

Hitchcock & the Presence of Portraits

Presented by Clara Fulkerson

*Undergraduate Philosophy Major
Minors: Film and French*

What is an “auteur”?

- A term in film theory to describe “authorship”
- Much like the originality expressed by authors of literature, the style, content, and themes in film can be recognizably unique to one filmmaker
 - Like the creative distinctions between Mark Twain and Charles Dickens

Examples of auteurs:

Quentin Tarantino



“Kill Bill Vol. 1” (2003)



“Pulp Fiction” (1994)



“Reservoir Dogs” (1992)

Tim Burton



"Edward Scissorhands" (1990)



"Alice in Wonderland" (2010)



"Sweeney Todd" (2007)

Wes Anderson



"The Life Aquatic" (2004)

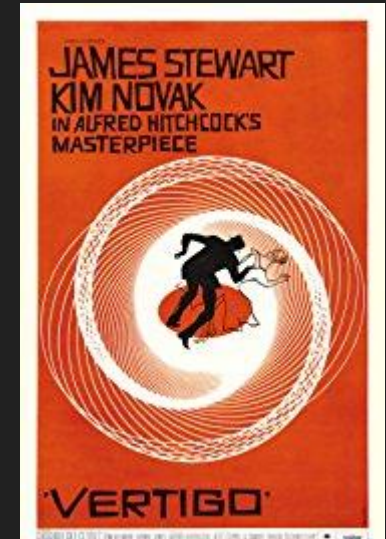
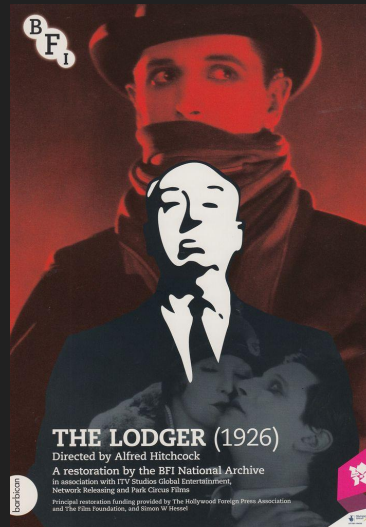


"Moonrise Kingdom" (2012)



"The Darjeeling Limited" (2007)

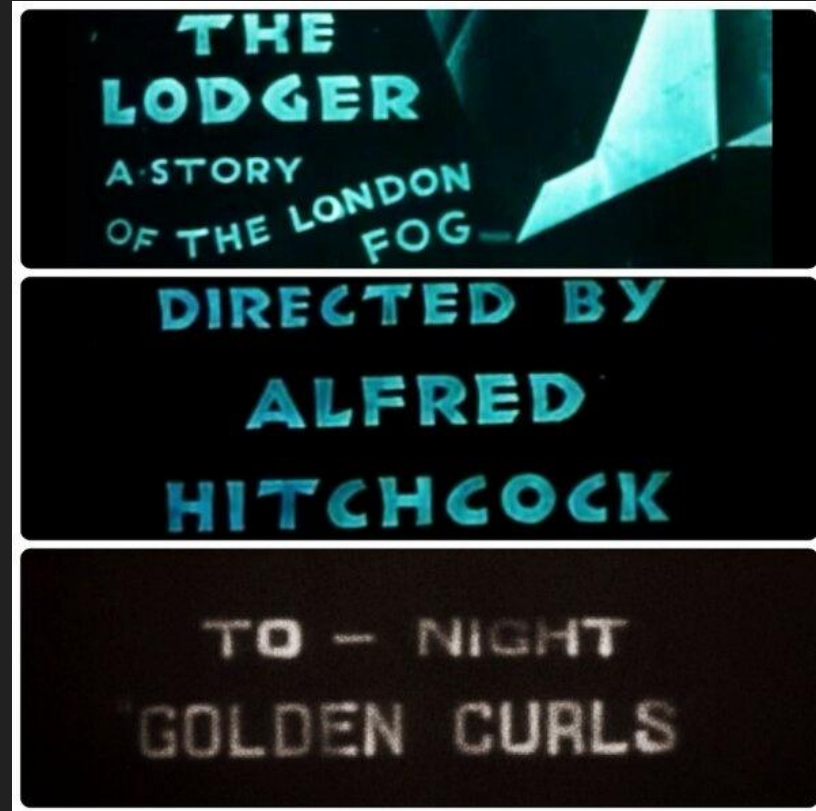
- Hitchcock, perhaps unknowingly most of his career, was a pioneer of auteurism, with stylistic repetitions across his filmography.
- Notable tropes are plot narratives (espionage), suspenseful tones (Bernard Herrmann, scene pacing), psychological themes (phobias, fetishes), and Hitchcock cameos.



German Expressionism



"The Lodger" (1927)





“These enigmatic images in Hitchcock’s films--
Spellbound’s savaged eyes, *Blackmail’s* jester, *The
Trouble with Harry’s* portrait of a dead man, *Torn
Curtain’s* silent museum architecture and artifacts,
and *I Confess’s* guilt-inducing courtroom Christ--
function like omniscient observers, staring eyes, as it
were, dispassionately framing the action, gazing on
it and at us while provoking our own individual
reactions and interpretations”

- Marc Strauss
*Painted Jester: Notes on the
Visual Arts in Hitchcock’s Films*



“Once it is understood that the paradigms for reading evidence, the critical schools for discerning truth, may be overturned, one necessarily admits the possibility that an interpretation may not only be made, but also fabricated or otherwise wrong”

- Jeremy Strong
Reconstructing the Rose



"Rebecca" (1940)







"It becomes difficult of
move of dispose of these
talismanic objects... these
objects must live in these
spaces, immovable and
heavy with memories
and psychological
attachments, as weights
around the psyches of the
living"

-Aaron Rich
"The Dark Galleries"



Her body became “the site
of a bizarre fort/da game”

Attempt by Mrs. Danvers
to rid of “her problems with
'overidentification' with
another woman”

-Tania Modleski

*The Women Who Knew
Too Much*



"Vertigo" (1958)

"Once their subjects have died, these [portraits] remain for the survivors, being almost more present than the living people were previously.

-Aaron Rich
"The Dark Galleries"

Portrait of Carlotta



“For more significant films, the authors present production details of individual paintings as well as valuable citations from cinematic literature relating to the given portrait. Thematic links emerge across films relating to social class, unfulfilled desire, how portraits either depict the deceased or foretell death, and how they represent an uncanny liminal space between life and death.”

-Aaron Rich

“The Dark Galleries”



- There is a “dynamic comparative interaction” between Madeleine and the *Portrait of Carlotta* that evokes “a discourse” and “a system of producing knowledge”

-Blanco, “*Conceptualizing Spectralities*”



"The Birds" (1963)

"Once it is understood that the paradigms for reading evidence, the critical schools for discerning truth, may be overturned, one necessarily admits the possibility that an interpretation may not only be made, but also fabricated or otherwise wrong"

- Jeremy Strong
*Reconstructing the
Rose*



"Rear Window" (1954)

“Artworks with plot import[ance]... reveal a sensitivity to the visual arts that richly complement the director’s signature concerns for mistaken identity, ambiguous morality, romance drama, and objects-as-subjects”

“These enigmatic images in Hitchcock’s films-- *Spellbound’s* savaged eyes, *Blackmail’s* jester, *The Trouble with Harry’s* portrait of a dead man, *Torn Curtain’s* silent museum architecture and artifacts, and *I Confess’s* guilt-inducing courtroom Christ-- function like omniscient observers, staring eyes, as it were, dispassionately framing the action, gazing on it and at us while provoking our own individual reactions and interpretations”

- Marc Strauss
*Painted Jester: Notes on the
Visual Arts in Hitchcock’s Films*

Bibliography

Blanco, María del Pilar, and Esther Peeren. "Introduction: Conceptualizing Spectralities." *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, pp. 1-28.

"German Expressionism in Film." *University of Washington*,
courses.washington.edu/crmscns/FilmExpressionismHandout.pdf.

"Godard Only Knows..." *The Observer*, Guardian News and Media, 26 Nov. 2000,
www.theguardian.com/film/2000/nov/26/features.

Hitchcock, Alfred, director. *The Lodger*. Gainsborough Pictures, 1927.

Hitchcock, Alfred, director. *Rebecca*. Selznick, 1940.

"The Lodger (1927)." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, www.imdb.com/title/tt0017075/.

Bibliography (continued)

Modleski, Tania. *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2016.

Rich, Aaron. "The Dark Galleries: A Museum Guide to Painted Portraits in Film Noir, Gothic Melodramas, and Ghost Stories of the 1940s and 1950s by Steven Jacobs and Lisa Colpaert." *Film Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 1, 2014, pp. 95-96., doi:10.1525/fq.2014.68.1.95.

Strauss, Marc. "The Painted Jester: Notes on the Visual Arts in Hitchcock's Films." *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2007, pp. 52-56., doi:10.3200/jpft.35.2.52-57.

Strong, Jeremy. "Reconstructing the Rose, or how Joining the Dots (Generally) makes the Picture." *Literature Film Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2011): 297-305. 28.

Truffaut, François, and Alfred Hitchcock. *Hitchcock*. Translated by Helen G Scott, Revised ed., Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1966.