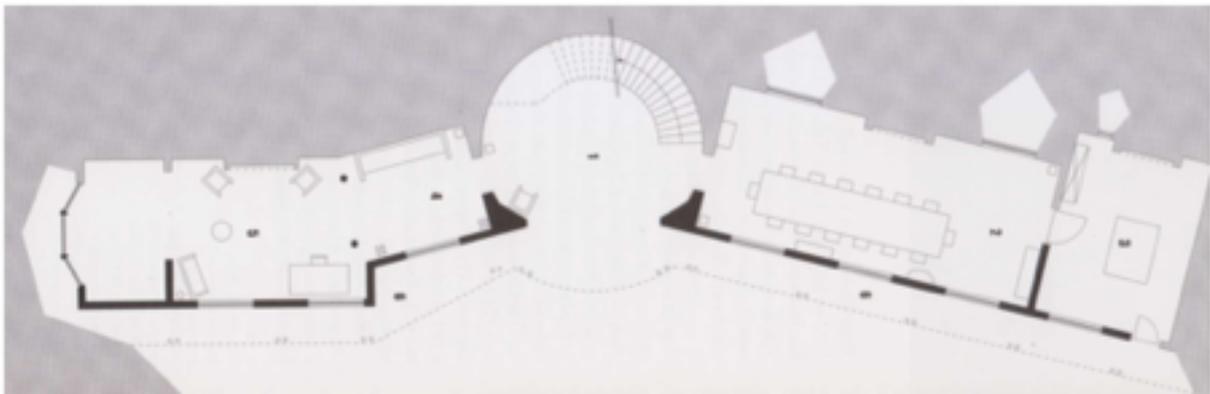
This connection with the landscape is also emphasized in the film. As some of Nash's buildings, Minyago Yugilla seems to be inspired by an Italianate style based on vernacular buildings in the backgrounds of the landscapes by Claude Le Lorrain – a source recommended by theoreticians of the picturesque such as Richard Payne Knight. (Watkin 2001: 146) Actually, Hitchcock's exterior views of Minyago Yugilla look like Claude paintings themselves: the exteriors are only represented by means of matte shots (and not by miniatures as several authors claim) that show, through the pictorial convention of framing trees, the building bathing in Claudean twilight or a nocturnal blue. Unmistakably, these pictorial light effects have to conceal the artificiality of the matte but, at the same time, they relate to the accurate nineteenth-century pictorial tone of the entire film, which has been praised as one of the most beautiful Technicolor movies of film history. In addition, the pictorial light effects contribute to both the exotic and uncanny atmosphere of the house.

Interior

The picturesque and Anglo-Palladian associations of the architecture also mark Minyago Yugilla's splendid interiors. Created by art director Thomas Morahan in collaboration with set dresser Philip Stockford (uncredited), the interior is characterized by light blue walls and white decorations such as fluted Tuscan columns and half columns, simple mouldings and mantle pieces. A look at the (reconstructed) floor plan reveals that the interior spaces are arranged in an irregular alignment, with a circular hall in the middle, connecting, like some sort of hinge, two wings each containing two rooms. On the left, there's an elegant drawing room, which contains a few chairs and a writing desk. Above the mantelpiece, in front of which fireside chairs are placed, there's a Claudean landscape showing two dorsal figures before a mirroring lake – it is as if the picturesque setting of the house itself recurs in the paintings it contains. Next to this drawing room, there is a small antechamber with a wall-sized tapestry, which connects the drawing room with the central hall.

On the other side of the hall, there is the elegant dining room with burgundy draperies on the windows. A long table occupies the centre of the room – the site of the dinner party

during which both Charles and the viewer meet the drunk and barefoot Hattie for the first time. Elegant tables and closets are placed along the walls, which are decorated with candleholders and several paintings such as a grisaille tondo showing nudes atop the mantelpiece, a picture of a horse, a portrait of a horseman, and several landscapes. In short, these paintings show the combination of classical restraint and romantic and picturesque elements that also characterize the architecture – a genuine Gainsborough landscape painting was even used in the film. Pictures taken on the set show Hitchcock and art director Thomas Morahan showing it to visitors.



Floor plan reconstruction of Minyago Yugilla,
The Wrong House: The Architecture of Alfred Hitchcock (2007)



Drawing Room, Minyago Yugilla, *Under Capricorn*

Keys, Staircases, and Bedrooms

Across from the connection to the hall, the dining room has a door leading to the kitchen, which is the site of the scene in which Hattie reclaims her position as lady of the house from the housekeeper Milly (Margaret Leighton) by throwing her whip into the fire, taking command over the clumsy kitchen servants. However, Milly sabotages Hattie's attempts by

humiliatingly displaying the signs of Hattie's alcoholism (empty bottles) to the kitchen staff. Milly's status as the figure who runs the household is also explicitly visualized by the motif of the house keys, which she wears attached to her belt. (Walker 2005: 272) Like doors, door knobs, windows and staircases, keys are important architectural motifs in Hitchcock, also playing an important part in *Notorious*, *Strangers on a Train*, and *Dial M for Murder* (1954).

The ultimate Hitchcock architectural motif, of course, is the staircase – already in 1929, the London correspondent of *Variety* referred to Hitchcock's so-called 'staircase complex' and ever since, Hitchcock's staircases became a much-discussed topic in Hitchcock scholarship. (Funck 1984; Walker 2005; Yacowar 1986; Zirnite 1986) In *Minyago Yugilla*, a curved staircase is situated in the cylindrical hall, which is the central core of the building, where it serves several narrative functions. The stairs are transformed into a catwalk when Hattie appears in her white dress to go to the governor's ball. As the spine of the house, the staircase also gives Hattie a feeling of domestic safety: she grabs 'the good old balustrade'



Dining Room, Minyago Yugilla, *Under Capricorn*



Hall, Minyago Yugilla, *Under Capricorn*

when she escapes to her bedroom on the second floor. However, as in *The Lodger* (1926), *Number Seventeen* (1932), *Rebecca*, *Suspicion*, *Notorious*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Vertigo* (1958), *Psycho* and *The Birds* (1963), staircases are leading to danger and terror. In *Under Capricorn*, the sole room on the upper floor that is visible to the viewer is Hattie's elegant bedroom, which is the equivalent of the forbidden locked room in many other Gothic Hitchcock stories. Typically Hitchcock, the bedroom is a site of disturbance: it is the place where Hattie is slowly poisoned by Milly, where she sees phantoms but also 'real' terrors such as a mummified aboriginal head.

Open Floor Plans and Long Takes

The similarities of Minyago Yugilla with some of the picturesque country houses by John Nash also apply to the irregularity of its floor plan, as it has been reconstructed in *The Wrong House*. (Jacobs 2007) Irregular and differentiated planning became one of the hallmarks of the English country house, as demonstrated by Herman Muthesius, in his landmark 1904 publication of *Das Englische Haus*. These irregular rooms, oblique corners, and alcoves serve Hitchcock well as his 1940s films often deal with a woman feeling both lost and imprisoned in her own house. In films such as *Rebecca*, *Suspicion*, and *Notorious*, the house becomes a trap and a labyrinth – in *The Paradine Case*, the complexity of the floor plan even becomes part of the plot, and a floor plan of the Paradine house becomes an exhibit in court. Varied, compact, and with ground floor windows reaching to floor level so as to make the most of the contact with the outside, Minyago Yugilla, like Nash's planning, anticipates a modernist fluid and organic arrangement of spaces. (Middleton and Watkin 1980: 49)

Such an integrated, open space also served Hitchcock's impressive long takes, sometimes moving from floor to floor and through several rooms. In *Under Capricorn*, Hitchcock took the innovative long-take technique of *Rope* (1948) a step further and combined it with the dark psychology, Gothic romanticism and the uncanny mansions that were present in *Rebecca*, *Suspicion*, and *Notorious*. For that purpose, Hitchcock had the Flusky mansion built in the MGM British Studios, near London – some exteriors were shot on the Hollywood back lot of Warner Brothers, the company that distributed the film (Cardiff 1996: 108). Erected on a specially built studio floor of asphalt, layers of felt and carpet, which was adapted to smooth and silent dollying in any direction, the set consisted of sections that c



Under Capricorn, Production Still

ould slide open electrically to allow giant camera cranes to float through doorways and walls. Cameraman Jack Cardiff, who had served as an operator on Hitchcock's *The Skin Game* (1931) and had acquired a reputation for the sensual colour photography on some Powell & Pressburger films, attached lights to cranes, dollies, boom mikes and even the forehead of crew members to make them mobile enough to light a shot and then get out of the way of the ponderous crane that followed the actors. Cardiff wrote that Hitchcock himself drew every set-up on paper, already prepared with frame lines. Another part of the careful preparation was the use of a large model of the composite set, using scale actors, furniture, and even scale lights. With a perfect miniature of the crane, every camera movement was mapped out. (Cardiff 1949; Hitchcock 1949; Krohn 2000: 108)

The flexibility of the architecture also applied to the furniture. "Tables were slipped away by grips, chairs put into view just as the camera came near you, walls were whipped up



Thomas Morahan, Jack Cardiff and Alfred Hitchcock inspecting a scale model of Minyago Yugilla



Under Capricorn, Scale model of Minyago Yugilla

in the air,” Ingrid Bergman later recalled. (Spoto 1992: 176) Long takes shot by the enormous Technicolor camera required the dinner table to disintegrate in the middle of a meal. The large Regency table was cut into fourteen divisions laterally and vertically, which came apart when the camera had to pass through. ‘The start of the scene showed the guests sitting in their places and the table adorned with gastronomic delights,’ Cardiff later recalled. ‘Now the camera moved forward, seemingly on an inevitable collision course, but at the last moment, each of the guests fell back on to a mattress clutching his section of the table with all props stuck on it! To have the camera cleave its way through the collapsing guests, falling back like dominoes in rapid succession, was like a surrealistic dream, but it worked.’ (Cardiff 1996: 105)

Another impressive set piece was the bed, which ‘had machinery that enabled it to tilt forward about 45 degrees. (...) We could thus affectively look “down” on Bergman,’ Cardiff wrote, ‘without going high and tilting our Titan blimp. Miss Bergman performed a remarkable feat in acting and maintaining equi-pose on a bed which performed silent see-saws!’ (Cardiff 1949: 359)

Strikingly, in this film *chouchou* of French critics, Hitchcock’s mobile long takes do not exude the apprehension of the continuity of an integrated space, which André Bazin so applauded in the long-take aesthetics that Max Ophüls, William Wyler and Orson Welles were developing at the time. Only occasionally, Hitchcock’s long takes do provide a sense of an

unobstructed, holistic unity of space. Primarily tracking in medium shot and close-up, Hitchcock rather evokes spatial disorientation, and emphasizes the social and psychological disconnection between the characters. Cardiff's camera glides through cinematic space without disclosing it. The shallow depth of field, selective focus and claustrophobic camera distance prevent the spectator's understanding of the cinematic space. This is also the result of the fact that the mesmerizing long takes seem to serve no purpose. As John Belton noted, 'unlike the elaborate cranes in *Young and Innocent* and *Notorious*, which voyeuristically search for and descend upon crucial objects (the drummer's twitching eye, the key), the camera movements in *Under Capricorn* do not explore space or reveal secrets within it.' (Belton 1981: 373) Indeed, the apparently aimless camera movements enhance the claustrophobic atmosphere and the feeling of voyeuristic intrusion.

This is already clear in the way Hitchcock's long takes introduce the spectator, with Charles Adare, to the house. The scene, in which Adare eavesdrops on the Flusky household before announcing himself, identifies Adare as a voyeuristic intruder. The angles and movements of the camera underscore his intrusiveness and convey a sense of violation of a private space. This feeling, however, continues to vibrate throughout all the other scenes set in Minyago Yugilla by the penetrating gaze of the omnipresent camera, which also draws attention to the unconcealed theatricality of the set design and the emphatic artificiality of the house's front.

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Notes:

¹ The Warner Bros. Archives contain a correspondence dated October/November 1948 between the studio and the Los Angeles City Board of Education on that matter.

² Warner Brothers Belgian release leaflet for *Under Capricorn* in the French language in the Royal Film Archive, Brussels. (Author's translation).

Under Capricorn: Head, shoulder, knees, and toes

John Bruns

Hitchcock's critics for quite some time have been careful not to indulge the director's disavowals of his films. In fact, think of the quite remarkable pieces of criticism that have been borne out of a healthy scepticism of Hitchcock's claims, such as Tania Modlkeski's essay on *Rebecca* (1940) in which she challenges the director's oft-quoted dismissal of the film as "not a Hitchcock picture" (Truffaut 1983: 127).¹ So, what do we make of Hitchcock's disavowal of *Under Capricorn* (1949)? Hitchcock states that he should not have repeated the mistake of *Rope* (1948) and undertaken elaborate long takes. He also states that he should not have attempted a costume picture. Yet technique and setting, taken together, are precisely what make *Under Capricorn* worthy of consideration as an important Hitchcock picture.

As for technique, Hitchcock himself urged his critics to remember that the long take involves not only sophisticated camera movement, but body movement as well. Speaking to *Cahiers*, Hitchcock insisted his technique required "the movements of the actors, not the camera alone, but of the actors *and* of the camera together" (2015: 262). Hitchcock's aim was to apply the elaborate technique of *Rope* "to a different sort of story in order to see what that would yield" (2015: 263). The "different sort of story" is a costume picture. And while it might seem, generally speaking, that the body is hidden underneath the costume, outperformed by it, we should learn from Hitchcock's defence of the long take and not subtract the body from the "costume picture". In other words, just as the camera does not diminish the status of the actor, the costume does not negate the body. In other words, just as the camera does not diminish the status of the actor, the costume does not negate the body – quite the contrary.²

In a word, *Under Capricorn* is about bodies, and the way Hitchcock's camera works in collaboration – and in tension – with the body and its parts in great detail. Bodies are often close, too close, together. They are exposed, even overexposed (ironic, for a costume picture). Bodies twitch, get picked over; they dance gracefully and perch dead still. Bodies are kissed, caressed, bathed, and healed. Bodies are whipped, shot, strangled, and poisoned. They are, at turns, on elegant and grotesque display.

If this paper attends heavily to detail, it is to reverse Hitchcock's repeated claim that costume pictures don't allow for details. More observational than analytical, this paper notes that what the long takes in *Under Capricorn* take in is the abundance of body parts at work and explores the ways Hitchcock's camera finds and frames the body in a way that recalls the well-known children's song, "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes." Each "part," I will show, is rich with thematic and narrative implications. In short, I will argue that the mechanism of *Under Capricorn*'s plot can be seen to turn with precision around moments when the body and the camera collaborate often with great subtlety to weave layers of expressive connotation.

Head

Let's take it from the top, with heads. While the appearance (and disappearance) of shrunken heads seem the obvious of candidates for this first category, I'll also focus on the odd juxtaposition of the campy, busy head of Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) and the motionless heads of church and state – that is, the heads of the Rev. Smiley (Victor Lucas) and of Mr. Corrigan (Denis O'Dea), respectively. But I will begin with the obvious: the shrunken head that haunts Lady Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman). I have this image before you because, as early as I can remember, it has haunted me – at least for as long as I have owned my copy of *Hitchcock/Truffaut*. It is as grisly a still from a Hitchcock picture as you will find in that book, and also the most bizarre. The shrunken head in Bergman's bed is an ugly prop; a *malaprop*. That is, ugly not just in form but also in its being quite out of place. Raymond Durnat said the use of this prop was "not really a gimmick, but so compressed a symbol, so *unfair* a device to use, as to seem so" (1974: 210). Its visibility is disgraceful, like the ex-convict women fighting in the kitchen, whose bodies are whipped by Milly (Margaret Leighton), exposed to Charles as he sidles his way along the exterior of Minyago Yugilla.

As I suggest, *Under Capricorn* is about *bodies*. But the film is, as Mark Rappaport has claimed, also about *time* – "the inescapable past that is always with us in the present" (2009: 195). I would like to suggest a connection between the two, between the body and time. The shrunken head, like any type of bodily mummification, is a grisly reminder of the past as permanence, a mockery of the potential for rebirth, regeneration, and renewal. For its victory

over death, the mummified body, in part or whole, must pay the price of arresting the flow of history and time. In this way, the shrunken head signals the impossibility of redemption. No wonder the sight of it infuriates Sam Flusky (Joseph Cotton). In this way, the shrunken head is an apt symbol of the New South Wales of 1830. Sam, after seven years of prison, is now an emancipate. Yet his new status all but guarantees that nothing will change. After all, how, in a society where it is bad manners to ask about one's past, can one ever hope to experience rebirth, regeneration, and renewal? For Sam and Henrietta there is nothing but stasis.

When the street dealer's shrunken head tumbles to the ground, earning itself a close-up, Charles Adare asks, 'Is that a human head?' A good question, and one that we might ask of Charles's head. More bird-like than human, Charles's head flits about restlessly. The effect is made all the more noticeable when he is framed standing beside or in front of another character whose head remains relatively motionless. In the first instance, the head of Rev. Smiley sits perched still above Charles's left shoulder, while Charles gawks and smirks energetically at Mr. Riggs (Ronald Adam), whose peculiar habit of picking his teeth in mixed company irks Charles.



In the second instance, the legal adviser Corrigan stands patiently still behind the Governor (Cecil Parker) and Charles as the subject of the latter's residence at Minyago Yugilla is

discussed. Once again, Charles's head is busy, pausing only to allow his eyes and eyebrows to do some work. Even prior to this moment, when Corrigan is standing still behind the Governor's right shoulder (stillness is quadrupled if one takes into account the bust perched above the office door, plus the two portraits that adorn the walls), Charles's head is all action.

No doubt the point of Charles's campy, busy head is to emphasize his class snobbery, directed at the crass denizens down under, as well as his attitude toward his cousin the Governor, whose naked sense of duty, which we will discuss momentarily, amuses him. Only when in the presence of Lady Henrietta does Charles seem to put his head to rest. She enters the film when she enters the dining room, unexpected and unannounced. At this moment, all heads are motionless, bowed in prayer. The words spoken by Reverend Smiley form an uncanny announcement of Lady Henrietta's arrival: 'Bountiful Jehovah, we thank ye for thy mercies which we are about to receive'. Then, heads turn. Slowly, Henrietta makes her way from the bottom of the stairs to where Sam is seated. Sam begins to rise, but she places her hands on his shoulders and says, 'Please be seated gentlemen'. Hitchcock's camera, having moved from just outside the dining room, then across the table, to the floor where we see Henrietta enter, then back as she approaches the table, stops to frame Sam at this precise moment.



Shoulders

'I have left too much on your shoulders,' Henrietta will later say to Milly, when she asserts herself as the mistress of the house. These words suit the film as well as, if not better than, "why weepest thou?" For *Minyago Yugilla* is a house of burdens, shouldered by others. Although Henrietta's unexpected appearance is an embarrassing breach of decorum (earlier Sam tells Winter to remove her place card from the dinner table), Sam cannot be angry at her. Nor can he blame her. She is doing this for Sam, for both of them. This is why he gently puts his hand on Henrietta's, on his own left shoulder, as if to suggest he not only understands but will shoulder the burden with her.

Twice the word "burden" is spoken, both times by Henrietta. First, in the moment I mentioned earlier, then again right after the row at the ball in the film's longest take, at eight minutes and forty-seven seconds. It begins with a furious Charles, cursing Sam for the spectacle. He tells Henrietta that Sam's jealousy of her fills him with black hatred and that she must return to Ireland with him. But Henrietta, as hurt as she is, defends Sam. So strong is Bergman's performance that she threatens to transport the viewer out of the film entirely, and the camera must enlist the aid of Charles to get a hold of her, and thus regain a hold on the film. She begins by telling Charles that she is a burden to her husband, 'A burden when he was trying to save his soul in this new country'. She then begins to describe her time with Sam, when they were young. 'We used to ride,' she says, her head tilted upward, as if a vision from their shared past was now hovering above her. Perhaps it is the same vision that hovers in front of Sam when is talking with Charles, telling him 'It would have done your heart good to see her on a horse'. In Ed Gallafent's words, these are two of the film's instances in which "a character's eyes are averted...fixed on something we cannot see, a vision of the past" (2005: 74).

This is only one instance in which Charles holds Henrietta by the shoulders. Another comes earlier in the film, after a long take of about two minutes during which Charles tries to convince Sam not to give up on 'Hattie,' despite the fact that she has now bolted her bedroom door (this is after Milly dumps the empty wine bottles on the kitchen table for the staff to see). Charles scales the outside wall and enters her bedroom through the balcony. As he approaches her, the bed tilts up slightly, lifting Henrietta's shoulder to meet him (a mechanical trick revealed

by director of photography Jack Cardiff in Charlotte Chandler's biography of Bergman). For this take, nearly four minutes in length, Charles's hands never seem to leave Henrietta's shoulders – save for when he unlocks the bedroom door to let Milly in for a brief moment.

Later in the film, in her bravura performance after the scandal at the Governor's ball, Bergman is unrestrained, free to follow her vision wherever it leads her – even out of the film entirely, taking the audience with her. But here, in Henrietta's bedroom, it is “Charles in Charge”. Guiding Henrietta with his shoulders, Charles does all the blocking. He is even in control of Henrietta's vision. After his sudden kiss fails to have the desired effect he gazes upward, and asks Henrietta, ‘Can you remember the west wind coming off the Atlantic? Can you fill your eyes with the greens and purples of the place you were born?’ Henrietta comes to life and, freed of Charles's tender grip, is drawn by the vision – but only for a brief moment. Charles grasps her shoulders once more and tells her, ‘Now go to sleep and dream about it’. We must wait until later in the film before we can join an unrestrained Bergman in her moment of agony and ecstasy.

Briefly, my thoughts about Charles's kiss are as follows: there is no question that he adores Henrietta, but his love is not romantic, or at any rate erotic. Charles is passionate about one thing: to see Lady Henrietta fully restored – or more precisely, rejuvenated. She is – or has the potential to be – the first work of art he's ever done. He kisses her not because he is boiling with erotic passion but because he is, as he tells Henrietta earlier in the film, ‘Boiling with enthusiasm’. Perhaps he kisses Henrietta out of an enthusiastic sense of duty to guide her toward rehabilitation. It's likely that Henrietta interprets the kiss this way, for she tells Charles, after the kiss, ‘I will do my best, but this is not the way of it’. The point here is not to call into question the potency of Charles's persuasive pucker, but it is worth noting that, as the newest and more promising young bachelor to arrive in New South Wales, he has stirred very little, let us say, *feminine interest*. Compared to Uncle Charlie's arrival in Santa Rosa, which has the hearts of merry widows all-a-twitter, Charles's arrival is a “bust”. Not a single wife shows up at Sam's dinner party. Heads do not turn for Charles.

Knees

We now arrive at knees, our first of two stops down the lower bodily stratum. The scene I wish to discuss is when Charles pays a visit to his cousin, the Governor, during bath time. We see three pairs of knees in close proximity, but it's the Governor's pair that literally stick out – poking up through the bath water, no doubt because it is a small tub that barely contains him. One might say this tub constitutes the absolute minimum of luxury – no indulgence, all duty. A similar scene is to be found in Hitchcock's *Notorious* (1946) when, near the end of the film, Devlin (Cary Grant) pays a visit to Captain Prescott (Louis Calhern) at *his* private space, finding him lying in bed with one knee bent upward, during *his* moment of minimal luxury: a light snack consisting of cheese and crackers, washed down with some beer.





The similarities and differences between these two moments deserve careful attention, but in the interest of time I'd like to zero in on the Governor's nakedness, particularly his knees. I suggest these juttied knees are a stand-in for what cannot and yet must be shown: a full and frontally naked sense of duty. This type of nakedness is, as Richard Dyer has argued, the emblem of white masculinity, at war with the body, a body that must be transcended. Historically, argues Dyer, white masculinity has been engaged in an ongoing struggle to overcome desire, to be clean and pure. The spectacle of naked white masculinity before us – of the Governor cleansing his body, emerging erect and draped in a long white towel – “conveys a sense of dignity and transcendence” precisely because it would take so little to lapse into eroticism (1997: 28). It is important to recall that ‘his excellency’ is bathing in full view of two men, one of whom has his request to be excused denied, *and* performing his duty as Governor, dictating a letter to His Majesty about the filthy conditions of the harbour.

Wilding's performance – here and throughout the film – also calls attention to the body, but in a considerably different way. Charles's knees, while covered, are also prominent. His knees not quite but very nearly touch the Governor's (physical contact between the two is in fact made when the Governor absentmindedly pats Charles's shoulder with his sudsy hand). And on

one occasion Charles's groin makes a very near pass across the Governor's head. Of this scene one might say, to borrow a phrase from Janet in *Rope*, 'How cosy'. And one can recall here D.A. Miller's observation about *that* film, how bodies are framed: proximity becomes touching becomes penetration. Of course, it makes no sense to suggest Adare desires his cousin. But it does make sense to suggest Adare's knees, perched in (perhaps too close) proximity of the Governor, are a queer reminder of what the film wants us to want but is structured to negate: the potential of adultery.

Toes

As Jacobowitz says, the problem posed by Ingrid Bergman is her refusal to be guilty (of duplicity in *Notorious*, disloyalty in *Gaslight* (George Cukor, 1944), and adultery in *Under Capricorn*). And Bergman poses a second problem, first noted by Robin Wood. It is a problem raised in the film when Bergman makes her entrance, toes first.



Specifically, Bergman's bare toes raise the "problematic corollary" that her "natural" beauty carries with it, a problem Hitchcock's camera contains by erasing from the screen (and thus from the scene) the heads these bare toes have turned (2002: 312). To begin this brief

discussion of Bergman's feet, let me turn to the issue of Henrietta's social footing, something which she, soon with the aid of Charles, struggles to rediscover. The effort begins here, with her unexpected appearance at the dinner party. 'I hope I'm not too late,' she tells her guests, thus reversing the roles typical in the space of hospitality, with guest apologizing to host for lateness. But host she most certainly is and asserts this role by three times entreating her guests to sit down. She entertains her guests only briefly, then excuses herself. Here Henrietta's project of improving her social footing is literalized. 'Thank you, Charles,' she says, 'That was good of you. Now I have the balustrade. Good old balustrade'. As she ascends the stairs, we catch another glimpse of her naked feet.

What is striking about this sequence is the way in which Hitchcock's camera manages to create a social bubble for Charles and Henrietta, framing them in a two shot and only once cutting away, to Sam in a medium close up. After which the camera cuts to a close up of Henrietta's hands as she covers her glass. The camera pans upward to frame Henrietta in medium close up, then pulls back to frame once again Charles and Henrietta in a two shot. The effect is to essentially erase the other guests from the scene, undermining their capacity to render judgment. To be sure, the technique of the long take disallows the reaction shots that no doubt would damage Sam and Henrietta's shared claim to legitimacy and communal acceptance. Only after Henrietta is safe and sound in her bedroom (Charles has fired his pistol at a fictional rat) does social prejudice rear its ugly head, with Corrigan's 'pink rats' remark.

I will close now with a final word on Wood's point about Bergman's natural beauty and its problematic corollary. For Wood, Bergman's beauty is her "radiance," "naturalness," and "health." Yet one might argue that Bergman projects none of these, in Henrietta's entrance scene and indeed for much of the film, although one might argue that she does. The film wants us to say, "the Bergman before us is not radiant, natural, and healthy, but rather pale, stiff and inelegant, and shockingly ill". Yet I would argue that the image of Bergman before us is Bergman at her *most* natural – if, following Wood's logic, the problematic corollary of the "natural" woman "entails the expression of woman's 'masculinity,' her active, assertive, [if not very] energetic side that patriarchal culture has long striven definitively (but unsuccessfully) to deny" (Wood 2002: 313). "Be seated gentlemen" – three times commanded, after having

interrupted the stately and theological chit-chat. No ornamental society hostess, Henrietta is ugly nakedness (of course, no one can make Bergman ugly – I mean, here, a nakedness that does not conform to male desire and is quite out of male control). Indeed, far from putting the male guests at ease, Henrietta puts them at unease. Were the stakes of securing social footing not so high, this scene could be a delightful joke on the male guests assembled (and here I'm speaking of Corrigan, Smiley, Riggs, and Wilkinson), a private revenge for Sam and Henrietta. And I think the project of the film is to secure a future for Sam and Henrietta in which they may look back on this scene and share a laugh.

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Notes

¹ See Modelski, Tania (2015) *The Women Who Knew Too Much*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 41-54.

² James Stewart disagreed, and famously joked about *Rope* that the only thing rehearsing for the film was Hitchcock's camera.

A New Mirror: The Feminine versus the Queer in *Under Capricorn*

David Greven

In my study *Intimate Violence: Hitchcock, Sex, and Queer Theory*, I argue that Hitchcock's films consistently feature a conflicted—rivalrous, agonized, in some way oppositional—relationship between the woman, most typically the heroine of the film, but other female characters as well, and a queer character. Exemplary in this regard is Eva Marie Saint's Eve Kendall in *North by Northwest* (1959) and the character of Leonard, played by Martin Landau, the chief henchman of the villain James Mason (Phillip Vandamm), Eve's boyfriend for the purposes of espionage. I discuss other films such as *Secret Agent* (1936), *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *Notorious* (1946), *Spellbound* (1945), *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Psycho* (1960), *The Birds* (1963), and *Marnie* (1964). Many critics have debated whether we can read Hitchcock's characters, particularly his villainous ones, as homosexual or gay. The term queer is especially useful in this regard because it describes nonnormative identities that exceed or defy conventional standards and definitions of gender and sexual identity. For the purposes of this talk, I argue that the character of Charles Adare is the queer figure in *Under Capricorn* (1949). His queerness emerges through several qualities associated with the character. Adare's status as single man and bachelor, neither married nor romantically attached to anyone else, emerges as significant within the context of the film's gendered and sexual dynamics, which emphasize his non-inclusion in the heterosexual couple. In this regard, he is distinct from the character that Helen Simpson portrays in her novel, the source material from the film, since Adare does develop romantic interest for a young working-class woman named Susan Quaife. Hitchcock's film and the screenplay by James Bridie from an adaptation by Hume Cronyn eschew these later developments and present Adare as romantically unattached save for his highly idiosyncratic relationship with Ingrid Bergman's Lady Henrietta Flusky, "Hattie." Not my focus here, Simpson's novel provides corroboration as well for a queer reading of Adare, especially his preoccupation with Sam Flusky's physicality.

In his admirable reading “The Dandy and the Magdalene,” Ed Gallafent persuasively describes Adare as the dandy to Hattie’s Magdalen. While it is anachronistic to classify the dandy in the diegetic world of 1831 Sydney as a homosexual figure, given that the dandy in the early nineteenth-century was associated with heterosexual sexual rapacity—the figure of the diabolical dandy—*Under Capricorn* is made several decades after the remythification of the dandy as a homosexual figure following the “gross indecency” trials of Oscar Wilde.

In Wildean fashion, Adare, as played by Michael Wilding, is associated throughout the film with fashion and loucheness. He aptly embodies the figure of the dandy as Thomas Elsaesser describes it in his essay “The Dandy in Hitchcock”:

A dandy is preoccupied above all, with style. A dandy makes a cult of clothes and manners. A dandy has an infinite capacity to astound and surprise. A dandy is given to a form of wit which seems to his contemporaries mere cynicism. A dandy must be negative: neither believing in the world of men—virility, sports—nor in the world of women—the earthy, the life-giving, the intuitive, the natural and flowing. A dandy prefers fantasy and beauty over maturity and responsibility, he pursues perfection to the point of perversity... [A dandy embodies] sartorial dandyism, the cult of clothes (176).

When Adare and his cousin Sir Richard (Cecil Parker), the new Governor of New South Wales, are first shown in the same shot, the Governor is in military garb and Adare in civilian ones, their clothes signifying the men’s respective roles. In contrast to the dark and drab outfits worn by the other men in the film, Adare sports tailcoats of a vivid, standout hue, most notably green and azure blue. In the next scene, at the bank, Adare’s green tailcoat sharply contrasts with the banker’s black jacket and brown vest and Flusky’s brown and tan cowboy rancher’s outfit. Perhaps most notably of all, Adare’s green tailcoat makes a pointed contrast for the Governor’s lack of any clothing as he takes a sponge bath in a bathtub as his aide and Adare look on.

When Adare goes to the Governor’s house, where he will converse with him in the bath, Hitchcock strikingly films Adare/Wilding making his way up the stairs. In what can only be described as dance-climbing, Adare jauntily and flamboyant strides upwards, an extraneous

moment that links Adare to Anthony Perkins/Norman Bates in the infamous moment when Bates sashays upstairs to Mother's room.

Hitchcock makes pointed use of tight framing throughout. In the scene of the Governor's bath, the Governor's male secretary Banks is seated in the background, Adare and his politician cousin in the foreground. (Figure 4) The Governor invites Adare to have a drink. In a shot that anticipates the one of James Stewart/Ben McKenna awkwardly changing seating positions in the Moroccan restaurant in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), leaving Doris Day/Jo to stare up awkwardly at his crotch, Adare rises and reaches past the Governor's head to avail himself of the alcohol in a goblet, and thereby aligns his midsection with the Governor's face. The tight physical proximity of the men in this scene and the fact that one of them is naked and soaping himself, while not represented in anything like an erotic register, nevertheless conveys a certain comic attitude toward the impossibility of male physical intimacy even in a scene that records it. Adding to this tone, the Governor asks, "Where is that soap?" at one point, creating mild suspense that he might have to rise up in his bathtub to find it or that one of the men may have to reach into the suds themselves; and the Governor wipes some sudsy material off of Adare's green jacketed arm.

Conveying Adare's separateness from the proceedings, he is depicted as a shadowy voyeur on his first visit to the Flusky home. Hitchcock and cinematographer Jack Cardiff emphasize the gothic aspects of the Flusky mansion and surroundings when the stagecoach driver deposits Adare there one night. The eerie scene suggests Adare as a Jonathan Harker calling on the vampire within, an effect heightened by the driver's refusal to go inside the Flusky abode for sustenance and determination to go back a long way and return for Adare later. Yet it is Adare who skulks around the ground floor unseen, voyeuristically observing and listening to those inside. Moreover, Adare comes in not through the front door, the doorbell of which he claims does not work, but through the back entrance of the kitchen where the housekeeper Milly (Margaret Leighton) disciplines the squabbling emancipist women in her charge. Flusky stares pointedly at Adare before responding to him, suggesting that he regards his appearance as strange and unsettling.

Wearing his blue azure tailcoat, Adare once again stands out in the male crowd of businessmen attending Flusky's dinner party without their wives, who will not make an appearance due to the scandalous nature of Hattie's alcoholism. The camera pans right across the table where these grizzled unaccompanied men have dinner with Flusky, pausing on his face as, startled, he strenuously looks behind him. In a shot of impossible vision much like James Stewart/Scottie Ferguson's when first "seeing" the beautiful Madeleine Elster (Kim Novak) in *Vertigo* (1958), Flusky's posterior gaze produces the shot of Hattie's lower body, emphasizing her bare feet. Significantly, Hattie sits next to Adare, not Flusky.

In a scene that offers a meta-commentary on the dandy's sartorialism and Adare's self-appointed role as Hattie's therapist and father confessor, Hattie explains her life with Sam and why this has been such an unhappy one. This scene occurs well before the later celebrated long take in which Bergman/Hattie fully explains, in an eight-and-a-half minute monologue, the backstory of her marriage to Flusky, the groomsman for her well-born family in Ireland, how they eloped and how her brother came after them wielding a gun and Hattie shot her brother instead, how Flusky was jailed in Sydney and Hattie's long slow decline began from this point.

In a later scene in what appears to be an afternoon, Hattie, seated, and Adare, standing, and once again in his eye-catching green tailcoat, have a conversation on the Flusky home veranda. Hattie, veiled, looks like a religious penitent. Adare, chewing on a piece of straw from the looks of it, stands at a slanted angle that along with his idle, playful chewing gives his comportment an air of loucheness that sharply contrasts with Hattie's melancholy musings. In an example of what I have called the thwarted gaze in Hitchcock's representation of the feminine versus the queer, Hattie averts her eyes from Adare for much of this scene, a point also made by Ed Gallafent, although he looks at her.

Many of Hitchcock's female-focused films intersect with themes in the classical Hollywood woman's film. In particular, they share the theme of a woman suffering from emotional and mental distress who needs help from a caring if often self-interested man. As in *Now, Voyager* (1942), Hattie gets help from a man she is not romantically attached to although in the former the person giving this help is a psychiatrist and Adare is most definitely a layman. In

an interesting contrast, when Dr. Jacquith, played by Claude Rains, encounters Bette Davis's troubled heroine Charlotte Vale for the first time and she asks him, "Dr. Jacquith, can you help me?" he responds without hesitation, "You don't need my help," even though he goes on to provide it (albeit off camera). Adare, however, says to Hattie directly, "You need help, don't you?"

"Did I make a terrible exhibition of myself?" Hattie asks in reference to her surprise, stumbling appearance at Flusky's dinner party. "You were extremely drunk," Adare responds. His blunt comment, far from offending Hattie, actually relieves her: "No one has ever said that to me before." In the manner of psychoanalytic talk therapy, Adare allows Hattie to articulate, or to hear the words that do, the truth of her alcoholism. All the while, Adare chews on the piece of straw, conveying his detachment from the moment. Nevertheless, he suddenly bends down so that he is face to face with the seated Hattie. "Oh, look at me," Hattie laments, "Don't you think I can see myself through and through?" Adare responds, "Do you ever look into a mirror?" Hattie answers, "I have no mirror. I threw them away years ago." Adare takes off his tailcoat and turns it inside out. He then holds the dark interior of his coat behind the glass door between the seated Hattie and himself, creating a surface in which Hattie's face can be reflected in the glass. "What do you see?" he asks as she turns around to look at herself, the music swelling to underscore the significance of this moment. Adare continues:

"If you saw what I see, you saw a very beautiful woman. What are you going to do with her? I'll buy you a new mirror. It will be your conscience. You'll look at it every day and say to yourself, 'Sister Hattie, do you see anyone coming?' And the mirror will answer, 'Yes, by George, it's yourself.'"

Both the fact that Hattie was a friend of Adare's sister and his invented dialogue for Hattie's conversation with herself, in which she calls herself "Sister," suggest that Adare's relationship to Hattie is that of brother to sister and that his fantasy of Hattie enshrines her sororal character. Adare's language recalls the incestuous tones in *Pierre's* exchanges with his mother in Melville's novel *Pierre*, in which the young man calls his Mother "Sister" and she calls him "Brother." *Pierre*, a parody at once of the Gothic and the sentimental novel, is an apt intertext for this film,

especially given its abject commercial failure at the time of release and its high critical estimation today. Given that incest has been read as an allegory for homosexuality, the incestuous overtones in Adare and Hattie's relationship, a kind of class rather than biological incest, seems especially suggestive here.

That Adare uses an article of clothing, and in particular one of his signature brightly hued tailcoats, to give Hattie the opportunity to see herself as she really is, or at least as Adare sees her, extends the metaphorical reach of the dandy figure to the ongoing sexual politics of the Hitchcock film centered in relationships between female and queer characters. Though not depicted as a psychopath in any way, Adare anticipates Bruno Anthony in *Strangers on a Train*, both sharing a penchant for flashy-debonair clothing—recalling Bruno's two-toned shoes and sumptuous robe worn around the house—louche, undercutting demeanor, a hostility to work, and a hostility to male authority figures (much more pronounced in Bruno, who loathes his father to the point of murder).

Moreover, Adare turns himself inside out, figuratively, to give Hattie the chance to see her own reflection. It's as if Hattie can only truly see herself when she does so within the context of Adare's intervention, indeed within the context of his own body. For Adare's clothing seems like his extruded flesh, an extension of his sensibility in physical form. He incorporates Hattie into his fashion-body, as if embedding her within its fabric. When Flusky appears at the end of the scene, he remarks once Hattie has left, "So you have her on this again," referring to a piece of needlework she was working on during the scene. Fascinatingly, this motif links *Under Capricorn* to another woman's film of its year, *The Heiress* (1949), in which the wronged heroine Catherine Sloper (Olivia de Havilland) plies dedicated skill to her needlework. Indeed, overlaps between these narratives abound, as Catherine tries to win the love of her steely and past-obsessed father and becomes entranced and ensnared by a dandy of suspect character.

Adare is no Morris Townsend, just as Flusky is no Dr. Sloper. Adare does not want Hattie's money even if he, like Montgomery Clift's Morris, is allergic to work. Morris feigns desire for Catherine, wanting the wealth that makes her the titular figure. Adare, as Ed Gallafent observes, similarly "does not feel a passionate sexual attraction to Hattie." It should be noted

that, even though Adare is played by the conventionally attractive Michael Wilding, Hattie even more clearly feels no sexual attraction to him, rebuffing his kisses however respectful and emphasizing her love and desire for Sam. Gallafent continues, “the emphasis of” Adare’s interest in Hattie “is that of a dandy, which is to say that he wishes to flirt, even to make a conquest, but his ultimate aim is not so much to claim Hattie for himself—after all, he knows he has no means of supporting her—as to take her away from Sam and return her to Ireland” (79).

In the next scene, Adare produces a literal mirror in which a newly vivacious, bonneted Hattie looks at herself, smiling in approval at what she beholds. Adare pronounces this image of Hattie as “The first work of art I’ve ever done.” Any Hitchcock aficionado will immediately think of *Vertigo* and its far darker versions of this *Pygmalion*-like scene. But the creation of Madeleine Elster has distinct sexual implications, being a design meant to lure and entrap the heterosexual male. Adare’s motivations are both more ambiguous and more unclassifiable. Milly, however, in a manipulative speech to Flusky, seizes on the gender instability within Adare’s campaign of female restoration and uses it as a weapon. As she remarks of the new dress Hattie wears courtesy of Adare: “Mr. A., he ordered it himself, they say...right out of the dressmaker’s shop... They say Mr. A. should be a lady’s maid...a fellow like that taking such trouble with a woman’s frills.” Milly’s comments make it clear that his gender infractions stem from his class status, one distinct from that of either Milly or Flusky: “They don’t have the same rules as us.”

Under Capricorn, despite the considerable tensions within the relationship between Hattie and Adare, certainly represents a more mutually giving and emotionally healing relationship between the woman and the queer figure. If we consider the overlaps between Adare and the homosexual killers of *Rope* (1948), who share his louche demeanor, especially the flamboyant Brandon of John Dall, and remember the acid interaction between Brandon and Janet, fiancée to the murdered David, the arch and inhumanly sardonic stance Bruno Anthony takes with the agonized Anne Morton in *Strangers on a Train*, Leonard’s relentless effort to expose Eve Kendall to danger, and Norman Bates’ ultimate betrayal of Marion Crane, the relationship between Adare and Hattie comes to seem both a healing respite and a warning of future entanglements ahead

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Adare in the Underworld: Suspicious Characters, Discarded Histories

David Sterritt

Under Capricorn (1949) takes place in the early nineteenth century in Sydney, the capital of New South Wales and a prime destination for the convicts deported to Australia from Britain in a process that began just a few decades before the time of the story. One hesitates to imagine how this milieu might be represented in the age of *Deadwood* (HBO, 2004-6) and *The Hateful Eight* (Quentin Tarantino 2015), but for Alfred Hitchcock it offers a chance to impose aesthetic order – with its flowing camerawork and elaborate decors, this is one of Hitchcock’s handsomest films – on a made-to-order chaos world, creating what has been called his sole venture into (or at least close to) the western genre, complete with horses, pistols, and a subjugated indigenous minority. Hitchcock domesticates this semi-wilderness by exercising an artful array of cinematic choices, the most conspicuous being the long-term buildup to the redemption of Lady Henrietta Flusky (Ingrid Bergman) from alcohol-related social degradation on the narrative level and the intermixing of montage episodes and bravura sequence shots on the stylistic level. These elements are closely related.

The master of suspense was always captivated by suspicion – one of his films has that very title – and the people who populate the precariously tamed frontier of *Under Capricorn* are suspicious characters by definition. The whites, deported from their homeland, have good reasons to be suspicious of one another, knowing that venality, rascality, and criminality are sure to flourish in an environment populated by castoffs, convicts, and emancipists. The natives, downtrodden in their own land, have overwhelming reasons to be suspicious of the interlopers forcing them into sociocultural irrelevance. Suspicion thrives on ignorance and obliviousness, and those qualities thrive on the erasure of history that afflicts everyone in this locale: the colonisers, as they conceal personal pasts shrouded in guilt or shame, and the colonised, as they suffer the

eradication of ethnic and tribal heritages, becoming tools of the imperialists whose power to shape geopolitical reality is indicated by the map in the film's opening titles.

In this fraught climate, privileged characters like Henrietta, her husband Sam (Joseph Cotten), and the newcomer Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) face a diffuse but ceaseless threat of danger and disarray that creeps into their experience despite the civilizational scrubbing that produces and sustains their surroundings, manifested by a greed-based capitalist economy, Europeanised food and clothing, and elegant architecture of the sort exemplified by Minyago Yugilla, as the Flusky mansion is called in an ostentatious mixture of aboriginal and colonial argots. The language of that name is probably native to the land where New South Wales now stands, but the words they translate – ‘Woman, why weepest thou?’ – come from the Gospel of John in the New Testament and refer obliquely to Henrietta's psychological and spiritual travails. It's no wonder that the coachman says there is ‘something queer’ about the mansion – like a coachman in a Dracula movie, he won't get too close to the castle – and Hitchcock depicts Charles's approach first in a suspense-building alternation of subjective and objective shots and then in a subtly disorienting dolly shot as Charles cases the joint through its windows, anticipating the tangled unhappiness he will find within. This is a place of disturbing and unnerving things that indirectly echo the coercion, corruption, and cruelty endemic to the colonial system as a whole. So continually fraught and occasionally hellish are the things we encounter that Sydney comes to seem like a Dantean underworld and Minyago Yugilla one of its infernal circles. Henrietta's slow emergence from disgrace is a social and familial process, and her emergence from disgrace is a spiritual one as well.

Contrasting the long-take strategy of *Under Capricorn* with the robust editing favored by Hitchcock in most of his other films, John Belton makes two important points in a 1981 article (372-3). One is that in Hitchcock's prior experiment along this line, *Rope* (1948), he made an *a priori* commitment to the absence of cutting – the source play by Patrick Hamilton has only one set and each act picks up where the previous one left off – and the movie's publicity pitched its unusual technique as a novelty offering extra

thrills to the audience. By contrast, the style of *Under Capricorn* is not committed to extended takes any more than its narrative is committed to Aristotelian unities. In this film, any shot prolonged beyond a normal or average duration is the result of a specific intention, not a predetermined agenda. The other essential point is that the conspicuous long takes in, say, *Young and Innocent* (1937) and *Notorious* (1946), and the most dramatic ones in *Rope*, are motivated by efforts to search out and discover pivotal or mystery-solving details, a purpose shared by few of the traveling shots in *Under Capricorn*.

There are two crucial exceptions to this, however: the shots comprising brief camera movements that end in emphatic close-ups of shrunken heads, the first when a street hawker tries to sell one to Sam, the second when Henrietta sees one secretly planted by her housekeeper, Milly (Margaret Leighton), and suddenly understands the gist of Milly's ongoing plot to undermine her sanity and destroy her life.



The hand of Milly (Margaret Leighton) secretly positions a shrunken head.

The street scene *initiates* a narrative thread and *prepares for* its future outcome; audiences are wise to Anton Chekhov's famous dictum, knowing that a gun on the wall is

likely to get fired at some point, and *Under Capricorn* follows this rule for guns and severed heads alike. The climactic scene *culminates* the shrunken-head motif in a moment of full-on revelation for both Henrietta and us; we share her grim fascination as she watches Milly hide the noxious head in a box and then doctor a drink with a presumably fatal dose of sedative. Feigning sleep and watching on the sly, Henrietta embodies two Hitchcockian archetypes: the tranced woman and the canny sleuth who detects the key that unlocks a riddle. Hitchcock's style brings each persona to the fore: an abrupt track-in italicises the appearance of the shrunken head; slightly lengthier shots show Henrietta waking out of her entrancement as she sees Milly's evil actions; and finally a very long take (with at least one disguised cut) shows her and Sam confronting Milly and underscoring the decisiveness of what has been discovered.

Enhanced by the film's most emphatically gothic lighting and color effects, this enormously effective scene relies brilliantly on Hitchcock's moment-to-moment choices between his habitually favored montage techniques and the long-take method he had recently pioneered and would subsequently save for special occasions. The partnership of long takes and edited sequences here and throughout the film make *Under Capricorn* unique in Hitchcock's filmography, foregrounding a stylistic freedom that aligns with the film's narrative project of freeing Henrietta and Sam from dark memories of the past in general and the machinations of a domestic enemy in particular. Even as Hitchcock puts his freedom into play, however, his supple tracking shots produce more claustrophobia than the film would have if the space-and-time-jumping aesthetics of Kuleshovian montage prevailed throughout. It's an odd paradox: the camera's impressive mobility contributes to the sense that we, along with the main characters, are ineluctably confined by the walls and halls of Minyago Yugilla, an expansive yet somehow stifling domain. It's no wonder that Éric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol called this one of Hitchcock's 'most abstract' films, noting that the camera increasingly 'hugs the characters', and especially one character, becoming 'the story of [Bergman's] face' as the lens scrutinizes and searches it, sometimes etching it, sometimes softening it, always loving it (102).

Returning to the revelatory bedroom scene, its distinctive visuals not only heighten the impact of a crucial narrative moment. They also amplify the inner transformation that Henrietta has been undergoing throughout the story – a transformation that is psychological on a manifest level but is also religious on a level only partially submerged. Religion plays a more noticeable role in Simpson’s novel, where Milly’s belligerent religiosity is flaunted with especial creepiness when she vents her wrath against Adare (88):

“I’m a Christian woman, I don’t stay in any house with adulterers. You, young man! Don’t cry when you burn in hell, like as you haven’t had warning.” She began to pray, turning up her eyes, between which her nose glowed, still red: “Oh Lord, pay down upon the nail, after Thy manner, the wages of this man’s sin. Let the fervent prayer of the righteous prevail, oh Lord, let not the wicked prosper, nor flourish as the bay tree and tree upon the wall. If Thou, oh Lord, wilt mark iniquity, shall a decent woman endure it? The wicked shall burn, we have Thy word for it, as we may take to our comfort – ”

To which Charles responds with a laugh. But while Milly is certainly overdoing things, the notion that Christianity is in the narrative air is less ridiculous than she is. The filmmaker who directed *I Confess* (1953) and *The Wrong Man* (1956), put Christological imagery into *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* (1927), and inserted scripture into *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *The Birds* (1963), and *Frenzy* (1972) was not free of theological inklings, and the prominence of ‘why weepest thou’ points to their presence in *Under Capricorn*. Rivette got to the heart of this in 1950, just a year after the film’s release. Everything in the film happens, he wrote, ‘in light of memory and in relation to it. The secret subject of this drama is confession, the deliverance from a secret in its two meanings: in the psychoanalytic sense, because it frees us from the secret by giving the secret a verbal form, and in the religious sense, the confession of sins being equivalent here to their redemption’.

We first see Henrietta right after grace is said at the dinner table, and the camera singles out her bare feet, perhaps the most notable sign of her humbled state when she enters the film. Any number of classic painters have portrayed martyrs and saints, including Mary Magdalen and the Virgin Mary, with bare feet, and Ed Gallafent links this image and other signifiers – such as the skull often associated with the Marys in classic art, here evoked by the memento mori of the shrunken head – with the specific discourse of Christian penitence, pointing out that ‘why weepest thou’ is asked twice of Mary Magdalen in the Book of John, once by angels and once by Jesus, whom she has failed to recognise after his resurrection and emergence from the tomb (69-70). But along with Henrietta’s remorse and shame, signs of *her* potential resurrection are also present. We see her face for the first time as she touches Sam’s shoulders and says she’d like to have a glass of wine, a request that accords with her alcoholism but has a sacramental undertone as well; and one can’t miss the flowers in her hair, droopy and bedraggled though these are in contrast with their celebratory glow in much Christian iconography. What she has is not a chronically lost soul but rather an acutely derailed psychology, and it isn’t minimizing her condition to see her unsteady entrance into the dining room as what today’s psychotherapists call a cry for help. ‘I’m in mourning for my life’, she might well say, like Masha in Chekhov’s *The Seagull* (3). It is a specific kind of mourning, moreover, tied to a need for contrition and atonement.

The situation of incomplete mourning and a resulting melancholia afflict the Bible’s Mary Magdalen and Hitchcock’s Henrietta Flusky alike. Gallafent sees Henrietta’s barefoot entrance not as a drunken blunder but rather a performance of penitential self-mortification, and it seems to work, scandalizing the gentry at the table but capturing Charles’s attention and soon thereafter his sympathy, comfort, and active help. Her progress from abjection to redemption is fueled partly by his belief in her, partly by Sam’s refusal to give up on her, and partly by her ability to come belatedly to terms with her terribly dark past. Working the other side is Milly, whom Rivette sees not as a mere movie villain but rather as an almost metaphysical extension of Henrietta’s sad history and the turmoil this has forced her to conceal. Milly seeks ‘to separate the lovers

the way they are separated by their past, the bad memory of which wants them all to itself’ – note that Rivette personifies memory here, giving it agency and intent – and the method she uses, encouraging and enabling Henrietta’s alcoholism, is an objective correlative for ‘the secret ravaging [of Henrietta’s] inside and the punishment of the imprudent person who wanted to lock the past inside her’. Hiding the past is the sin; confession and avowal are the cures. It takes most of the narrative for those cures to come to pass, but there is a moment of spiritual grace in the film, akin to Manny’s moment of prayer in *The Wrong Man*. It arrives when Henrietta opens her eyes at just the right moment to see Milly hide the mummified head and prepare the fatal sedative. In the hands of a lesser filmmaker this might have been a mere melodramatic coincidence. But in Hitchcock’s hands it is transcendent.

To come within reach of this small but decisive miracle, Henrietta has had to go ‘down, down, down, to where I can go no further down’. This is a marker of her intuitive bond with Adare, who could not aid her redemption if he had not himself ‘gone down’ to the underworld of Minyago Yugilla, become a participant in its interwoven dramas and potential tragedies, and worked for Henrietta’s deliverance from evil instead of immediately hightailing it back to the comfortable mansion where his cousin, the Governor (Cecil Parker), presides over affairs of state. Milly’s scheme feeds on Henrietta’s secrets and weaknesses, and Charles’s friendship opens up a path to salvation that Sam, freighted with his own sad weaknesses, has been unable to provide. After the dinner scene, Sam walks outside with Charles and recounts the decline of his marriage after his prison term. Likening the young Henrietta to a ‘blessed angel’, he says she would jump fences on horses ‘like the kingdom of heaven was on the other side’ and tells how she ‘sold all she had’ to follow him, making her loyalty sound like Christian sacrifice. But later, he goes on, ‘We weren’t the same people, the two of us, after all those years. There was nothing to talk about that we wanted to talk about. What is it they say in the Bible? A great gulf fixed ...’. Quoting some of this dialogue and citing the long takes that contain it – each ending with an upward movement toward Henrietta’s bedroom window – Constantine Verevis describes how ‘the fluidity of the camera movement ...

contributes to a sense of inertia and to an understanding of a house haunted by traumatic memories and bygone events', adding that the 'spatialized metaphor' of the great gulf is further expressed by 'the inviolable thresholds and vertical camera movements that counterpoint the film's lateral tracks' (181). Here is the Hitchcockian paradox again: visual flow, psychological stasis, and spiritual need become mutually reinforcing aspects of one another.

Speaking of great gulfs, a vast one is also fixed between Australia and the Anglo-Irish world whence the main characters hail, as the map in the opening titles categorically shows. And an equally great gulf is fixed between those characters and the indigenes of New South Wales, who must be dwelling everywhere outside Minyago Yugilla but are scarcely ever glimpsed within the film. The narrative ultimately frees Henrietta, but the society around her remains tragically the same, frozen in the colonial inertia represented by the Governor's authority and Sam's land-grabbing prosperity. This is the darkness at the heart of *Under Capricorn* – a darkness that will continue long after Charles makes his bittersweet exit from the story.

A fascinating detail in the last seconds of the film is a dockworker in the background, laboriously hoisting a heavy burden onto his shoulder just before the final fadeout; the gesture may not have been plotted out by Hitchcock, but it seems to signify the weight of ongoing history, the onus that the present and future denizens of Sydney must inevitably bear as long as colonial oppression, capitalist exploitation, and authoritarian government manage to hang on.



*A dockworker in the background (behind pillar to right of flag)
hoists a heavy symbolic burden.*

Briefly seen though they are, the ever-memorable shrunken heads are also emblems of all that is worst in this invaded land – signs of violence and terror when the victims were murdered and mutilated, not necessarily by people of their own ethnicity, and signs of decadence and corruption when a street vendor tries to sell one and a wicked servant uses one to violate her vulnerable employer’s already precarious mental stability. Its anamorphic grimace recalls Jacques Lacan’s notion of the stain or blot that conjures the unquenchable desire of the unknowable Real (74) – a hint of Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* (1533) sneaks into the movie here – and in Sigmund Freud’s terms it represents the return of the repressed in all its inescapable tenacity (249). Other elements of the film’s visual scheme render pervasive dread in similarly palpable ways: the

recurring images of alcohol (which Hitchcock links with poison in *Notorious* and elsewhere), the hellish turbulence of the Flusky kitchen, the disastrous society ball, the struggle and shooting at the climax. Even the most imaginatively positive vision in the film – Henrietta’s idealised image in a window momentarily transformed into a mirror by Charles’s chivalrously wielded coat – bespeaks the transience of hope and the uncertainty of redemption.

It’s hermeneutically risky to make much of character names, but Simpson hit on some good ones that Hitchcock understandably retains: Samson Flusky was in fact a flunky (a stable boy and groom) who acquired strength by enduring a prison term and capitalizing on opportunity after his release, and Adare is definitely one who dares – daring to dine with the Fluskys against the Governor’s order, to kiss Henrietta even though she’s an alcoholic with a husband, to save Sam by lying to the Governor about the gunshot that almost killed him, and finally to leave Down Under and sail back to his homeland, thereby removing all trace of shadow from Sam and Henrietta’s reborn relationship. The analogy is inexact, but I see Adare as a sort of Orpheus who journeys to a netherworld in a spirit of caprice (a word related to Capricorn, as Simpson’s novel observes) and altruistically elevates a new Eurydice, this one not literally lifeless but socially dead to her neighbors and peers. Then he crowns his benevolence by fading gracefully from the scene (at least more gracefully than the original Orpheus, who was shredded by the Maenads or struck by Zeus’s lightning, depending on which version one prefers). Unlike his mythical prototype, Adare is not a poet, singer, or genius of the lyre, but I think an Orphean aura wafts across his foppish clothes, willowy gestures, and generally dandified air, so different from the Governor’s starchy ways and Sam’s no-nonsense demeanor.

Ever a movie reviewer as well as a film scholar, I wish I could conclude that *Under Capricorn* is itself a work of Orphean vigor and expressiveness, but I find it a bit too staid, too mannered, too unadventurous to stand with the truly excellent Hitchcock films. That said, however, the skill of its performances – mainly those of Bergman and Cotten, although Wilding, Leighton, and Parker are also at their best – and above all the

eloquence of Jack Cardiff's cinematography lend it continuing interest in my filmography. So do the subtle resonances of its interlaced historical, sociopolitical, and theological themes. When the film does catch fire in its most effective scenes, I think part of the credit goes to challenges posed by the long-take shooting style and the complex logistics of the staging, which put the actors in heightened 'suspense' as chances for error accumulated during the protracted shots, annoying Cardiff and driving Bergman to vocal complaint. The mindsets of actors on the set are usually not meant to show, but they can never be entirely banished; the psychiatrist and film scholar Harvey Roy Greenberg has hypothesised that in the making of a film the unconscious energies of every participant are somehow subliminally present.

Taking this one step farther, it's conceivable that the drama's powerful theme of expunging stressful memories is related to Hitchcock's own lingering regrets over the failed experiment of *Rope*, which he both recapitulates (with his extended takes) and disavows (with his finely tuned montage). Sub-rosa apprehensions behind and before the camera may well have contributed some of the shadowy power that *Under Capricorn* intermittently achieves.

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The Use of Music in Hitchcock's Transatlantic Pictures

Brian Davidson

In 1939, Hitchcock began working in Hollywood under contract to David Selznick. It was to prove a fruitful partnership but also one which became increasingly more difficult to sustain as the years passed, Hitchcock often having to compromise his artistic ideals to satisfy the wishes of his employer.

Even before completion of *The Paradine Case*, his last film under contract to Selznick, Hitchcock had already formed Transatlantic Pictures with the help of his London based friend Sidney Bernstein. Now, for the first time in his career, he had free rein to choose his own projects and to exert full artistic control.

The experimental nature of *Rope* (1948), the first of the Transatlantic projects, makes a powerful statement against the restraints previously placed upon him. In many ways it is a work very much ahead of its time, certainly regarding its thinly veiled homosexual subtext which, according to screenwriter Arthur Laurents, was never mentioned during production.

Much has been written about the director's daring use of long takes in *Rope* but its minimalistic soundtrack, so perfectly mirroring not only the method of shooting but also many of the film's central themes, is rarely discussed. The luscious, romantic scoring of the Selznick years is now replaced by a quirky, avant-garde piano piece which pianist Philip, (psychologically the weaker of the two murderers in the story), nervously attempts to play during the party scenes but struggles to complete. The director's roving camera technique is reflected in the piece's title, *Mouvement Perpetuel* by French composer Francis Poulenc, the first of three pieces written by him bearing that name.

Its opening phrase, filled with B flat major optimism, is flowing and relaxed in tone, an ideal backdrop to the party atmosphere on screen. But, as the audience knows, the chest from which food is served to the guests conceals the body of a murdered man, a crime committed, we are told, for no other reason other than the intellectual experience of murder itself. But perhaps the killing is not without motive? Could this possibly be a crime of passion committed by two gay lovers attracted to the soon-to-be-married David Kentley? If so, there

is no evidence in the screenplay to support this view, leaving the audience to reach its own conclusions.

Like the two seemingly respectable, smartly tailored murderers, the piece begins in similar fashion following classical harmonic lines but quickly becomes more dissonant with clashing ninths and fragmented phrasing. The dual nature of the melodic line mirrors not only the personalities of the killers but also those of the film's director and his composer. Poulenc, who struggled throughout his life to come to terms with his own homosexuality, was once described by a critic as 'half-monk and half-naughty boy', a character description which could just as easily be applied to Hitchcock.

Meanwhile, the bass part flows in steady quaver motion, calmness prevailing at all cost no matter the twists and turns of the melody, a fitting commentary on the killers' attempts to conceal their crime by creating a mood of light-hearted charm and grace. But it is also relevant to the production itself. One can imagine Hitchcock doing everything in his power to avoid panic on the set, knowing the pressures his method of filming were placing upon cast and crew. The slightest slip would mean having to re-shoot an entire take, in turn adding hugely to the overall cost.

The use of a perpetual motion piece from which there seems to be no means of reaching a satisfactory conclusion not only suggests the dilemma posed by filming in such a way but also comments on the inconclusiveness of the story's ending. Philip and Brandon may have committed murder but their teacher Rupert Cadell has filled their heads with Nietzschean philosophy based on the concept of the Superman with its deluded implication of one man's superiority over another. Rupert's vehement denial of guilt after discovering David's corpse in the chest only serves to raise our doubts of his innocence further, forcing us to question just exactly how his teachings were supposed to be interpreted.

Poulenc instructs the player to repeat the piece even although there has already been repetition of some phrases. This adds to the sense of confinement created, the musical equivalent of being lost in a labyrinth with no means of escape, in the same way the murderers and their guests seem trapped within the walls of the apartment.

Describing Poulenc's music, the pianist Paul Crossley stated "it is redolent of parties, festivals, carnivals", but the real message is "the party's over". (Jack Sullivan-Hitchcock's Music). By the end, the party is most definitely over for Philip and Brandon but so too must it be for Rupert, for their crime is rooted in his words and he must forever live with the consequences.

The brilliant orchestrations of Poulenc's themes during the credit sequences are not by the French master but distinguished Hollywood composer and arranger David Buttolph. Accumulation of suspense is subtly achieved by clever interweaving of woodwind and strings, the piece's opening now serving as the central climax. The tempo is also more measured, creating a mood of grandeur absent from the original.

The closing credits create a sense of a world in chaos, brass instruments supporting strings as the music builds to its climax. The ending of the piano piece, absent from the film's score, is very different in tone, rising slowly to an interrupted cadence which leaves the listener with a feeling of being suspended in mid-air. Its absence is regrettable given how perfectly it would have fitted the story's morally ambiguous ending.

Astonishingly, neither Poulenc nor Buttolph are credited on the film, nor have I found evidence that Poulenc was ever contacted for permission to use his score. Instead, musical director Louis Levy, long-term Hitchcock collaborator from his pre-Hollywood days, is given sole credit.

Beginning with *Waltzes from Vienna* (1933), Levy acted as either composer or musical director on most of Hitchcock's films during the 1930s. Both men were Londoners from similar social backgrounds, each beginning work in the industry long before the introduction of sound and, therefore, sharing similar perspectives on the relationship between music and image. By 1910, Levy was already working as an orchestral violinist before later becoming an arranger.

The second of Hitchcock's two Transatlantic Productions, *Under Capricorn* (1949), also featuring Levy as musical director, offers one of Hitchcock's rare forays into costume drama. Poorly received by audiences and critics alike at the time of its release, its re-evaluation is long overdue. The soundtrack by Richard Addinsell is one of the English

composer's most accomplished scores, perfectly capturing a sense of romantic yearning as well as nostalgia for Ireland where the story's central characters, Sam and Henrietta Flusky, first met.

Addinsell is best remembered today for his famous *Warsaw Concerto*, written specifically for the wartime drama *Dangerous Moonlight* (1941). The producers' first choice to write the score for that film was apparently Rachmaninoff but when the Russian maestro turned the offer down, Addinsell was invited to compose music in a similar style. His 9-minute mini-concerto for piano and orchestra has since remained a firm concert hall favourite, performed and recorded countless times over the years. Indeed, so closely is his name associated with that single work, it has rather eclipsed his other scores. He was, in fact, one of the most prolific composers for both cinema and radio of his generation.

Before '*Under Capricorn*', he had previously written music to accompany a number of propaganda shorts for the Ministry of Information, including *Men of the Lightship* which Hitchcock would later edit for the American market even although he was not involved in the making of the original film. During this process, the director would certainly have become very familiar with the composer's style.

Addinsell's friendship with the author Clemence Dane (pseudonym of Winifred Ashton) is also worth noting. Dane wrote the original play *Enter Sir John* on which Hitchcock's early talkie *Murder!* (1930) is based. They had a close working relationship for many years, Addinsell writing the music for her radio plays in the 30s. Dane also worked with Hitchcock in 1936, acting as a dialogue assistant on *Sabotage* and later forming a writing partnership known as 'The Detective Club' with Helen Simpson, author of the original novel on which *Under Capricorn* is based.

Addinsell conceived his compositions at the piano, writing his scores as solos for that instrument but also marking in suggestions regarding instrumentation. The task of orchestrating he would generally leave to others, in the case of *Under Capricorn* the English composer Leighton Lucas. The resulting score is a rich tapestry of instrumental colours, ideally suited to the unfolding drama on screen.

Early in the movie, we see male guests arriving for a dinner party at the Flusky's home, *Minyaga Yugilla (Why Weepst Thou?)* each in turn making a feeble excuse to explain his wife's absence. The scene's comic tone is highlighted by the music with its use of quirky wind writing and pizzicato strings.

The Strauss-like waltz which we hear later at the Governor's Ball derives from string music used earlier, now metamorphosed to capture the gaiety of the dancers as well as the grandeur of the event. This is then immediately followed by Henrietta's long confession to her cousin, Charles Adare, admitting guilt for the crime which Sam took the blame and was subsequently imprisoned. Shot in one continuous take, the scene marks one of the highpoints of Ingrid Bergman's screen career, a true acting 'tour de force'. Her intimate revelations to Adare are perfectly complemented by the delicacy of scoring at this point, beginning with solo violin before being taken up by the orchestra.

But again, like Buttolph before him in *Rope*, no mention is made of Lucas' name in the credits, an appalling omission given the quality of his work. However, Hitchcock must clearly have admired his contribution for he was soon invited back to write the score for the director's next movie, *Stage Fright*, which would also be the last of the Hitchcock/Levy musical collaborations. Like *Under Capricorn*, the importance of its musical score has never received the attention it deserves, largely due to the poor reception of both films on their first release.

The period setting and costumes of *Under Capricorn* give the movie an operatic feel, the 1830s marking a high point in the history of romantic opera and its popular success across Europe. This aspect is further highlighted by the use of dialogue and music serving in tandem as equal partners, neither being more or less important than the other, thus breaking free of Hollywood convention.

Traditionally, film music becomes more dramatic with each surging crescendo towards climax points but not so here. Instead, the build-up of suspense towards our discovery that the housekeeper Milly has been poisoning Henrietta and terrorising her with a shrunken head is played without music, a reversal of Hollywood tradition unique in Hitchcock's work.

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