

#### Jalal Toufic



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This book is available for download free of charge from the author's website: www.jalaltoufic.com

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#### **Acknowledgments**

- "How Not to Be Subject to Variations on Guilt and Innocence," What Was I Thinking? (Berlin: e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2017), 128–132.
- "Rear Window Vertigo," and "The City of the Fellowship of Strangers: 1. Clean After Me; 2. Mind My Business; 3. Bury Me Dead," *Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You* (Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2005), 38–88.
- "Reality Is as Distant in Psychosis or Deep Trance as the Film Set Is from the Finished Film," and "Vertiginous Eyes," (Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film, revised and expanded edition (Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2003), 145–147 and 148–155, respectively.
- "Otherworldly or Unworldly Birds Awaiting the End of the Refrain at the End of the World in Order to Irrupt in the Radically Closed Region," *Radical Closure* (Singapore: National Gallery Singapore, 2020), 9–10, 16–17, 22–23, 82, 84, 92. The title of the section was added for this publication.
- "Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo," Postscripts (Stockholm: Moderna Museet; Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2020), 22–27. The title of the section was added for this publication.
- "The Other Can Never Die in My Place, but He or She 'Always' 'Robs' Me of My Place," Reading, Rewriting Poe's "The Oval Portrait"—Angelically, part of dOCUMENTA (13)'s "100 Notes—100 Thoughts" (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 10—11. The title of the section was added for this publication.
- "Dream Woman," "Post Scriptum" of "Notes Towards Cinematic Biographies of Some Qur'anic Prophets," *Forthcoming*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2014), 154–156. The title of the section was added for this publication.



#### What Did One of the Neighbors Miss During His Photographic Assignment Abroad?

(conceptual film, 21 minutes, 2023)

Pascal Bonitzer: "Neither death nor crime existed in the polymorphous world of the burlesque, in which everyone deals and takes blows as best he can, in which cream buns fly and buildings collapse in a burst of collective laughter. In a world of pure gesture, such as the animated cartoon (itself a substitute for slapstick), the protagonists are in principle immortal and indestructible ... violence is universal and inconsequential, and guilt does not exist. The weight of death, murder and crime have meaning only through the proximity of a gaze. All Hitchcock has done in his films is

to make the best possible use, where staging is concerned, of the function of the gaze laid bare by crime. The dictum that 'there is crime only where there is a gaze' also means that the positing of a crime causes the gaze to function quite nakedly, and delivers up its essential obscenity, as the case of *Rear Window* proves." What Did One of the Neighbors Miss During His Photographic Assignment Abroad? (2022) composes a variant of Hitchcock's Rear Window (1954) in which the "gaze" is subtracted. "What did I miss during my photographic assignment in Kashmir?" asked one of the neighbors. "A neighbor's dog was killed and shortly after replaced by what appears to be the very same one, and there was an attempted house robbery of the Thorwalds' apartment, but the thief was, fortunately, apprehended."

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#### Eyeing a Boring Couple Unselfconsciously<sup>2</sup>

(conceptual film, 17 minutes, 2023)

This film is to be watched in an apartment giving onto other apartments. Would those of its spectators who ignore its intertextual source be as bored by it as I would were I, who composed it, to also ignore its intertextuality? Would they as a result look at their neighbors while it is playing? Would what they would see make them forget about resuming viewing the film, if not the film tout court?

#### A Doubly Possessed Psycho

(conceptual film, 103 minutes, 2023)

In 1998, Gus Van Sant did a shot-by-shot remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). In a podcast interview with Marc Maron on July 16, 2018 (WTF Episode 933), and in response to the latter's, "Obviously, I can't go through every movie that I want to, but I need to ask this pressing question, to remake *Psycho* frame-by-frame: That's an obsessive undertaking?" "Yeah. There's a whole reason behind it.... During the 90s, the joke

about the executives was that they would rather make a sequel than they would an original piece, because there was less risk.... When I did Drugstore Cowboy, I was all of a sudden meeting with the heads of studios because they knew that actors would work with me.... During one of the meetings, Casey Silver at Universal brought in all of his vice presidents, and one guy was head of the library, and he said, 'In the library, we have old films that you could remake, we have scripts that haven't been made yet that you could make,' and it just reminded me of that thing that they wanted to do, which is remake something. And I said, 'What you guys haven't done is try to take a hit and remake it exactly. Rather than remake it and put a new spin on it, just remake it for real,' because I'd never seen that done yet, as an experiment. The whole thing seemed experimental to me anyway, so I thought why not, and they laughed—they thought it was silly, ridiculous, absurd—and they left. They said, 'We won't be doing that.' Every time I would meet with Casey I would bring it up, and I locked in on Psycho; I'm not sure why Psycho, but it just seemed like the movie that would work the best. I would bring it up again and they would laugh again. And then later when we did Good Will Hunting and it did really well at the box office—it also got nominated for nine Oscars or something —... my agent was saying, 'Universal really wants to do a deal with you, have you got anything for them?' And I was like, 'Universal, Universal ... oh yeah, tell them Psycho, frame-by-frame, new cast, in color, and that's the idea,' and then my agent calls back and says, 'They think that's fantastic.' So, all of a sudden, they were in.... The idea was whether or not you could actually remake something and it would repeat the box office.... It obviously didn't work." I didn't expect that he would indicate that one of the reasons to do the remake was that "the whole thing seemed experimental to me anyway, so I thought why not," the worst justification for making something (Deleuze: "Philosophy ... consists in creating or inventing concepts.... Of course, you don't just say one day, 'Hey, I am going to invent this concept,' no more than a painter says, 'Hey, I'm going to make a painting like this.' There has to be a necessity, in philosophy and elsewhere, just as a filmmaker doesn't just say, 'Hey, I'm going to make this film!' There has to be a necessity, otherwise there is nothing at all. [A creator is not a preacher working for the fun of it. A creator only does what he or she absolutely needs to do]"); I would have expected that he would rather answer: "I did the film for the sake of introducing two images that appear to flash through Arbogast's mind as he falls down the stairs after being stabbed by Norman while the latter is possessed by his dead mother: a half-naked woman with shades over her eyes in some featureless misty environment and a calf seen from the windshield of a car heading in its direction in another foggy landscape." I myself remade Gus Van Sant's remake of Hitchcock's film to make use of an exquisite opportunity that was missed by Gus Van Sant's remake. In my remake, A Doubly Possessed Psycho, which is not experimental but conceptual, the dead mother's voice of Hitchcock's Psycho does not simply haunt her son, Norman, indeed possess him; it also haunts Gus Van Sant's remake of Hitchcock' Psycho, replacing the voice of the mother in that remake, claiming the body of Norman across films, presenting another power of the acousmatic voice, one that Michel Chion did not address not only in the initial, French edition of his book La voix au cinema (1982), but even in the preface to the English translation of his book, The Voice in Cinema, published in 1999. The voice of Norman's dead mother will possess her son Norman wherever he goes, even across films. Instead of a double bill, it would be most fitting to curate a screening of the three feature films.

#### Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo

(conceptual film, 110 minutes, 2016)

While watching a strong film, for example, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), one cannot imagine it to be any different, in other words, one is unable to imagine variants of it. Given that my *Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo* (110 minutes, 2016) is a strong film, while watching it a discerning spectator would not be able to imagine it to be any different, for example, for its story and events to be exactly as they are in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*! In the particular case of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, this impression of foreclosure of variation while watching such a strong film is reinforced by its status as an iconic film, which makes tampering with it feel like an act of

profanation; and by its content, since the disavowal of the melancholic lover Scottie has for effect that the next woman he goes out with, Judy, is not allowed to manifest any variation whatsoever in relation to his dead beloved, Madeleine: she has to dress exactly as Madeleine did, her hair has to be styled in the same way Madeleine's was and have the same coloras Madeleine's, etc. And yet, sooner or later after watching Hitchcock's Vertigo, a perceptive spectator would recognize that it is associated with variation, since, itself a film adaptation, it presents a variation on Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's novel D'entre les morts (1954; English translation: The Living and the Dead, 1956), 3 and since its protagonist, Scottie, tries to do a variation on what happened between him and (the woman he assumes to have been) Madeleine in the tower, where, having failed to follow her up the stairs, he saw her fall to her death—indeed he confesses to Judy as he takes her back to the site of the trauma: "One doesn't often get a second chance.... You're my second chance, Judy." (I was asked during the premiere of my conceptual film in Beirut: "Why did you change into a dream the scene that shows Judy's memory of the moment when, dressed and looking exactly like Madeleine, she arrived at the top of the tower where Madeleine's scheming husband was waiting for her in order to then throw his wife to her death?" "Well, it's a dream-like scene to begin with, isn't it? In my variant of the film, it is when Scottie has turned Judy into a look-alike of Madeleine that he dreams the scene in Hitchcock's film in which there are seemingly two Madeleines at the top of the tower. Given that according to Freud adream is a wish fulfillment, 4 what is the wish fulfilled by this dream? The fulfilled wish is for Madeleine's death not to have resulted from his playing the psychoanalyst when he is not actually one, and to place the blame on someone else, Madeleine's husband.") What is the status of the director's cut beyond being "a version of a movie that reflects the director's original intentions, released after the first studio version,"5 that is, once the interferences of the producer have been undone by restoring the original ending, or by including scenes that were excised by the studio, etc.? Is it the version in relation to which no variations by someone else can be successful, that is, avoid falling

apart "two days" later? Or is it, on the contrary, the version that allows the largest number of creative variations on it, for example, in other branches of the multiverse—or in the labyrinth? If it is the latter, I can well imagine a director contesting the version released by the producer and demanding a director's cut precisely because he felt that the already released version into which certain scenes and/or shots were inserted despite not being approved by him allows for far fewer variations, at the limit only sloppy ones that fall apart before they are screened. Many if not most people view Scottie's remodeling of Judy to look exactly like Madeleine following the latter's death as excessive, driven by his melancholia, yet a person who would do what he did would not, unlike in Hitchcock's Vertigo, stop once he made Judy a look-alike of Madeleine, all the more since, soon after he was released from the psychiatric hospital, he went to the building in which Madeleine had resided and initially misperceived a blonde woman coming out of the building as Madeleine; to Ernie's Restaurant, where he sat at the counter, as he had done the first time he saw Madeleine, looked sideways towards the table where she was seated, and briefly hallucinated the blonde woman who left her table and headed toward the exit with her partner as Madeleine; and to the Palace of the Legion of Honor, where he stared from a distance at a blonde woman seated in front of the Carlotta Valdes painting, expecting her to be Madeleine. While these visits show that, melancholic, he is disavowing that she is dead (Octave Mannoni's formula for disavowal is: "I know very well, but all the same ..."), they also imply a compulsion to repeat his previous encounters with Madeleine. In my Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo, where Judy is not a woman who impersonates Madeleine in a scheme devised by the latter's husband to kill his wife, but someone Scottie meets only after Madeleine had already died and then induces her to wear clothes and a hairstyle à la Madeleine's, Scottie, following an interval in which it seems that he was fully satisfied with the moment of full similarity between Judy and Madeleine, when Judy could very easily have been mistaken for Madeleine come back from the dead, persuades Judy, who loves him intensely and thus finds



Clockwise from top: Judy-as-Madeleine in Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo (1958); Judy in Alfred Hitchcock's Vertigo (1958); Madeleine in Jalal Toufic's Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo (2016); Madeleine/Judy-as-Madeleine in Jalal Toufic's Vertiainous Variations on Vertigo (2016).

it difficult to decline his requests, however unreasonable and counterproductive they seem, to participate in a reenactment of the exemplary episodes of his falling in love with Madeleine: at Ernie's Restaurant, where Judy, now dressed as Madeleine and having the same hair color and style, sits at the same table where Madeleine was seated when Scottie first laid eyes on her; at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, where Judy now sits in front of the Carlotta Valdes painting while he stands at the other side of the gallery looking at her ostensibly incognito; at the florist shop Podesta Baldocchi, where she now buys the same kind of bouquet Madeleine had bought and then places it on Carlotta Valdes's tomb at the Mission Dolores graveyard while he follows her at a distance; at the Golden Gate Bridge, where she jumps into the bay so he can, as he did with Madeleine, act as her savior and then take her back to his apartment, etc. One risk of Scottie's making Judy redo what Madeleine did is that she might become possessed by Madeleine, who was possessed by Carlotta Valdes; in my Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo, Judy ends up spending some of her time at the McKittrick Hotel, where Carlotta Valdes lived for a while. I assume in Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo that while out of her developing love for Scottie, Judy initially yields to his requests to act in the scenes he models on the ones he lived with Madeleine, at some point along these re-enactments she wonders what would happen once they would have repeated the few episodes of Scottie's love affair with Madeleine: would he lose all interest in her and leave her, or would he tolerate her so that he would have the opportunity to ask her from time to time to repeat again what Madeleine did in these episodes—or would he end up asking her to repeat the scene at the Spanish mission tower, which led to Madeleine's death? And so, she laments and protests, "Why are you doing this? What good will it do?" Distraught, he feebly answers, "I don't know. No good, I guess." Exasperated, she exclaims: "I wish you'd leave me alone. I want to go away." She suspects that he will not let her simply leave him, but will, having been a detective for years, track her as he had done with Madeleine. And indeed, he soon follows her in an unscripted visit to McKittrick Hotel ... where she disappears! During the Q & A at the Beirut premiere of the film, I was asked "Why was the film premiered in a double-feature program with Hitchcock's Vertigo?" I answered: "Nowadays many young people have not seen Hitchcock's Vertigo, hence it seemed sensible to show Hitchcock's film before showing mine, so young spectators would have the opportunity to recognize the variation. But perhaps it was not a good idea to title my film Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo, since this title seems, if one reads its 'Vertigo' as Hitchcock's film rather than the sensation, to preclude the possibility that someone who had watched my conceptual film first and then Hitchcock's film would consider that the latter is a variation on my film, and would then bemoan the changes Hitchcock has made, since they unexplainably suspend the melancholic lover's drive to repeat and reenact."8

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# Variations on Guilt and Innocence in 39 Steps

(conceptual film, 75 minutes, 2013)

In Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*, having just rushed out of a theater where gunshots were heard, a woman asks the man standing next to her: "May I come home with you?" He asks her: "What's the idea?" She replies: "I'd like to." He responds: "It's your funeral!" I presume that both consider that he is being facetious; actually "It's your funeral!" is an expressed that calls for a certain answer of the real in the state of things, while itself remaining an incorporeal event. Shortly after their arrival in his apartment, she says to him: "Would you think me very troublesome if I asked for something to eat? I've had nothing all day." While he is preparing her dinner, she is startled by a noise. "Nervy? Upset by those shots tonight?" "I fired those shots ... to create a diversion. I had to get away from that theater quickly. There were two men there who wanted to kill me." "You should be more careful in choosing your gentlemen friends.... Have you ever heard of a thing called 'persecution mania'?" "You don't believe me? ... Go and look down into the street then." While still holding the knife with which he was slicing bread for her, he gingerly heads to the living room, peeks through the window, ascertains that there are indeed two men surveilling the apartment from the street, then walks back to the kitchen, with the knife still gleaming in his hand. Deleuze wrote in the chapter "The Affection-Image: Qualities, Powers, Any-Space-Whatevers" of his book Cinema 1: The Movement-Image: "[In Georg Wilhelm Pabst's Pandora's Box (1929)] there are Lulu, the lamp, the bread-knife, Jack the Ripper: people who are assumed to be real with individual characters and social roles, objects with uses, real connections between these objects and these people—in short, a whole actual state of things. But there are also the brightness of the light on the knife, the blade of the knife under the light, Jack's terror and resignation, Lulu's compassionate look. These are pure singular qualities or potentialities—as it were, pure 'possibles.' Of course, power-qualities do relate to people and to objects, to the state of things, which are, as it were, their causes. But these are very special effects: taken all together they only refer back to themselves, and constitute the 'expressed' of the state of things, whilst the causes, for their part, only refer back to themselves in constituting the state of things.... In themselves, or as expresseds, they are already the event in its eternal aspect, in what Blanchot calls 'the aspect of the event that its accomplishment cannot realize." I would paraphrase Deleuze's words regarding Pabst's Pandora's Box thus in relation to Hitchcock's The 39 Steps: "There are the agent who goes by the name of Annabella, the apartment, the bread-knife, Hannay: people who are assumed to be real with individual characters (Hannay appears to be hospitable ...) and social roles (she is an agent ...), objects with uses (the bread-knife with which he slices the bread ...), real connections between these objects and these people (he's using the knife to make her, who is hungry, dinner ...)—in short, a whole actual state of things. But there are also the sentence 'It's your funeral,' the brightness of the light on the knife, the blade of the knife under the light, the stealthy way Hannay walks with the gleaming knife to the kitchen where 'Annabella' is seated. These are pure singular qualities or potentialities—as it were, pure 'possibles.' Of course, power-qualities do relate to people and to objects, to the state of things, which are, as it were, their causes. But these are very special effects: taken altogether they only refer back to themselves, and constitute the 'expressed' of the state of things, whilst the causes, for their part, only refer back to themselves in constituting the state of things.... In themselves, or as expresseds, they are already the event in its eternal aspect, in what Blanchot calls 'the aspect of the event that its accomplishment cannot realize." To the perceptive viewer, one symptom of the impossibility of fully subsuming these power-qualities under the state of things in which one encounters them is that they would fit as well if not better another state of things; for example, the first variation on Hitchcock's The 39 Steps in my Variations on Guilt and Innocence in 39 Steps presents a more fitting state of things for his response to her request to come home with him, "It's your funeral!" and for the gleaming knife in his hand as he heads stealthily toward her in the kitchen than the one in Hitchcock's film: he uses the

knife to kill his guest rather than to resume slicing bread (the gleaming knife continues not to be fully actualized in the more appropriate state of things; as the expressed, it is "the aspect of the event that its accomplishment cannot realize"). If in Hitchcock's The 39 Steps Hannay momentarily considers giving himself up to the police, isn't it in part on account of an unconscious feeling of guilt? If he unconsciously feels guilt, it is not because he might have wished for her death, but because in the unconscious his stealthy walk while still holding the knife was extracted from its original context and reedited in such a way that he looks like he killed his guest. 10 Were he to father children with the woman he falls in love with later in the film, these children might suffer an incorporation of his unconscious secret and guilt (in his "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology," 1975, Nicolas Abraham wrote, "The phantom is a formation of the unconscious that has never been conscious—for good reason. It passes ... from the parent's unconscious to the child's,"11 and Anne Ancelin Schützenberger continued in The Ancestor Syndrome: "From a transgenerational perspective, a person who suffers from a ghost leaving the crypt suffers from a 'family genealogical illness.' ... From a psychoanalytical perspective, Abraham and Torok perceive in this kind of manifestation 'a formation of the dynamic unconscious that is found there not because of the subject's own repression but on account of a direct empathy with the unconscious or the rejected psychic matter of a parental object"12). To be radically innocent requires refraining from indulging, with "the unbearable lightness" of those who are unconscious of the unconscious, in ambiguous gestures, figurative speech, and the use of words whose etymology they do not take into consideration, through which they would be providing the unconscious, with its mechanisms of dissociation, condensation, etc., the opportunity of concocting a different narrative, one in which it seems that one is quilty. 13 To be a ma'sūm, "someone immune from error and sin," infallible (in Twelver Shi'ism, the imam is said to be ma'sūm), it is not enough to conform to the religious law (Sharī'a); in addition, one's gestures and words should be such that they cannot be edited by the devil or the unconscious to appear to breach the religious law.

To be a ma'sūm then requires either an omniscient God who foresees all possible edits of a gesture, utterance, etc., and then guides the one He chose to be infallible to do only those gestures and to utter only those phrases that can in no way be included in montages where they would appear to breach the religious law; or an omnipotent God who deflects (yasruf) the devil, the accuser, or the unconscious from actually concocting a different narrative from those of the chosen one's gestures, movements, and words (for example, figures of speech) that, placed in a different context but without any other alteration, would implicate him or her in a breach of the religious law (in a similar manner to how, according to some Muslim thinkers, God deflected those who would otherwise have been able to produce linguistically something that has the quality of a sūra of the Qur'ān from trying to do so, thus maintaining the Qur'ān's "i'djaz, since the second half of the 3rd/9th century [the] technical term for the inimitability or uniqueness of the Kur'an in content and form," but which literally means "the rendering incapable, powerless" 14); or having unceasingly practiced not only that which God has made obligatory for one, but also supererogatory works: "My servant draws near to Me through nothing I love more than that which I have made obligatory for him. My servant never ceases drawing near to Me through supererogatory works until I love him. Then, when I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his hand through which he grasps, and his foot through which he walks" (a hadīth gudsī)—one is then infallible because one has gone beyond good and evil; or having been resurrected by the life (according to John 11:25, Jesus Christ) from the death that, as a mortal, one undergoes even while still physically alive, thus becoming fully alive, without an unconscious, hence not subject to a reediting of at least some of one's gestures and utterances.

# Mother and Son; or, That Obscure Object of Desire

(Scenes from an Anamorphic Double Feature) (conceptual film, 41 minutes, 2006)

My experience of collaborating in an untimely manner with Gus Van Sant was not a happy one. Had he heeded my suggestions, he would not have tried to do a remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) in which he reproduced each frame of the original largely in the manner of Hitchcock, but would instead have done a *Psycho* in the manner of Sokurov, so that the resul-













tant film would have been: *Psycho*, School of Sokurov (as *The Betroth-al*, circa 1640–50, is by the School of Rembrandt). Such a programmatic film would have proved all the more appropriate when Sokurov went on to do a seemingly programmatic cinematic work, *Russian Arc* (2002), a 96-minute film videotaped in one continuous shot. Since Van Sant did not heed my suggestions for his remake of *Psycho* (1998), I did *Mother and Son; or, That Obscure Object of Desire (Scenes from an Anamorphic Double Feature)*, 2006, in lieu of the failed untimely collaboration.

## What Do Van Gogh, Hitchcock, and Kurosawa Have in Common?

(conceptual film, 4 minutes, 1997)

#### What Do Van Gogh, Hitchcock, and Kurosawa Have in Common?, version 2

(conceptual film, 6 minutes, 1997)

The two best cinematic versions of the birds of Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* (July 1890) are the abstract, artificial ones of Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963), who utter an out of this world sound; and the electronic birds in the section "Crows" of Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990). Kurosawa's film confirms that the crows in Van Gogh's painting or in the wheat field in Auvers-sur-Oise that the painting represents are unworldly entities that irrupted in a radically-closed space rather than worldly birds that were previously invisibly resting in the field or flew over it from behind the horizon. Through editing seamlessly the abstract, artificial birds in the opening credits sequence of Hitchcock's *The Birds* with the ones that appear from behind a school building to attack the fleeing school-children, my short conceptual film renders clear that the attacking birds come straight from the film's credits sequence.

# A Line of Flight from One Radically Closed Space to Another

(conceptual film, 4 minutes, 1997)

#### A Line of Flight from One Radically Closed Space to Another, version 2

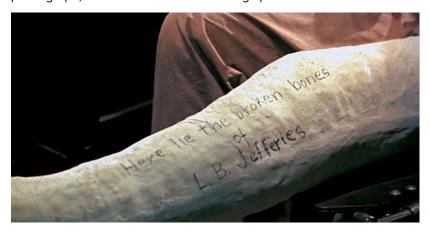
(conceptual film, 6 minutes, 1997)

The two best cinematic versions of the birds of Van Gogh's Wheatfield with Crows (July 1890) are the abstract, artificial ones of Hitchcock's The Birds (1963), who utter an out of this world sound; and the electronic birds in the section "Crows" of Kurosawa's Dreams (1990). Kurosawa's film confirms that the crows in Van Gogh's painting are unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure, rather than worldly birds that were previously invisibly resting in the field or flew over it from behind the horizon. Through editing seamlessly the abstract, artificial birds in the opening credits sequence of Hitchcock's The Birds with the ones that appear from behind a school building to attack the fleeing schoolchildren, my short conceptual film renders clear that the attacking birds came straight from the film's credits sequence and reached the latter, by way of a radically-closed wheat field, from Van Gogh's Wheatfield with Crows, a radically-closed painting where these unworldly birds initially irrupted.

### **Rear Window Vertigo**

"Truth lies not in one dream, but in many dreams" (the epigraph of Pasolini's Arabian Nights, 1974; fittingly, the vertiginous quote is attributed to The Thousand and One Nights, a work famous for its embedded stories). Sometimes, when the protagonist in two films, preferably by the same director, is played by the same actor, we can say equivalently: "Truth lies not in one film, but in many films." Alfred Hitchcock's Rear

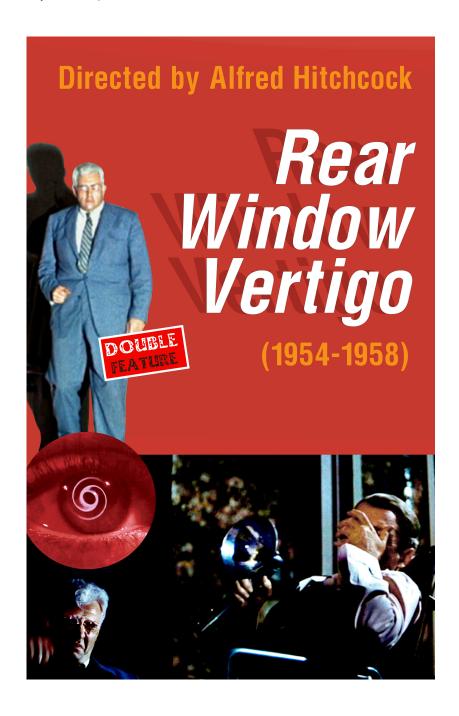
Window, 1954, and Vertigo, 1958, compose an exquisite double feature, with the implicit title Rear Window Vertigo. The cast for the two main roles of this double feature would be: James Stewart as L. B. Jefferies/ John "Scottie" Ferguson, and Kim Novak as Madeleine Elster/Judy Barton. The credits sequence of the first part of the double feature (script by John Michael Hayes, based on the short story "It Had to Be Murder" by Cornell Woolrich) opens on an interior view of three shaded windows. While the credits appear, the three shades are drawn one by one, revealing the rear of a three-storied apartment building flanked by various other buildings in Greenwich Village, New York. Through the windows we can see much of what is going on in the facing apartments as well as in the hallways leading to them. The view is from the apartment of a middle-aged man who is sleeping in a wheelchair. The camera pans along his left leg: it is encased in plaster. The following words are inscribed on the white cast: "Here lie the broken bones of L. B. Jefferies." Who has inscribed these words on the cast? Will they prove fatidic, Jefferies' legs failing him repeatedly and he himself revealed to have an affinity with death? The camera pans to a table on which rests a broken camera, and then moves up to a photograph on the wall showing a racing car skidding out of control, with one of its rear wheels, now loose, heading in the direction of the photographer, who must have been standing in the middle of the automobile racetrack! The camera continues its tilt up to another photograph, which shows the car blowing up. How come he took a sec-

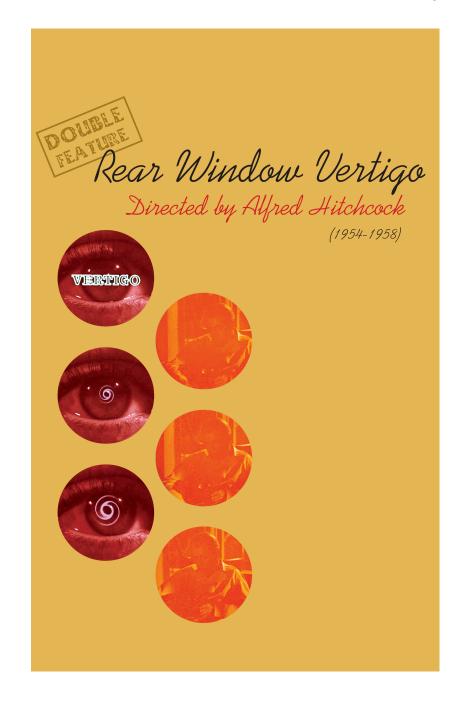


ond photograph? Did he fancy that by arresting the motion in the photograph, he would be arresting it also in reality? Soon after waking up, Jeff receives a phone call from the magazine where he works. While conversing, he watches the occupants of the apartments that face him. "Congratulations, Jeff." "For what?" "Getting rid of that cast." "Who said I was getting rid of it?" "This is Wednesday: seven weeks from the day you broke your leg. Yes or no?" ... "Gunnison, how did you get to be such a big editor with such a small memory?" "Did I get the wrong day?" "No, the wrong week: next Wednesday ..." After he hangs up, he feels an itch in his thigh, so he works a Chinese backscratcher under the cast and scratches the itching area. Then he resumes looking at the apartments and their various residents: "Miss Torso," a young busty woman who is constantly practicing ballet; "Miss Lonelyheart"; the "Songwriter"; the "Salesman" and his wife.... Shortly, his insurance company nurse, Stella, enters and admonishes him: "The New York State sentence for a Peeping Tom is six months in the workhouse—they've got no windows in the workhouse.... I can see you in court now surrounded by a bunch of lawyers in double-breasted suits." On this mention of trouble, the conversation segues to the fashion model Lisa Fremont, who expects him to marry her: "She's just not the girl for me." "She's only perfect!" "She's too perfect. She's too talented. She's too beautiful. She's too sophisticated. She's too everything—but what I want.... She belongs to that rarefied atmosphere of Park Avenue: expensive restaurants and literary cocktail parties.... If she were only ordinary ..." When Lisa visits him at night, he asks her: "Is this the Lisa Fremont who never wears the same dress twice?" "Only because it's expected of her.... You know, this cigarette box has seen better days." "Oh, I picked that up in Shanghai." What else did he pick up in Shanghai besides this cigarette box and the backscratcher? Some Chinese sayings and rules of conduct? She tries, unsuccessfully, to convince him, a photographer on assignments in frequently inhospitable zones abroad, to open a studio in the city and become a fashion photographer. Having witnessed in a short span of time the spouses who live in the facing apartment quarrel; then the wife taunt her husband on overhearing him talking on the phone with another woman; then the husband, a wholesale jewelry salesman, go out at 1:55 at night under the rain with his sample case, come back forty minutes later, then go out again with his sample case under the heavy rain and the rumbling thunder, then come back, then the next day wrap a butcher knife and a small saw in a newspaper, Jeff grows to suspect that the salesman has murdered his wife then hacked her to pieces to get rid of the body. The next day, still preoccupied with the salesman, he answers the nurse's "Good-bye, Mr. Jefferies" with "Uh-huh." "See you tomorrow, and don't sleep in that chair again." "Uh-huh." "Great conversationalist!" He relays his suspicions to Lisa when she visits him again at night, then, briefly, the next morning, over the phone, to an old detective friend of his. When the detective drops by, Jeff enjoins him: "Go over and pick him up." "Jeff, you've got a lot to learn about homicide." Notwithstanding his reply, the detective agrees to investigate the matter unofficially. When he returns shortly after, Jeff again enjoins him: "Go over there and search Thorwald's apartment. It must be knee-deep in evidence." "I can't do that.... I'd like to remind you of the Constitution and the phrase 'search warrant issued by a judge' who knows his Bill of Rights verbatim. He must ask for evidence." "Give him evidence." "I can hear myself, 'Your Honor, I have a friend who's an amateur sleuth ...' Oh, he would throw the New York State penal code right in my face, and it's six volumes." Lisa visits him at night. As they watch "Miss Lonelyheart" invite a man to her apartment then throw him out when he tries to forcibly kiss her, Jeff muses: "Do you suppose it's ethical to watch a man with binoculars and a long-focus lens ...? Of course, they can do the same thing to me, watch me like a bug under a glass, if they want to." Of course, unbeknownst to Jeff and Lisa, someone must be spying on them with a binocular or a telephoto lens from one of the facing apartments. I advance that it is a man called Gavin Elster. Lisa asserts theatrically, "The show's over for tonight," and lowers the shades. She then picks up her open overnight case, tells Jeff alluringly, "Preview of coming attractions," goes to the bathroom then comes out in a nightqown. His complements are cut short by the scream of a woman who has just found out that her dog was strangled. The next day, Jeff notices an anomaly in the garden. He sus-

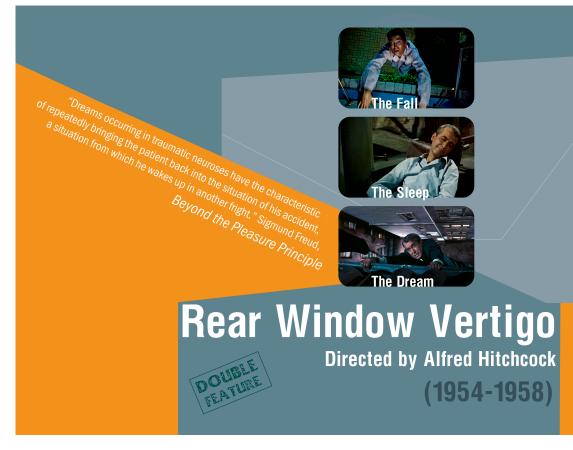
pects that there is something buried in there—the knife and saw with which Thorwald butchered his wife?—and that Thorwald must have killed the dog because it was sniffing around and digging the flowerbed. He looks up Thorwald's number in the phone book, dials it, and tells him to meet him in a nearby bar to "settle the estate of your late wife." After Thorwald leaves for the meeting, Stella and Lisa go down to the garden. When Stella's digging comes up empty, Lisa impulsively ascends the fire escape to Thorwald's apartment on the second floor to look for his wife's wedding ring. As she is doing so, Jeff mutters impotently and futilely: "What are you doing? Don't ..." She quickly heads to the bedroom but does not find the wedding ring in the handbag. Has Thorwald already given it to his mistress? She decides to search for it elsewhere in the apartment. Stella returns to Jeff's apartment and notices that "Miss Lonelyheart," who lives on the first floor of the facing building, i.e., right below Thorwald's apartment, seems to be on the point of attempting suicide by swallowing some rhodium tri-eckonal capsules. Jeff dials the operator and asks her to connect him to the police. Fortunately, hearing some lively music coming from the songwriter's apartment, "Miss Lonelyheart" wavers, then desists from swallowing the capsules. Seeing the sweeping salutary effect the music had on her, Jeff briefly wonders what the outcome would have been had the songwriter been composing a dirge instead. Jeff and Stella now shift their attention again to the second floor and see Thorwald heading toward his apartment. Jeff quickly redirects the police. Meanwhile, Thorwald enters his apartment, discovers Lisa, throws her on the sofa, takes the jewelry from her, then turns off the light. Fortunately, the police arrive at this critical point. Thorwald accuses Lisa of breaking into his apartment to steal jewelry. While the two policemen consider their next step, she places her two hands behind her back and points to Thorwald's wife's wedding ring on one of her fingers. Thorwald notices her gesture and realizes that she is signaling to someone who is spying on him. He quickly looks ahead and locates Jeff. The policemen arrest Lisa and take her to the police station. Jeff promptly sends Stella to bail her out. Moments later, he hears approaching footsteps in the hallway. Suspecting that Thorwald is coming for him, he im-

provises a photographer's weapon: a flash holder and a small packet of bulbs; and moves back his wheelchair to the rear window. When Thorwald swings the door open and advances threateningly towards him, Jeff lifts the flash holder, closes his eyes, and explodes the flash. Thorwarld is momentarily blinded by the overexposure. When he opens his eyes again, he sees Jeff and the rest of the room tinted in intense orange. As he regains his orientation and resumes his now furious advance toward Jeff, the latter quickly inserts a second bulb, closes his eyes and explodes the new bulb. Again Thorwald's advance is arrested momentarily as he blinks and then sees Jeff and the rest of the room tinted in intense orange. This process is repeated one more time before Thorwald ends up reaching Jeff. The police arrive just as Thorwald is choking Jeff and trying to throw him out of the window. When Jeff looks down, "the brick floor of the patio seems a hundred feet below." 16 Two detectives rush into the apartment. Unfortunately, by the time they grab Thorwald, Jeff 's grip has loosened and he plunges down. Fortunately, his fall is broken by two policemen who had hurriedly positioned themselves beneath his window. The next scene starts with a pan across the various apartments facing Jeff's: the songwriter and "Miss Lonelyheart" are listening together to a just released recording of his tonic song; two house painters are repainting the walls of Thorwald's presently unfurnished apartment; "Miss Torso," hearing a knock on the door, interrupts her ballet practice and ardently welcomes her paramour, an army private. The camera then pans past Jeff asleep in his wheelchair: both his legs are now in casts—but these are blank, no longer have his name on them. Is this an ominous sign? Has he lost his name? Lisa is sitting on the nearby sofa. She appears to be reading a travel book: Beyond the High Himalayas. When she is sure he is in deep sleep, she puts down the book and reaches for the last issue of Harper's Bazaar. A song is playing; the lyrics say: "But dream forever in your arms ..." At this point the credits of Vertigo (screenplay by Samuel A. Taylor and Alec Coppel, based on the novel From Among the Dead by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac), the second part of the double feature, would start: we see the vertiginous unblinking open eyes of Judy/





Madeleine in a red light that seems to be the aftereffect of one of the momentarily blinding flash bulbs that Jeff exploded in the face of Thorwald. Is this woman who can continue to stare into that intense light from a flash bulb dead (before dying physically)? Daniel Paul Schreber, who, a paranoid schizophrenic, died before dying physically ("According to the formal certificate of Professor Flechsig of Leipzig issued for the transfer of the patient to this Asylum, President Schreber ... thought he was dead ..."17), wrote in his Memoirs of My Nervous Illness: "I can look into the sun unperturbed and am dazzled only very little, whereas in days of health, I, like other people, would have found it impossible to look into the sun for minutes on end."18 Soon after Lisa leaves, Jeff's dream turns into a nightmare. It begins with a close view of a roof parapet and the curved rail of a fire escape at dusk. Suddenly a man's hand grips the top of the rail, and the man quickly climbs over the parapet and runs away over the rooftops against the background of the San Francisco skyline. Then a uniformed policeman with cap and badge climbs over the parapet, draws his gun and starts to shoot at the fugitive. He next sees himself, in the guise of a detective in civilian clothes, climb over the parapet and join in the pursuit. When the fugitive reaches a short gap between two rooftops, he leaps across it successfully. The policeman follows suit. But when Scottie, too, leaps across the gap, the impact of his landing causes the tiles to give way. While sliding, he dexterously manages to grip the edge of the gutter (is this the guise the dream is giving to the present uselessness of his broken legs cast in plaster?). As he looks down with horror, he has a strangely familiar sensation on seeing the ground recede: it is exactly as if a photographer were moving backward while zooming in. The ground now seems so far away that the following words pop up in his mind: beyond the high Himalayas. Alerted by the sounds of the impact and the sliding tiles, the policeman rushes back to the slope of the roof and stretches out his hand to reach down to Scottie. Unfortunately, the tiles beneath his heel give, and he falls through space to his death. Sigmund Freud: "Dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristic of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another



fright."<sup>19</sup> When Lisa visits Jeff's apartment to check on him, she does not find him. She entreats his detective friend to search for him. Initially this rather ornery man thinks she's pulling his leg and snidely tells her: "First you and Jeff tell me that Thorwald's wife, more specifically, her body, disappeared, and now you tell me that Jeff himself has disappeared!" "Do you think I'm making it up? I'm not making it up; I wouldn't know how." "Do you suspect that, as was the case with the body of Thorwald's wife, Jeff's body, too, has been cut up and that his severed limbs have been buried in various places? As far as I recall, his left leg was buried under a cast in this room. Where might his severed head be? For all I know, it



might not be in New York at all. Might it be in some cemetery at the other side of this vast country, for example, in San Francisco?" "You don't have to be deliberately repulsive just to impress me that I'm wrong." Regretting his inconsiderate remarks, the detective agrees to look for his friend. He searches for him "everywhere"—in New York—to no avail. What happened to L. B. Jefferies? He had a psychogenic fugue: he unexpectedly went away West, to San Francisco; assumed a different name, John "Scottie" Ferguson; and, fresh from his successful amateur detective work that led to the apprehension of a man who had murdered his wife, but still smarting from his detective friend's remark about his flagrant unawareness of the law, he studied law, in particular the San Francisco State penal code, and, after a short stint as a lawyer, became a detective.20 It seemed to many that he was on his way to become San Francisco's chief of police—until an untoward incident befell him while in pursuit, along with a policeman, of a man on the run. The latter ran up the fire staircase of a tall building. The policeman caught up with him just as he stretched his hand to grip the curved rail at the end of the fire escape. They fought for a while. The policeman lost control but managed during his fall to hold onto the edge of the gutter and desperately invoked Scot-

tie's help. Scottie started to hurriedly ascend the stairs but was unexpectedly seized with vertigo and stopped in his tracks. The fugitive kept stepping on the policeman's hand until, moments later, the latter fell to his death. Traumatized, guilt-ridden Scottie is hospitalized. After his discharge from the hospital, he visits his friend Majorie Wood, who was his fiancée for three weeks during their college days. While she draws a slim woman wearing a brassiere, he plays at balancing his cane in the air. It falls to the floor. While trying to pick it up, he yells in pain. "I thought you said no more aches or pains?" "It is this darned corset. It binds." "No threeway stretch? How very un-chic." "Well, you know those police department doctors: no sense of style. Anyway, tomorrow will be the day!" "What's tomorrow?" "The corset comes off tomorrow.... I will be able to scratch myself like anybody else [-rather than with a Chinese backscratcher?]." "What are you going to do once you have quit the police force? ..." "You sound so disapproving, Midge. I had to quit." "Why?" "I wake up at night seeing that man fall from the roof and try to reach out for him." "Johnny, the doctors explained to you." "I know, I know. I have acrophobia.... Boy, what a moment to find out I had it." "You've got it, and there is no losing it.... Why don't you go away for a while?" "You mean to forget?" For some reason, he momentarily feels paranoid, as if she is making some insinuation. His attention is then drawn to a prominent object on the table: "What is this doohickey?" "It is a brassiere." "I have never run across one like that." "It is brand new. Revolutionary uplift: no shoulder straps, no back straps—but it does everything a brassiere should do." For some reason, the words "Miss Torso" pop up in his mind. "Midge, do you remember a fellow in college by the name of Gavin Elster?" "You'd think I would? No." "I got a call from Gavin today." On his way out, he halts and asks her: "What did you mean, 'There is no losing it'?" "I asked my doctor. He said that only another emotional shock could do it and probably wouldn't. You're not going to go diving off another rooftop to find out?" When he meets Elster in the afternoon, he confesses to him that for much of their phone conversation he did not recall having an acquaintance by that name. Elster responds humorously: "How did you get to be such a big detective with such a short memory?" "How

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did you get into the shipbuilding business?" "I married into it.... Her father's partner runs the company yard in the East, Baltimore...." "How long have you been back?" "Almost a year.... I read in the newspaper about your accident." What was he referring to? The fall of Jefferies from his second-floor apartment? The mortal fall of the policeman whom Scottie failed to save during their chase of a fugitive? Both? "Scottie, do you believe that someone out of the past, someone dead, can enter and take possession of a living being?" "No." "What would you say if I told you that I believe this has happened to my wife?" "Well, I would say, take her to the nearest psychiatrist or psychologist or neurologist or psychoanalyst—or maybe just plain family doctor. I would have him check on you, too." "Do you think that I am making it up? I am not making it up. I wouldn't know how." How did Elster, notwithstanding this inauspicious beginning, quickly manage to convince his interlocutor, a retired detective, to follow his wife, Madeleine? He succeeded in doing it by intimating an unconscious affinity between Scottie and Madeleine, that between two people suffering from a psychogenic fugue: "She'll be talking to me about something. Suddenly the words fall into silence. A cloud comes into her eyes and they go blank. She's somewhere else, away from me, someone I don't know. I call her; she doesn't even hear me. Then, with a long sigh, she's back, looks at me brightly, doesn't even know she's been away, can't tell me where or when.... And she wanders. God knows where she wanders. I followed her one day, watched her coming out of the apartment—someone I didn't know. She even walked in a different way. She got into her car and drove out to Golden Gate Park—five miles—and sat by the lake, staring across the water at the pillars that stood on the far shore. You know, the portals of the past.... I had to leave, get back to the office. When I got home that evening, I asked her what she'd done all day. She said she'd driven out to Golden Gate Park and sat by the lake, that's all." "Well?" "The speedometer on her car showed that she'd driven 94 miles." Elster tells Scottie to come to Ernie's Restaurant, where he and his wife will be dining. What Scottie does not know is that Elster has lured a woman, Judy Barton, a look-alike of Madeleine, to impersonate her in a murderous scheme he devised to inherit his wife's fortune: Judy

is to fool Scottie, a set-to-order witness, into believing that Madeleine committed suicide. How twisted of Elster, who intends to murder his wife, to ask this man, who had been a peeping Tom and who led to the apprehension of a husband, Thorwald, who killed his wife, to follow his wife as a private detective. Why does Scottie end up acquiescing? He does so out of fascination by Madeleine. What is the secret of his fascination by Madeleine, a woman he has not yet seen? She exemplifies his condition. As planned, he goes to the restaurant, sits at the bar, and espies the husband and wife. On her way out, Madeleine stops just two feet away from Scottie, to wait for her husband while he finishes tipping the waiter. From Scottie's point of view, she is in profile. He fleetingly has the impression that she is posing, as if for a photograph. The next morning, he follows her by car from her apartment building to a flower shop where she picks up a nosegay. For some reason, the flowers seem to him filled with morbid associations. This sensation is confirmed shortly, since Madeleine visits next the old Mission Dolores' graveyard, where she pensively looks at a headstone on which the following name and dates are inscribed: "Carlotta Valdes: Born 3 December 1831; Died 5 March 1857."



While heading toward the exit with the flowers still in her hand, she pauses by the grotto behind which Scottie is hiding and observing her. Again, he has the uncanny feeling that she is posing for a photograph. What a subtle and risky touch on the part of the husband: making Judy transiently assume the posture of someone posing for a photograph in the presence of a photographer suffering from a psychogenic fugue, thus evoking obscurely a dissociated memory! Scottie follows her now to the Palace of the Legion of Honor. When he arrives inside, he finds her seated alone at the far end of one of the galleries. She is gazing at the three-quarter portrait of a blond woman dressed in a nineteenth century costume and wearing a diamond pendant necklace. Even though he does not consciously remember his previous existence as L. B. Jefferies, during which jewelry ended up being associated with a murder, the necklace casts a morbid aura on the woman for Scottie. He asks an attendant about the woman in the portrait, who answers that she is Carlotta Valdes. The next day, he again follows Madeleine, this time through a poor section of San Francisco. She stops her car at an old residence turned into the McKittrick Hotel. She goes in and shortly appears at a second story window. Scottie enters and asks the manageress to give him information about the occupant of the room. When she refuses to divulge such private information, he shows her his badge. "Valdes. Miss Valdes ..." "Carlotta Valdes?" "Yes." Madeleine seems to be suffering from a psychogenic fugue. "How long has she had the room?" "It must be two weeks ..." Later that day, he learns from Elster that that hotel used to be the house of Carlotta Valdes prior to her suicide. The next day Scottie follows Madeleine by car first to the Palace of the Legion of Honor for her ritual sitting before the Carlotta Valdes portrait, then to the Golden Gate Bridge. She parks her car and walks to the water's edge and begins to scatter flowers in the water. After a while, she leaps into the Bay! Scottie dashingly saves her from drowning and takes her unconscious to his apartment. When she wakes up, she asks him: "Why am I here? What happened?" "You fell into the bay. You don't remember?" "No." When he asks her where she was before going to the Golden Gate Bridge, she answers: "Downtown, shopping.... And where had you been just before?" "The Palace of the

Legion of Honor—the Art Gallery." "Oh, that's a lovely spot, isn't it? I've never been inside"! Has he ever been to Greenwich Village, New York? Coming to the embarrassed realization that they—actually Judy Barton and L. B. Jefferies—have not been properly introduced, she says: "My name is Madeleine Elster." "My name is John Ferguson. 21 ... Acquaintances call me Scottie.... Has this ever happened to you before?" "What?" "Falling into the San Francisco Bay?" "No, never before. I've fallen in lakes, out of rowboats, when I was a little girl. And I fell into a river, once, trying to leap from one stone to another." Is Madeleine a neorealist character? André Bazin: "The technique of Rossellini undoubtedly maintains an intelligible succession of events, but these do not mesh like a chain with the sprockets of a wheel. The mind has to leap from one event to the other as one leaps from stone to stone in crossing a river. It may happen that one's foot hesitates between two rocks, or that one misses one's footing and slips. The mind does likewise. Actually it is not of the essence of a stone to allow people to cross rivers without wetting their feet ..."22 To my knowledge, no viewer of Hitchcock's Rear Window and Vertigo, both of which are concerned with falling, and the second of which begins with a series of very risky leaps that lead in one case to a mortal fall, has previously managed to leap from one film to the other across the break between them, joining the two into a double feature. When Scottie follows her again the next day, she leads him back to his house: it turns out that she has come to leave him a formal thank-you letter. They then wander together to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. There they stand before the cross section of the cut down massive trunk of a Sequoia tree. Various rings on the tree trunk indicate the dates of a major historical event contemporaneous with them, starting in 909, near the center, and ending in 1930, the year the tree was cut down. In a trance, she points to two spots beyond the white ring marked "1776—Declaration of Independence" and says: "Somewhere in here I was born ... and here I died." Scottie tries to snap her out of her trance by calling her emphatically: "Madeleine!" He then drives her to Point Lobos. When he sees her walking toward the rocks against which the waves are pounding, he rushes towards her. "Why did you run?" "The Chinese say that once you have

saved someone's life, you are responsible for it forever." Did he learn this saying in Shanghai perchance? She confesses absentmindedly: "There is so little I know. It is as though I were walking down a long corridor that once was mirrored, and fragments of the mirror still hang there, dark and shadowy, reflecting a dark image of me ... and yet not me ... someone else, in other clothes of another time, doing things I have never done ... but still me ..." How could he not feel affined to this woman who was describing his own state? "But the small scenes, the fragments in the mirror: you remember them." "Vaguely ..." "What do you remember?" "There is a tower and a bell and  $\dots$  a garden below  $\dots$  but it seems to be in Spain, a village in Spain." "If I could find ... the beginning to put it together." At dawn she comes knocking at his door and tells him that she can now remember clearly the dream. To the full description she gives him, he responds: "It's all there. It's no dream.... Madeleine, a hundred miles south of San Francisco, there's an old Spanish mission—San Juan Batista it's called—and it's been preserved exactly as it was a hundred years ago—as a museum." He drives her to the mission. They go into the livery stable. Madeleine sits in a surrey and closes her eyes. Shortly, seeing her entranced, he asks her: "Madeleine, where are you now?" How can the woman impersonating Madeleine, as well as the film spectator, not be struck by this double entendre? At one level, the question can be understood as addressed to the entranced woman, who has been repeatedly possessed by Carlota Valdes, and as inquiring about the space-time to which her trance has transported her. But at another level, it is a structural parapraxis of the situation, and concerns the whereabouts of Elster's real wife Madeleine. Taken in the latter sense, this question reminds the impersonator where Madeleine is at that point in time and therefore where she needs to be in order for Elster's scheme not to misfire at the last moment. And indeed, she is quick to say: "There's something I must do." She walks swiftly toward the church, then runs up its stairs. He runs after her, starts to ascend the staircase, but is repeatedly incapacitated by vertigo, until he definitely can no longer continue his ascent. Seeing her open and go through the trapdoor at the top of the tower, the following words pop up in his mind: "What are you doing? Don't ..." He then

hears a scream and sees, through a small rear window that looks out on the back garden, a body fall. He looks down and sees Madeleine's body lying on the cloister's roof. During the case hearings at Plaza Hall, Scottie is surrounded by a bunch of lawyers in double-breasted suits. While addressing the jury, the judge berates him for his conduct: "... Nor does his strange behavior after he saw the body fall have any bearing on your verdict. He did not remain at the scene of the death; he ran away. He claims he suffered a mental blackout and knew nothing more until he found himself back in his apartment in San Francisco several hours later." Basing itself largely on Scottie's testimony, the jury comes to the conclusion that Madeleine Elster committed suicide. Shortly after, Scottie has a nightmare in which he sees, at times in negative footage, his head severed and falling into the open grave of Carlotta Valdes. With its associations to Thorwald's dismemberment of his wife, and to the flowerbed that Stella unearthed in her search for the traces of the murder, this nightmare implies that at some level Scottie is already intimating that he was fooled by Gavin Elster in his scheme to murder his wife. And with some of its images in negative, this nightmare is intimating a past he is repressing, one in which he was a photographer. Scottie suffers from melancholia and is hospitalized. Midge visits him and brings him a tape of music by Mozart.<sup>23</sup> "They have music for dipsomaniacs, and music for melancholiacs, and music for hypochondriacs. I wonder what would happen if somebody got their files mixed up?" For some reason, the expression "Lonelyheart" pops up in his mind. Midge kneels besides him and entreats him: "Oh, Johnny, Johnny, please try. Try, Johnny." He does not respond. "You want me to shut that off?" He doesn't answer. "You don't even know I'm here, do you?" He doesn't reply. She kisses him and assures him: "I am here." Out of frustration and a lingering jealousy regarding Madeleine, whose loss has produced such a drastic effect on this man she loves, while leaving, and despite the great tenderness she feels for him, the following words pass through her mind: "Great conversionalist!" After his discharge from the hospital, he revisits the places associated with Madeleine: first Ernie's Restaurant; then her erstwhile apartment building, where he is startled to see a car of the same make, year and color as Madeleine's car

parked in the forecourt; then the Art Gallery at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, each time momentarily misrecognizing some woman as Madeleine. Shortly after, he notices a group of working women walking down the street. He is struck by the high degree to which one of them looks like Madeleine notwithstanding that her makeup is gaudy rather than subtle à la Madeleine's, and notwithstanding that her hair is dark rather than blond as Madeleine's was. He follows her to her hotel room. He seems unconvinced when she tells him that her name is Judy Barton. She shows him her Kansas driver's license. According to it, her name is indeed Judy Barton, and her address is 425 Maple Avenue, Salina, Kansas. She then pulls her current, California driver's license; according to it, too, her name is Judy Barton, and her address is the hotel where they are presently standing. His sight falls on some framed photographs showing a teenager. "That's me—with my mother." Does he, a man suffering from a psychogenic fugue, believe her? It does not seem so. Something in him is making him suspect that she is not really Judy Barton but Madeleine, for he himself, who can produce a driver's license, a social security card and even a badge that show that he is John "Scottie" Ferguson, is actually not John Ferguson but someone else. Vertigo can thus be viewed as one more Hitchcock film (Spellbound, 1945; North by Northwest, 1959; Marnie, 1964) that instances a change of name of the protagonist, here in the case not only of Madeleine/Judy but also of Scottie, whose real name is Jeff.<sup>24</sup> His repeated attempts in the first part of the film to make Madeleine assume fully and persistently her identity, to dissuade her from periodically assuming the identity of Carlotta Valdes (arranging her hair in like manner to her and living under her name in her old house turned into a hotel), are attempts to make her overcome what he views as a psychogenic fugue. These attempts are repeated in the second half of the film, since this melancholic suffering from a psychogenic fugue (a dissociative condition) disavows Madeleine's death, so that while consciously trying to turn the look-alike woman he came across on the street into a replica of Madeleine, he is unconsciously trying to make Madeleine herself overcome her new psychogenic fugue—in which she thinks she is someone called Judy Barton from Salina in Kansas—and remember her real identi-

ty by making her undo all the changes he fancies she introduced during her fugue. That's why he takes her to the same places Madeleine used to visit, starting with Ernie's Restaurant. After dinner, he drives her back to her hotel room. "May I see you tomorrow?" "Tomorrow night? Well ..." "Tomorrow morning." "But I have to go to work! I've got a job." The next day, because she loves him, she calls work and reports that she's sick—is love a sickness, one unto death (Kierkegaard)? He takes her to buy clothes at Ransohoff's. A model comes in and parades before them in a gray tweed suit. While Judy admires the suit, Scottie dismisses it. The saleswoman is puzzled: "But you said gray, sir." "I just want an ordinary, simple gray suit." "The gentleman seems to know what he wants. All right, we'll find it." How pleasantly surprised his former girlfriend, the model Lisa Fremont, would have been had she seen how discerning he has become regarding clothes. When they manage to find the suit in question, he tells the saleswoman: "Now, we'd like to look at a dinner dress, an evening dress: short, black, with long sleeves, and a kind of square neck." "My! You certainly do know what you want, sir." Yes, he wants and expects a woman who wears the same dress twice again and again, always. He then buys her the high-heeled shoes Madeleine used to wear and takes her to the local Elizabeth Arden Salon to change her hair color to blond and place it in a bun as was Madeleine's custom. Felicitously, Judy ended up not "too perfect" for him since both "perfect" and "ordinary," associated conjointly with Ransohoff's and I. Magnin department store. Now that she has the looks, the manner and the words of Madeleine, wouldn't it be time for him to look, act, and move like Jefferies? Indeed, in the next scene of the film, while preparing herself to go to dinner, Judy asks him to help her fasten a necklace around her neck. As he finishes doing so, he looks at her in the mirror. He is taken aback by what he witnesses: the same necklace he saw in Carlotta's portrait. He feels unsettled. He drives her to the old Spanish mission San Juan Batista. Full of misgivings, she asks him: "Why are we here?" "I have to go back into the past. Once more. For the last time. I need you to be Madeleine for a while. And when it's done, we'll both be free." What this melancholic suffering from a psychogenic fugue does next, recounting and reenacting the events of that fateful day at the church, has a double aim: to force Judy to acknowledge that she was an accomplice of Gavin Elster in his successful scheme to kill his wife; and to make Madeleine remember her past and thus get over her psychogenic fugue. "Madeleine died here.... I have to tell you about Madeleine now.... We stood right there, and I kissed her for the last time.... And then she turned and ran into the church." He impels her to go with him inside the church. "I couldn't find her and then I heard footsteps.... She was running up the stairs and through the trapdoor at the top of the tower. I tried to follow her, but I couldn't get to the top.... One doesn't often get a second chance. I want to stop being haunted." What is it he wants to stop being haunted by? By Madeleine and her traumatizing death? Or by his dissociated past? "You're my second chance, Judy.... You look like Madeleine now. Go up the stairs." "No!" "Go up the stairs, Judy, and I'll follow." While she ascends the stairs reluctantly and stiffly, he twice momentarily looks down apprehensively, each time feeling vertigo. But he perseveres until they reach a critical spot on the stairs: "This was as far as I could get, but you went on." She is taken aback. "Remember? The necklace, Madeleine. That was the slip. I remembered the necklace.... We're going up the tower, Madeleine [my italics]." "You can't! You're afraid." He drags her up the stairs: "Who was at the top when you got there? Elster? With his wife?" "Yes." "And she was the one who died not you. The real wife. You were the copy, you were the counterfeit. You played the wife so well, Judy.... When you got up there, he pushed her off.... Why did you pick on me? Why me?" "The accident!" "... I was the set up, wasn't I? I was a made-to-order witness." Was he going to call Elster later and tell him to meet him in a bar to "settle the estate of your late wife"—as he did as Jeff with Thorwald? During this engrossing dialogue, they had continued their climb up the spiraling staircase and had reached the door to the tower. Becoming aware of this, Scottie exclaims: "I made it!" On overcoming his acrophobia on the staircase, why does he insist on ascending to the top of the tower with Judy? Is it only to look at the scene of the crime? Is it due to the repetition compulsion?<sup>25</sup> Is it as a result of his lingering resentful exasperation with her for being the mistress and accomplice of the man who murdered Madeleine, his archetypical beloved, and for implicating him in the murder through his false testimony? Is it because he can presently intimate that he is suffering from a second disability that is the effect of another shock and that this second disability, too, can possibly be healed by yet another shock? Is it out of his incredulous frustration that while he is calling her by her two names, she persists in calling him by only one name? Is it for all the above reasons? On top of the tower, he again switches between her two names while admonishing her about keeping the necklace: "Did he give you anything?" "Some money." "And the necklace, Carlotta's necklace" (as he's saying these words, Scottie has a déjà vu impression but cannot determine the reason for it: like Elster after him, Thorwald, too, killed his wife and gave one of her jewels to his mistress). "There was where you made your mistake, Judy. You shouldn't keep souvenirs of a killing; you shouldn't have been that sentimental.... I loved you so much, Madeleine [my italics]." What happens when Judy falls to her death from the tower? The shock he experiences ends his psychogenic fugue, which was triggered by his being pushed from his second-floor apartment by a murderer. While assuming the posture of Jesus Christ on the cross, in whom the human Jesus of Nazareth and the Son of God coexisted, the following two names pass through his mind: L. B. Jefferies and John "Scottie" Ferguson.

#### **Vertiginous Eyes**

Vertigo's Scottie Ferguson, a former detective suffering from vertigo, acquiesces reluctantly to an old school friend's commission to follow his wife Madeleine supposedly suffering from possession by her great-grandmother, Carlotta Valdes, who committed suicide at the age of 26, Madeleine's present age. He surveils Madeleine, who wanders in an apparently entranced state in the city, first stopping at Carlotta's tombstone; then at a museum, where she sits for a long time in front of a portrait of Carlotta while wearing the same necklace the latter is wearing and having her hair modeled on the latter's hair style; then at a hotel,

from one of whose rooms she mysteriously disappears, and which, Scottie subsequently learns, is the house where Carlotta lived for many years. A day or two later, she drives to the Golden Gate Bridge. Suddenly, she jumps into the San Francisco Bay. Scottie, who had followed her, quickly jumps into the water, saves her, then takes her to his house to recover. It is now for the first time that their eyes cross. The next day she returns to his house to leave him a thank-you note. They then wander together through the city and then into a park, where they stand before a cross section of a sequoia whose rings indicate the width of the tree when various historical events took place: 909 AD: the beginning of the tree's life; 1066: the Battle of Hastings; 1215: Magra Canta signed; 1492: the Discovery of America; 1776: the Declaration of Independence; 1930: the date the tree was cut down. Madeleine, entranced, points to the circles on the cross section of the Sequoia tree and says: "Somewhere here I was born, and there I died." She soon tells him that she is haunted by a recurrent dream, but seems unable to clearly remember it. After a sleepless night, he hears insistent knocks on his door toward dawn. When he opens the door, he sees her. Haggard, she says: "The dream came back again.... It was the tower again and the bell and the old Spanish village clear, so very clear for the first time, all of it." "Tell me." "It was a village square, and a green with trees, and an old whitewashed Spanish church with a cloister. Across the green, there was a big gray wooden house with a porch and shutters and a balcony above, ... a small garden and next to it a livery stable with old carriages lined up inside." "Go on." "At the end of the green, there was a whitewashed stone house with a lovely pepper tree at the corner ... " "... and an old wooden hotel from the old California days; and a saloon: dark, low ceilings, with hanging oil lamps?" "Yes!" "It's all there. It's no dream. You've been there before, you've seen it." "No, never!" "Madeleine, a hundred miles south of San Francisco, there is an old Spanish mission, San Juan Batista it is called, and it has been preserved as it was a hundred years ago, as a museum. Think hard, darling, think hard: you've been there before, you've seen it." "No, never ... Oh Scottie, what is it? I've never been there." In what context other than possession can we place such an exchange? Time travel. Shortly, they

drive to the mission. After telling him that she loves him, she is suddenly seized by an apprehension: "It's too late." He implores her and protests: "No. No ..." Unyielding, she runs away from him up the bell tower staircase. Prevented by his incapacitating vertigo from following her to the top, he sees her moments later fall to her death. Madeleine's death is ruled a suicide by the court. Her guilt-ridden bereaved lover suffers from melancholia. Out of the hospital, he comes one day across a woman who physically looks quite similar to Madeleine, but who is, unlike her, common, wearing garish clothes and largely blending with her coworkers at I. Magnum's department store. He follows her to her hotel, sees her open the window of one of the rooms, knocks on the door of the corresponding room and asks her to go out with him for a drink. She consents reluctantly. After he leaves, she starts writing a letter to him. We witness her flashback: wearing a gray suit and with blonde-died hair drawn back, she reaches the top of the bell tower where Gavin Elster, Madeleine's husband, is already standing with one hand over the mouth of a body identical to hers. She confesses in the letter she ends up tearing that she was part of a scheme devised by Elster to kill his wife and inherit her fortune, and that he had used her for her remarkable resemblance to his wife. One may at first be surprised by how common Judy looks once she is no longer dressed up and directed on how to behave, walk, and talk by Madeleine's husband. But what happened on the top of the tower? She witnessed her death when the husband threw Madeleine down to the ground way below. Judy, who while impersonating Madeleine said as she pointed to a spot of the cross section of the Sequoia's trunk, "There I died," dies before dying physically. The two identical bodies on top of the Spanish tower bring to mind time travel, which is travel to a variant, but generally largely similar branch of the multiverse, one in which there is already another version of one. Perhaps the greatest drive behind time travel is to witness oneself in these two limit situations: death (Chris Marker's La Jetée) and birth; to watch one's birth and one's death (with video and film, one can now see oneself not only being born but even prior to birth, as a fetus in the womb of one's mother. But one cannot see oneself die. That's why the drive to witness one's death is much stronger than that of witnessing one's birth). How hapless Scottie is: her love for him had to compete with the amazing fascination, indeed the drive to witness one's death. Her run toward the tower is an attempt to be present at the scene of her death. When he later asks her: "Why did you scream?" she answers: "I wanted to stop it, Scottie." And indeed on arriving breathless at the top of the tower, she gestures toward Gavin Elster not to throw his wife off the tower, in a repentant impulse, but more so because in that instant in which she sees a woman who is identical to her in body and clothes and hair style on the point of being pushed from the tower, she intuitively realizes that she is witnessing her own death. Hitchcock does not emphasize the look on Judy's face then; he shoots the scene of the co-presence of the two identical bodies on the tower and Elster's throwing of Madeleine to her death in a long shot with Judy's back to us. I envision the expression on Judy's face on top of the tower to be identical to that on the protagonist's face in La Jetée as he uncannily witnesses himself die. If that was her death that Judy witnessed, then that is how she will die, falling from the bell tower of the old mission (it would have been best had she been wearing the same gray dress when she and Scottie, who is under the sway of the repetition compulsion, insisting all along their relationship that she dress the way Madeleine did, go to the tower that final time). In Vertigo, woman is difficult to look at not because, as Laura Mulvey advances, she induces a castration anxiety in men ("In psychoanalytic terms, the female figure ... also connotes something that the look continually circles around but disavows: her lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure.... Thus the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified"), 26 but because she has seen her own death, thus has vertiginous eyes. Having overlooked that in Vertigo Judy sees her own death, Mulvey fails to discern in her famous article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," where she writes in the section titled "Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look," "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female,"27 that in the universe of Hitchcock, one exemplifying the male

"gaze" directed at a woman, it falls to a woman to have that most uncanny and peculiar of gazes: seeing one's own death, oneself die. If Vertigo is such a paradigmatic film about the gaze, it is not only because it presents us with a male private eye spying on a woman, but also because a woman witnesses what one normally cannot see: one's own death. Since the latter is the far more intense gaze, the film's emblematic credits begin with the vertiginous gaze of Judy. The single Hitchcock opening credits sequence that foregrounds the gaze, Vertigo's, shows a woman's eyes and not a man's. The paradigmatic gaze in Hitchcock is not that of a man reduced to a look, the photographer with cast leg of Rear Window, but of a woman who witnessed her death, Judy in Vertigo. In the nightmare he has after Madeleine's death, Scottie sees himself mortally falling from the top of the tower. In that nightmare, he already, through displacement onto himself, senses that his beloved witnessed her own death and he is jealous of her for accomplishing that. The assumption by the woman of the paradigmatic position of the gaze necessitates or favors that she also be, at least partly, the source of the gaze even when she is ostensibly the one being stared at. It is therefore symptomatic that only after we see the scene where Judy witnesses a body identical to hers being thrown off the tower that we learn that the woman who was being followed by Scottie already knew that he was following her and therefore that she was perceiving him without looking in his direction, gazing at him.

The eyes of someone who has seen his or her own death are at least as vertiginous as time travel or being simultaneously at two places, for example, in out-of-body experiences. Thus, the credits sequence of *Vertigo* shows proliferating receding revolving spirals in the eye of Judy—the superimposed title and credits act as a minimal veil to shield us from this vertiginous gaze. Mulvey: "Scottie's voyeurism is blatant: he falls in love with a woman he follows and spies on without speaking to." But given that the voyeurism of Scottie is mitigated by the circumstance that the best position in which to be in relation to someone who has witnessed her own death is that of a shadowing detective since it allows one to avoid her vertiginous eyes, it is better to find other examples of

voyeurism in Hitchcock's work, for example, the male photographer with cast leg of *Rear Window* who spends his time observing his neighbors furtively, including with his camera's telephoto lens; or *Psycho*'s Norman Bates, eyeing through an aperture in the wall his female hotel guest taking off her shirt and skirt in order to shower. I imagine that in *La Jetée* past the traumatic visit to the jetty during which he saw himself die, the boy's friends used to often play with him blind man's bluff to simply have those vertiginous eyes of his temporarily covered with blindfolds. As an adult, he is at times followed, at other times blindfolded by those conducting the time-travel experiment, because it is unsettling if not traumatic to look into his vertiginous eyes. The one kind of look that would balance the gaze of someone who saw his own death is the startling movement of the eyes of the woman in *La Jetée* in what was until then a "photonovel."

As she comes out of the bathroom dressed in the same gray suit as Madeleine and having Madeleine's hair color and style, Judy, surrounded by a green penumbra ostensibly issuing from the garish light of the hotel neon sign flashing outside her window, looks spectral. She appears that way not only because Scottie has the impression that he is seeing Madeleine coming back from the dead, but also because Judy herself is someone come back from the dead, since what she witnessed on the tower was her own death. Scottie's cold bearing and rigid posture as Judy hugs him is that of someone holding a corpse; and his gingerly reciprocal hug is that of someone not fully convinced that she is there, that is, that of someone unsure that he is not hugging a ghost. The protagonist of Marker's *La Jetée* is ghostly (as the narrator indicates: "She calls him her ghost") not only because he appears and then disappears in his back-and-forth travels in time, but also because he has already died, carries in his memory the image of his death, which he saw as a child.

Why did he time-travel? He did it to find in the multiverse the branch in which all the lies his beloved told him are truths.

It is all too natural that there be remakes of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, a film revolving around the repetition compulsion.

# You Are My Second Chance

How ominous and uncanny (it should be) to hear someone say to one, "You are my second chance," not only on account of how slim, if not null is the chance that the person traumatized by a past event would resist the compulsion to repeat it, but also because this locution insinuates or should insinuate that the person he or she is treating as similar to one was no other than oneself! Having felt, "He or she is my second chance," or blurted, "You are my second chance," one should reconsider and suspect that, however mysterious or inexplicable it seems, the one referred to in such a statement is the very one involved in one's traumatic failure, betrayal, or dishonor, albeit perceived "through a glass darkly." When one says, "You are my second chance," it is often the case that one unconsciously intimates that one is dealing with the same person one failed or betrayed or who failed or betrayed one the first time around. In M. Night Shyamalan's The Sixth Sense, the next fall season after the death of one of the disturbed boys Dr. Malcolm Crowe, a therapist, had failed to successfully treat, Vincent Gray, it appears that he is asked to treat another disturbed boy, Cole Sear. Both boys were around nine years old at the time of their initial consultation with him. As is clear from his notebook, like Vincent, Cole has divorced parents, is "socially isolated," and exhibits the classic symptoms of "acute anxiety." And as in the case of Vincent, Cole is treated by some people, including other students in his school, as a freak. The therapist remarks to his wife, "They're so similar, Anna. They have the same mannerisms, the same expressions, the same thing hanging over them," and concludes, "I feel like I am being given a second chance here, and I don't want to let it slip away." After he gets to know Cole better, he confesses to him, "Once upon a time there was this person named Malcolm. He worked with children, loved it more than anything. Then one night, he finds out he made a mistake with one of them. Didn't help that one at all. He thinks about that one a lot. Can't forget.... And then one day ... [he] meets a wonderful boy who ... reminds him a lot of that one. Malcolm decides to try to help this new boy. He thinks that maybe if he can help this boy, it would be like helping that one too." Cole reciprocates and confesses to him that he sees dead people, who appear to have some unfinished business and consequently entreat him or badger him to perform on their behalf what would complete what they didn't. Why didn't or doesn't Vincent, who died in traumatic conditions, appear to Cole, to ask him to complete an unfinished business on his behalf? I would advance that it must be because Vincent Gray and Cole Sear are not two very similar boys but one and the same boy! In Hitchcock's Vertigo (1958), the rather common woman, Judy Barton, whom retired detective John "Scottie" Ferguson comes across in the street, and who looks physically quite similar to the woman whom he was tasked to follow by her husband and with whom he ended up falling in love, Madeleine Elster, proves to be, in a twist, the woman he had followed and loved, since it turns out she had impersonated Madeleine in a scheme by the latter's husband to have Scottie, incapacitated by his acrophobia and thus unable to follow her to the top of a bell tower, where he would have seen the husband throw the corpse of his real wife in lieu of the impersonator, be a witness that Madeleine committed suicide by leaping to her death. Having realized this, he takes her to the same bell tower, confessing, "One doesn't often get a second chance. I want to stop being haunted. You're my second chance." Second chance to do what? Why not be explicit about it? Second chance to yield to and indulge in the compulsion to repeat? And, consequently, to lead to his beloved's death, again?

## The Other Can Never Die in My Place, but He or She "Always" "Robs" Me of My Place

In Hitchcock's Vertigo, what did Judy see when she reached the top of the tower? She witnessed Elster throw a woman who looked very much like her to the ground way below. Judy's death was stolen from her; she died as Madeleine. Soon after Scottie comes across her in the street and they become a couple, she asks him to help her put on a necklace—a gift to her from Elster. Scottie quickly remembers having already seen this necklace, first in a painting, where it was worn by Carlotta, and then on Madeleine's neck. Consequently, he strongly suspects that Madeleine's death was a murder in which Judy was implicated. Through her parapraxis, Judy was unconsciously hoping that this obsessed melancholic man, who had remade her as Madeleine (making her wear the same clothes and shoes, have the same hair color and hairdo ...), would take her back to the scene of the crime. Her seemingly accidental final mortal fall from the same church tower on being taken aback by the sudden appearance of a nun was a manner of reclaiming her death. She seems not to have suspected the following while succeeding in exoterically reclaiming her death: esoterically, "there is always someone else," in the lapse we undergo at the furtive extreme moment of death, "to strip us of our own" death. The other can never die in my place (Heidegger: "Dying ... is essentially mine in such a way that no one can be my representative"29), but, unless I am a yoga or Sufi or Zen master, he or she "always" "robs" me of my place (in "his" dying before dying ["This autumn, as lightly clad as possible, I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant (no, he is my son, insofar as I am Carlo Alberto, my nature below), but I was Antonelli myself"], Nietzsche writes: "I am Prado, I am also Prado's father,

I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige ... every name in history is I"<sup>30</sup>).

### I Know Full Well, or Suspect, that this Is Not Fetishism, but I Will Treat it as If It Is

According to Freud, one of the sexual theories of children "starts out from the neglect of the differences between the sexes ... characteristic of children. It consists in attributing to everyone, including females, the possession of a penis, such as the boy knows from his own body. It is precisely in what we must regard as the 'normal' sexual constitution that already in childhood the penis is the leading erotogenic zone and the chief auto-erotic sexual object; and the boy's estimate of its value is logically reflected in his inability to imagine a person like himself who is without this essential constituent. When a small boy sees his little sister's genitals, what he says shows that his prejudice is already strong enough to falsify his perception. He does not comment on the absence of a penis, but invariably says, as though by way of consolation and to put things right: 'Her ——'s still quite small. But when she gets bigger it'll grow all right."31 Given the child's "theory that his mother possesses a penis just as a man does,"32 he is shocked by the perception of its absence. Freud, again, "The child, having been mainly dominated by excitations in the penis, will usually have obtained pleasure by stimulating it with his hand; he will have been detected in this by his parents or nurse and terrorized by the threat of having his penis cut off. The effect of this 'threat of castration' is proportionate to the value set upon that organ and is quite extraordinarily deep and persistent. Legends and myths testify to ... the

horror which is linked with the castration complex.... The woman's genitalia, when seen later on, are regarded as a mutilated organ and recall this threat, and they therefore arouse horror instead of pleasure in the homosexual."33 In the case of the one who will become a fetishist, "it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish [my italics]. Thus the foot or shoe owes its preference as a fetish—or a part of it—to the circumstance that the inquisitive boy peered at the woman's genitals from below, from her legs up; ... pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as a fetish, crystallize the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic."34 When, exceptionally, the movement of recoil of the look away from a shocking revelation or event is experienced as not so much in space but in time, more specifically, as a backward in time movement, and when the entity on which the look rests from its recoil from the shocking perception happens to be the same as the one from which the movement that led to the shocking perception started, in the example mentioned by Freud, the shoes, or when it was what made possible such a backward in time movement, one can rightly consider this entity as a fetish. For the movement of recoil to be experienced as not so much in space but in time, as a backward in time movement, special conditions must apply: the disconcerting perception triggers a trance, with the consequence that the recoil occurs in a state in which one is oblivious of any background changes that would imply the usual, forward movement of time; or the recoil happens to occur in the absence of anything that would evidence the normal, forward passage of time, for example, moving people or animals or leaves, and the acousmatic words or exclamations (expressing disapproval or astonishment) that the one who is to become a fetishist hears or that pass through his mind during the movement of his eyes away from the disconcerting, shocking perception happen to be palindromes, for instance, "Aha!" or "Tsk tsk," or "Tut," or "Tuttut," or "Wow!" or "Ere," or "Gag," or "Peep," or "Eye," or "Mom," hence could be and are experienced as happening backward in time. The closer the object that the eye rests on in its recoil from the shocking perception, the less likely that some element, for example, a heard word or

phrase or the motion of someone, would imply that one is experiencing a movement forward in time. "When fetish first appeared in English in the early 17th century, it referred to objects (often amulets) believed by certain West Africans to have supernatural powers. By the early 20th century, fetish took on yet another meaning quite distinct from its antecedents: a sexualized desire for an object (such as a shoe) or for a body part that is not directly related to the reproductive act (such as an earlobe)", 35 if it was fitting to maintain the same word for what seem to be two different kinds of objects, it is that the sexual fetish appears to have, at least in the unconscious of the fetishist, a supernatural power, that of taking him backward in time to a moment prior to the traumatic discovery, perception, or event. Since there is something (temporally) vertiginous about the fetish, it is no wonder that (Hitchcock's) Vertigo (screenplay by Alec Coppel and Samuel A. Taylor) is the exemplary film around the fetish and its production. Basically, Scottie is a fetishist, indeed, a model fetishist, not really because he initially disavows the death of his beloved, Madeleine, repeatedly mistaking in a hallucinatory manner other women for her, and modeling a similar-looking woman, Judy, on her, but because he later manages to turn Judy into a fetish, to produce a fetish. In Vertigo, this happens in stages: buying her and making her wear the same model of grey jacket, skirt, and shoes that Madeleine used to wear prior to her death, then having her dye her hair in Madeleine's hair color. When Judy protests against his attempts to model her on Madeleine, "Why are you doing this? What good will it do?" He responds, "I don't know. No good, I guess." Someone who views him as a fetishist on account of his disavowal of the death of Madeleine might provide the following answer on his behalf: "As long as you are dressed like Madeleine and have your hair styled like hers, and so look identical to her, you allow me, who through playing the psychoanalyst while not being one led to her untimely death, to disavow this death and, so, not to feel guilt about it." While this way of trying to produce a fetish through reproducing the lost object or the last object one perceived before the sexually-inhibitive shocking perception rarely works (if it seems to work, it is in the majority of cases through disavowal—including of its failure), it does exceptionally in Vertigo. Even

though she arrives in the hotel room where Scottie is waiting for her wearing the same model of grey jacket, skirt, and shoes, and having the same hair color as Madeleine's, she deliberately omits arranging her hair in the same way Madeleine used to do it, in a bun. He insists that she arrange it in the same way (if the ostensible fetish, or, more precisely, those elements of it on account of which it ostensibly functions as a fetish, cannot be changed while still functioning ostensibly as a fetish, it is not because it would be perfect but because it would otherwise not provide a condition for disavowal). When she does, it seems that Judy has become his fetish in the Freudian sense and that his state is one of disavowal, which can be verbalized thus psychoanalytically: "I know well that she is not Madeleine, since I saw Madeleine fall to her death; indeed, that she is Judy Barton, since I had the occasion, at this very hotel room, to check her driver's license and social security card and see photographs of her with her parents in her hometown in Kansas, and since I made her dress and style her hair exactly like Madeleine, but all the same I'll treat her as Madeleine." But then it transpires, through a shift in the background from the hotel room to the stables at the Old Mission San Juan Bautista a year earlier, where he and Madeleine declared their love for each other and kissed passionately and from which she dashed to the tower and then ostensibly leapt to her death, that Judy has become a fetish in a more radical sense, the real sense, the one that overlaps with the older, early 17<sup>th</sup> century sense of fetish (fetiche, feitico): she has acquired the supernatural power of taking him backward in time to a point prior to the traumatic, sexually inhibitive perception and event, Madeleine's apparent suicide. It cannot be said that he knows then that Madeleine is dead since the fetish brought him backward in time to a moment prior to her death unlike time travel, where the travel to the past (in Another Branch of the Multiverse) is in the traveler's subjective future and therefore does not erase the memory of whatever shocking perception and (conscious or unconscious) knowledge he or she has, the fetish takes the fetishist backward in time to a point prior to the shocking perception or event, so the latter no longer figures in the fetishist's memory and knowledge, even unconsciously. The one whose psychic apparatus functions in the

mode of "I know well, but all the same ..." is not really, notwithstanding Octave Mannoni, who provided this formula for fetishism, a fetishist; we could say of him that he is in disavowal that he is not really a fetishist, and we could say of the object he treats as a fetish, "it is as though it is a fetish" (thus evoking the same expression in Freud's essay on fetishism: "it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish"), or we could use the following words on his behalf, ones that convey the disavowal, "I know well that this object is not really a fetish, but all the same I will treat it as a fetish," or "I know well that the one whose psychic apparatus works in the manner of 'I know well, but all the same ...' is not really a fetishist, since in fetishism proper the fetish takes the fetishist backward in time to a moment prior to the shocking, disconcerting perception and knowledge, but all the same I'll consider myself a fetishist." It would seem that for the disavowal to work, the fetishist has to be in the presence of the fetish, but actually in the presence of a real fetish, which takes the fetishist backward in time to a moment prior to the inhibiting traumatic perception or event, there is no need for disavowal. Cases considered by many to be ones of fetishism because they evince disavowal are actually cases of disavowal in relation to fetishism rather than in fetishism, and so can be formulated thus: "I know very well that this is not fetishism and that this object is not a fetish, but I will treat it as if it is." Notwithstanding Freud, who wrote in his essay "Fetishism" (1927), "The fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and ... does not want to give up,"37 the fetish does not function as a substitute for the expected but shockingly missing organ or the inexistent object cause of desire, since it transports the fetishist backward in time to before the experience of their absence. So long as he is not in the presence of the fetish, the fetishist knows, whether consciously or unconsciously, about the traumatic event or piece of information that he witnessed and that's inhibitive sexually, if not of desire tout court; but in the presence of the fetish, he or she doesn't, not even unconsciously, since the fetish transports him backward in time to a moment prior to the shocking perception (the fetishist is back in the past in relation only to the shocking perception/

event/absence/knowledge). One can provide on Scottie's behalf a different response to Judy's questioning of his drive to model her after Madeleine, "What good will it do?": "Given that my guilt for Madeleine's untimely death was an obstacle to my having a love relation with you, by letting me turn you into a fetish, you allowed me to go backward in time to a moment prior to Madeleine's death, doing away with my guilt toward her, which had obstructed my having an amorous relation with any other women." While it appears that there are two kinds of fetish, the object that is coincidentally the starting point of a movement that led to the shocking perception and the end point of a recoil from the shocking perception, and the object that itself appears to supernaturally take one backward in time to a moment prior to the shocking perception/event/ knowledge/loss that would otherwise inhibit one's sexual desire, actually, only the latter is a radical, real fetish; the former ostensibly functions as a fetish only through disavowal (Vertigo presents the peculiarity that the Judy whom Scottie models perfectly on Madeleine becomes a fetish and consequently makes it possible for herself as she impersonated Madeleine while she stood in the stables of the Old Mission San Juan Bautista just before rushing to her apparent death to be coincidentally the starting point of a movement that led to Scottie's perception of what proved to be a traumatic event for him and the end point of a recoil, by means of a backward in time movement, from the latter). By relieving him of his feeling of guilt through taking him backward in time to a moment prior to the death of his beloved, a death to which he feels he contributed by playing the psychoanalyst; and making it possible for him to suspend his melancholia without having accomplished the work of mourning, the fetish allows him to feel that Judy is desirable. Now he can kiss Judy and make love to her. And yet, when he kisses the woman standing in front of him, he is kissing not only and simply Judy in the hotel room looking identical to Madeleine, but also, since Judy functions then as a fetish and thus makes it possible for him, through a backward in time movement, to return to the past, (the woman he mistook as) Madeleine in the stables at the Old Mission San Juan Bautista around a year earlier. In the presence of his fetish, the fetishist experiences a double temporality, and thus a temporal vertigo: Scottie is conjointly in the hotel in San Francisco and in the stables at the Old Mission San Juan Bautista around a year earlier. In relation to the sexually-inhibitive shocking perception, the fetish takes the fetishist backward in time to a moment that precedes this perception, but in relation to other matters nothing is altered in his temporality, so, in the presence of the fetish, the fetishist is disjointed temporally. Did Scottie obscurely wish at this stage to replace his spatial vertigo with a temporal one, through a fetish, rather than to get rid of his vertigo tout court?

Notwithstanding how dangerous it can be to assume such a position, what would many people matter were they not the fantasy of someone? In Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, would Madeleine (as emulated and impersonated by Judy in a scheme devised by Madeleine's husband to make his planned murder of his wife appear to be a suicide) strike Scottie as perfect were it not that she happens to coincide with his fantasy? To be the fantasy of someone, is that not one of the rare manners of being perfect just as one is? As for Judy, not as she is herself but as (melancholic Scottie's) fantasy changes her into herself as Madeleine, does not lovingly give what—in comparison to Madeleine—she does not have<sup>38</sup>?

#### **Dream Woman**

Should one dismiss outright the term "dream woman," having become nauseated by its sloppy and facile use in Hollywood, the "dream factory," and by the debased rhetoric of dreams in contemporary American culture ("the American dream," etc. How mundane is any "dream team" when set against a group of surrealists participating in an exquisite corpse)? No. Given that, basically, every actor who plays a historical character is a dream creature, <sup>39</sup> the actress Madeleine Stowe is a dream woman as the Mary of Bernard L. Kowalski's *The Nativity*. To be a dream woman in the world or in the diegesis, a rare concatenation of circumstances has to

occur. I see a woman during the day. At night, she appears in my dream. Is this significant? Not necessarily: "Dreams show a clear preference for the impressions of the immediately preceding days.... They make their selection upon different principles from our waking memory, since they do not recall what is essential and important but what is subsidiary and unnoticed"40 (Freud). In the dream, she looks different, having been distorted by the dream-work mechanisms of condensation and displacement. When I see her again in my waking life, she appears, through a chain of circumstances in the world, as she was in the dream. It is this unintended change through the waking world's uncorrelated reasons and means into how the primary processes of the dreamer's unconscious had altered her that turns a woman into a dream woman. Dr. Kathryn Railly of Terry Gilliam's Twelve Monkeys, 1995, played by Madeleine Stowe, is such a dream woman. Trying to evade detection by the police, the time traveler to the past James Cole and the psychiatrist turned his accomplice Kathryn Railly hide in a movie theater. It is showing a Hitchcock double feature, beginning with Vertigo. Why Vertigo? It is in part because of the likelihood that the traumatized protagonist would be tempted to try to make Kathryn look exactly as she appears in his recurrent dream. Did the protagonist see Scottie transforming Judy into his dead beloved Madeleine by making her don the same dress and adopt the same hair color and style? It is undecidable, for when we see him next, he is waking up during the subsequent film. Unexpectedly, unlike Vertigo's Scottie, Twelve Monkeys's protagonist refrains from trying to make Kathryn look as she was in the dream! Is it because, already doubting his own sanity, he is apprehensive that by making her slip into the blonde wig and the dress she had in the dream, he would be making reality indistinguishable from a dream? Is it also because the dream in question was not only desirable but also nightmarish since associated with his ostensible death? It is also because he must intuit that were he to succeed in consciously actualizing the changes that would transform her into the exact look of the woman in his dream, she could no longer be a dream woman, who is for the most part the product of unconscious mechanisms (the Judy who, transfigured by him at long last into Madeleine, appears from the dressing room and approaches Scottie in a greenish penumbra is no dream woman). Notwithstanding her ignorance of how he and she looked in his recurrent dream, by attaching a moustache to her ostensibly awake companion to make him less recognizable to the police, Kathryn, unawares, initiates their transformation into the images of the dream. When he wakes up, she has disappeared—was she only a dream figment? He rushes outside in the blonde wig she placed on his bald head during his sleep—the same kind of wig in which he appears in his recurrent dream. He catches sight of her. She is talking at a public phone. She turns around and starts heading toward him. A snoring sound, faint but unstoppable, like the distant voice of a hypnotist, soon reaches him. The sound has also the tone of an alarm that may wake one from a dream. So then, he first saw her in the blond wig in which she appears in his recurrent dream between two sleeps: his own, having dozed off in the movie theater, and that of the old usher, who is taking a nap on a chair at the cinema entrance. He would have preferred that the old usher be looking at them, gaping at them even, rather than dreaming. There was something voyeuristic about that sleeping usher, as if he were gazing at them in his dreams.

In Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, while Scottie already felt that his long-time friend Midge was in no way the object of his desire even before becoming intensely attracted to, indeed enamored of Madeleine, who gave every sign of being unconsciously haunted by and modeling herself on her dead great-grandmother, Carlotta Valdes, including through the latter's portrait at a museum, his feeling was starkly confirmed when Midge, in a fit of jealousy of Madeleine, painted a version of Carlotta Valdes's portrait in which she substituted herself for her—in a great intuitive gesture of profanation that backfired. What would have released him from the melancholic spell of Madeleine, now dead, which drove him to model a woman, Judy, who resembled her physically, into a Madeleine lookalike (same clothes, hairstyle and hair color, etc.)? It would have been for the remodeled Judy to sit in the museum admiring the painting that Midge painted of herself in the position of Carlotta Valdes.

# The City of the Fellowship of Strangers

Given that the city is a space for strangers, I envision in what follows three possibilities of special relationships between strangers. The interested readers are implicitly invited to come up with other possibilities of such relationships. A plurality of kinds of this relationship would compose the City of the Fellowship of Strangers and would provide a mundane inkling of the death realm, where one's relationship with oneself is an uncanny, extimate (Lacan) one, a relationship with a startlingly familiar stranger (which is the more startling then: the familiarity or the strangeness?).

#### 1. Clean After Me

During his phone conversation with a friend late at night, he, sleepy, let slip in response to his friend's comment "Given the string of remarkable days I've had recently, I feel that tomorrow will be the beginning of a cycle of indifferent days": "You don't say! Tomorrow happens to be my birthday!" His friend insisted on organizing a birthday party for him the next night and volunteered to call round in the evening to pick him up since his car was damaged in an accident with the kind of driver endemic to postwar Lebanon—the reckless. He acquiesced while already abhorring the many gifts he was bound to receive from friends and acquaintances, expecting to throw most of them in the garbage can once he returned to his apartment. The next day, while waiting with his friend at a red traffic light on their way to the party, he saw a young woman lingering at the crossroads. For some reason, he felt that she was waiting for him. He implored his friend: "If you really want to give me an appropriate birthday gift, follow this woman! And no questions asked!" "But you'll be making your friends wait inordinately for you at your birthday party!" Was she

waiting? Strangely but felicitously, yes. What was she waiting for? She was waiting to sense that someone is going to follow her. And now, having felt this, she walked to a parked car and sped away. They followed her. She drove soon into the parking lot of a hypermarket, went into one of its cafes and ordered an assortment of fruits. After sitting at the other end of the café, he told the waiter that he preferred the spot where she was seated. While peeling an orange, she cut herself. She raised her bleeding finger to her lips and licked it. Then she briefly wrapped it in the napkin. As soon as she left, he swiftly moved to her table and placed in his bag the stained napkin she had left behind. On another, indifferent napkin, he scribbled: "While the majority of men and many women have forgotten that the bodily fluids they part with are gifts, a small percentage of men and a larger percentage of women haven't forgotten this: 'Its faeces are the infant's first gift, a part of his body which he will give up only on persuasion by a loved person, to whom, indeed, he will make a spontaneous gift of it as a token of affection, since as a rule infants do not soil strangers. (There are similar if less intensive reactions with urine)'41 [Freud]." He espied her enter a pharmacy, leave it, then go inside a photo booth. Soon, she came out, picked the three strips of snapshots delivered by the machine, looked at them briefly then dropped them on the floor. He took leave of his friend and quickly picked them. The first strip of photographs was of her bandaged finger, the second of her naked wounded finger, and the third of the stained bandages. He rejoined his friend, and they followed her car until she parked at and entered an apartment building. Fortunately, he did not have to make an agonizing decision on whether to stay in front of the apartment building to make sure that she resides there; or to go with his friend to the party celebrating his birthday: soon the light in one of the dark apartments was turned on and moments later she appeared at one of the windows. At the party, he received numerous birthday gifts. Once in his apartment, he dutifully unwrapped them, decided to retain one and threw the rest away. Having discharged this charge, he stayed up late writing: "The indexical relation of the photograph of a bodily stain to its referent has to be really strong for the photograph to function as a trace that induces a perverse desire for its pres-

ervation: it is so in magical practices and a magical universe, where there's identity of the object with its traces and its images; or if its human referent or the one following her has a conception of photography close to the one that Balzac had, itself reportedly close to that of primitive people: 'According to Balzac, each body in nature is composed of series of specters, in superimposed layers, foliated in infinitesimal films.... And, certainly, each Daguerrrian operation, each photograph, comes to catch in the act, detach and retain, by fitting over it, one of the layers of the objectified body. Hence, for the said body, and with each renewed operation, an obvious loss of one of the specters, that is, of one of its constitutive essences';42 or if the photograph itself is stained by another, tauter-for more intimately related to the body-indexical element, for example, by being splattered during a car crash with the blood of the one who was photographed. A certain type of pervert considers things the other discards as tokens of the latter's generosity, therefore when he picks them, he wraps them, as he would any other gift. If the woman who is followed is thrifty, she would minimize her bodily secretions by fasting and retain her reduced bodily fluids as long as possible, or else discard only what she guesses does not interest the other. If she is generous, then even after she ends up discovering that among the things she's discarding the other cherishes the ones that are stained with her bodily fluids, she continues to discard such traces liberally. Whether the one followed is clean or not is dependent in such cases on the desire of the follower: the latter will feel that the woman he is following is clean if all that she leaves behind is desired by him; but unclean if some or most of what she discards has nothing to do with his desire, with the consequence that he will leave it littering the ground. The desired body for a certain type of pervert repeatedly abjectly stains glasses and cups with lipstick mixed with saliva, underwear with urine and/or the fluid expelled during orgasm from the urinary bladder or from the paraurethral glands, tampon with menstrual blood; but it is conjointly, for the one who happens to pass at a short delay along the same trajectory of the perverse follower, who has already removed the discards of the one he's following and placed them in his bag, on the contrary a pure body that does not

leave traces, that does not shed tears, urinate, salivate, and menstruate. In a rigorous video or film, we can detect if the perverse follower is fully coincident with himself or also follows himself implicitly and thus witnesses the immaculate absence of stained traces of the one he is following from the manner in which the video maker or filmmaker shoots the one who is being followed: if the follower is fully coincident with himself then the one followed appears as only an abject body; if the follower follows himself implicitly, as 'the third who walks always beside you' (T. S. Eliot) then the one he is following appears as conjointly abject and pure." He was awakened by a phone call from his insurance company informing him that his car was ready to be collected. For the next fortnight, he followed her at a distance collecting her traces. She was neat throughout, but in two different ways: when he was not following her, she did not throw anything except in garbage cans, sealed plastic bags, etc.; but when he was following her, she littered generously, sensing that he will be all too happy to clean after her. When all is said and done, was it all great clean fun? No, since the limit toward which following the other for his or her bodily traces tends is not "a little blood" (the expression the Renfield of Murnau's Nosferatu uses while speaking to Harker concerning the latter's forthcoming trip to Transylvania: "And, young as you are, what matters if it costs you some pain—or even a little blood?") but the whole body as a trace of itself discarded for the perverse follower. Why was she driving so speedily on this rainy day? Had she become tired of being followed? He was trying not to lose sight of her at a breakneck curve, when his car skidded and crashed into hers. Now the distance, which was initially the one that he maintained while following her, instead of being canceled by the excessive proximity brought about by the car crash, was displaced, becoming one between herself and her body in an out-ofbody state during which she, floating, witnessed from above her body lying on the ground, 43 and felt towards it, now unrecognizable as it was covered with bruises, blood, and urine, what she feels towards these bodily discharges. The three objects stained by her bodily fluids that he had wrapped in plastic and that were lying on the car seat next to him were now stained by his and her discharges during the crash. Himself

only lightly injured, he rushed her to the hospital, and, given that there turned out, fortunately, to be blood type compatibility between them, he donated blood to her. After having collected and wrapped in plastic various objects stained with her bodily fluids, including blood, he felt odd seeing his own blood collected in a bag for her. On his first visit to her at the hospital after she regained consciousness, she said emphatically: "The Chinese say that once you have saved someone's life, you are responsible for it forever. I very much hope that you don't subscribe to their way of thinking on this matter." When she asked him why he seemed bemused, he answered that her words reminded him of those of the protagonist of a famous film. "Are you into cinema?" "Yes; in addition to being a writer, I am also a film theorist and a video maker. How about you?" "I received my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree around a year ago. I've been considering continuing my studies and/or art practice abroad, possibly in Asia, for example, Singapore." "I do not recommend Singapore, where one is fined if one is caught spitting, and where littering of any kind is subject to up to a S\$1,000 fine for first offenders, and up to a S\$2,000 fine and a stint of corrective work cleaning a public place for repeat offenders; it is a city that is too sanitized since it does not allow for the perversely clean." "Do you have any suggestions?" "I recommend the three art institutes where I've taught: the Rijksakademie and DasArts in Amsterdam, and California Institute of the Arts." "Did you know that immediately after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the US Department of Justice questioned thousands of non-citizens, primarily foreign-born Muslims, for information about or connections to terrorist activity, and that at least 1,200 non-citizens were subsequently arrested and incarcerated, of which approximately one thousand in secret? Given the repressive policies of the Bush administration, I prefer to apply to Europe. I'll visit the web sites of the Rijksakademie and DasArts once I leave the hospital and thenceforth promptly apply." They became lovers during his visits to her in the hospital. When he first said to her, "I love you," she was elated; but when he again uttered these words to her a week or so later, she asked him: "Do you love me totally?" He did not answer. He had a confirmation that her

body was a trace of itself, that it was somewhat a discard, when she mentioned that she had an out-of-the-body state during the car crash and described the episode of depersonalization she underwent. Sometimes while looking at her sleeping in his bed, he had the queasy feeling that she was somewhere else in the room looking at him and her body, so that on several occasions he swiftly turned his head backward only to be relieved that there was no one there. This time, when he turned back toward her, he was startled: her eyes were wide-open, staring at him. When it became clear that she was unable to resume her sleep, he suggested that they watch a film, Vertigo. She had not seen this film before! While watching it, she had a déjà vu impression on hearing Scottie tell Madeleine shortly after saving her from drowning: "The Chinese say that once you have saved someone's life, you are responsible for it forever. And so I'm committed." While they were making love afterwards, he at times exclaimed, at times whispered: "I love your feet ... your ankles ... your knees ... your thighs ... your buttocks ... your breasts ... your nipples ... your shoulders ... your arms ... your neck ... your hair ... your face ... and your mouth ... your eyes ... your nose ... your ears ... your saliva ... your blood ... your urine ... and the fluid you expel from the urinary bladder or from the paraurethral glands during orgasm." At which point, she, momentarily jarred and embarrassed, quickly protested: "Don't say this!" He in turn remonstrated: "When you told me that you wanted me to love you totally my second thought was that you were being perverse. But even did I not love you totally, I would have said this litany of 'I love your saliva ... I love your hair ...' out of sympathy with the magical moments we've been having." He tenderly passed his fingers through her beautiful long hair, then went to his library, picked up a book and read aloud: "The simplest expression of the notion of sympathetic contiguity is the identification of a part with the whole. The part stands for the complete object. Teeth, saliva, sweat, nails, hair represent a total person.... Everything which comes into close contact with the person-clothes, footprints, the imprints of the body on grass or in bed ... are all likened to different parts of the body."44 He then fetched from his library his DVD of Godard's Contempt, the one birthday gift he had not thrown away, inserted it in his player and, noticing her apprehension, assured her that they will not get to the penultimate scene of the fatal car crash. They watched together Camille, the female protagonist, played by Brigitte Bardot, ask her husband, Paul, while naked in bed: "Do you see my feet in the mirror?" "Yes." "Do you think they are pretty?" "Yes, very." "And my ankles? Do you like them?" "Yes." "Do you like my knees, too?" "Yes, I really like your knees." "And my thighs?" "Your thighs, too." "Do you see my behind in the mirror?" "Yes." "Do you think I have a cute ass? "Yes, very." "And my breasts, do you like them?" "Yes, tremendously." "Which do you prefer, my breasts or my nipples?" "I don't know, I like them the same." "And my shoulders, do you like them?" "Yes." "... And my arms?" "Yes." "And my face?" "Your face, too." "All of it? My mouth, my eyes, my nose, my ears?" "Yes, everything." "Then you love me totally?" "Yes. I love you totally, tenderly, tragically." As he had promised her, he stopped the film before the scene of the mortal car crash. She mused: "What is it with me tonight? Although this is the first time I watch this film, I had an impression of déjà vu when I saw the image of Bardot sitting on the bathroom seat. In any event, Camille's husband didn't tell her that he loved her saliva, blood, and urine, and 'the fluid she expelled during orgasm from the urinary bladder or from the paraurethral glands." "On two later occasions, Godard had the opportunity to make Paul's concluding words more believable. While at the garden of the American film producer who has commissioned him to rewrite the script that Fritz Lang is filming and that is based on Homer's The Odyssey, Paul takes leave of his wife to go wash his hands. Instead, inside the house, he flirts with the producer's secretary and translator and slaps her on her buttocks while she's leaving to the garden. Just at this point his wife enters and, after reprimanding him, asks him: 'Where can I pee?' He signals to her to go upstairs. But he could have instead accompanied her to the bathroom, washed his hands there, then placed them between her thighs and asked her to urinate...." "Now I remember where I've seen that image before. It was at the recently opened Le Coffee restaurant and coffee house in Beirut. A framed film still of Bardot sitting on the bathroom seat hangs on the wall beside the door to the ladies' room. Let's have a drink there tomorrow!" "To-

ward the beginning of Godard's First Name: Carmen, a man falls in love at first sight/fight with one of the robbers of the bank he guards, a woman by the name of Carmen (played by Maruschka Detmers). He ties himself to her (in what seems to be an intertextual reworking of the disposition of a man and a woman manacled to each other in a film by a director who, unlike Godard, is actually perverse: Hitchcock's The 39 Steps, 1935) so it would seem that he was being abducted by her and her accomplices. They drive away then stop briefly at a gas station and rush into its men's room. While still tied to him, she starts to pee; her legs continue to be covered by her skirt. He at first looks her straight in the eye, but quickly averts his eyes, down to the floor (a gross man who had entered the men's room to surreptitiously eat a cup of yogurt he filched from the adjoining store looks at her now and then through the mirror while lustfully licking his yogurt-smeared fingers). Perhaps we could do a remake of this scene at Le Coffee. In our remake, your legs would not be covered by your skirt, I would not look away but at them, and there would certainly not be a gross onlooker around." "I'll give you my response about doing a remake of that scene only after I watch it. Please continue what you were





saying about Contempt before I interrupted you." "In the film's penultimate scene, Camille is killed in a car crash while hitchhiking a ride with the producer. We are shown, in a medium long shot, the blood on her neck, cheeks and hair. Had the accident occurred close to the whereabouts of Paul, and had he rushed toward the site of the car crash, there would have been another opportunity for him to go over the series again, but this time adding to the series of things he loves about her the fluids with which he sees her covered in the crushed car—'I love your urine, blood, 45 and saliva'—and then conclude rigorously this time: 'I love you totally.' Since Godard does not have Paul do this, he should have come closer with his camera to the wounded Camille and shown what is missing from the deduction, in a perverse impulse or pedagogical course of action.<sup>46</sup> Given how rigorous the filmmaker of M (1931) and The Testament of Dr. Mabuse (1933) is, 47 I would wager that his implied script of Homer's The Odyssey did not need rewriting, and therefore that Paul is contemptible for accepting to do such a rewrite (it's not at all strange that the protagonist of a Godard film titled Contempt should be a screenwriter, given Godard's well-known disrespect for scripts); but I think that Godard's

film would have benefited from a rewrite. Were I the producer of Godard's film, I would have recommended that he either extend the wife's series of questions to her husband about what it is he loves in her to cover her saliva, blood, urine, and the fluid she expelled during orgasm from the urinary bladder or from the paraurethral glands, or remove the 'concluding' exchange ('Then you love me totally?' 'Yes'), or else accept in his cinematic adaptation of Moravia's novel Contempt, in which a screenwriter is commissioned to rewrite Fritz Lang's script for an adaptation of Homer's The Odyssey, that the novelist J. G. Ballard, the future author of Crash (1973), rewrite the penultimate scene of the car accident.<sup>48</sup> I myself have never written a script for my video essays. But after the publication in 2003 of the second editions of my first two books, I've become interested in remakes. For example, it would be felicitous to do a remake of Vertigo in which, unlike in Hitchcock's film, Madeleine leaves behind sundry objects stained with her bodily fluids for the private detective who is following her. For that, new scenes with digital versions of James Stewart as Detective John 'Scottie' Ferguson and Kim Novak as Madeleine Elster/Judy Barton would have to be added. The other scenes and shots would be altered surreptitiously but significantly by the addition of the new scenes and the alteration of some of the existent ones, in a new version of the Kuleshov effect. While filmmaker George Lucas, whose company, Industrial Light & Magic, recreated, through special effects for Spielberg's Jurassic Park, dinosaurs that had been extinct for tens of millions of years, 'can't see any reason to recreate John Wayne or Monroe ...'49, I can: to digitally remake certain scenes in the director's cut through the use of numerically recreated dead actors. The DVD or the future format in which such a remake of Vertigo will be available is to be advertised as this or that Remaker's Retouch of Vertigo or else as Hitchcock's Vertigo in ABMV<sup>50</sup> (the acronym standing for 'Another Branch of the Multiverse'; aka Hitchcock's Vertigo in ABMWIQM [the variant acronym standing for 'Another Branch of the Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics'])—the screen would then indeed be a window ... onto another branch of the multiverse. So here is my remake of Vertigo [the additions and/or alterations are italicized]. During a chase over the rooftops

of San Francisco, police detective John 'Scottie' Ferguson is overcome by acrophobia and, as a consequence, unwittingly and unwillingly contributes to the accidental death of a fellow policeman. He retires from the police department because of his disability and of his unresolved feelings of guilt. On a visit to his old girlfriend and one time fiancée, Midge, he mentions that he received a call from an old college acquaintance, a certain Gavin Elster. When he meets Elster, the latter asks him to follow his wife, Madeleine, because some harm may come to her from someone dead who seems to be taking possession of her. What Scottie does not know is that Elster has lured a woman, Judy Barton, a look-alike of Madeleine, to impersonate her in a murderous scheme he devised to inherit his wife's fortune: Judy is to fool Scottie, a set-to-order witness, into believing that Madeleine committed suicide. The following day he waits in his car at the corner of the apartment building where she lives. When she comes out and drives off, he follows her. She goes first to a flower shop, where she picks up a specific bouquet she had clearly designed; then to the old Mission Dolores' graveyard, where she pensively gazes down at a headstone. When she walks away, he hastens to the headstone and scribbles the inscription on it: 'Carlotta Valdes: Born 3 December 1831, died 5 March 1857.' He then follows her to an old hotel at the intersection of Eddy and Gough streets and discovers that she has rented a room there. The next day, he again follows her, this time to the Palace of the Legion of Honor. When he arrives inside, he finds her seated alone at the far end of one of the galleries. She is gazing at the three-quarter portrait of a blond woman dressed in a nineteenth century costume and wearing a distinctive diamond pendant necklace. Scottie is struck by the similarity between the bouquet Madeleine has placed next to her on the bench and the bouquet held in the woman's hand, and by the similar way both women, inside and outside the painting, had pulled their hair back into a bun. He beckons to an attendant and asks him in a hushed voice: 'Who's the woman in the painting she is looking at?' 'Oh, that's Carlotta. You'll find it [the reproduction of the painting] in the catalogue: Portrait of Carlotta.' The attendant withdraws after handing him a catalogue. While still entranced by the painting, Madeleine reaches for the bouquet of flowers



lying next to her on the bench, in the process wounding her finger by a thorn. Close shot of one of the flowers: one drop of blood then another fall over it.51 Awakened from her trance by the pain, she removes the offending and stained flower out of the bouquet, leaving it on the bench. Scottie looks apprehensively around to check that the attendant has not witnessed what has just occurred; he feels relieved that the latter happens to be helping another guest somewhere else in the museum. He tries to understand why he felt such apprehension but fails to do so. He quickly heads to the bench where Madeleine was sitting, stretches his hand hesitantly toward the flower then holds it gingerly.' Moments later, he rushes outside and follows Madeleine's car back to her apartment building. He then drives to Midge's apartment. 'Who do you know that's an authority on San Francisco history?' '... Professor Saunders over in Berkeley.' 'No, no, I don't mean that kind of history. I mean the small stuff; you know, people you never heard of." ... Pop Leibel. He owns the Argosy Book Shop.... You are not a detective anymore. What is going on?' The bookshop is filled not only with old books, but also with memorabilia of California's 'pioneer days': framed old mining claims, posters describing outlaws wanted by the law, Wells Fargo Pony Express posters. While waiting with Midge for the owner to conclude his conversation with the

one customer in the shop, Scottie looks for a section of books of psychoanalysis. Not finding one, he searches for the poetry section, finds it, and picks up one of the books. He flips through it, finds something that catches his attention, and looks for a piece of paper. Not finding one, he opens the catalogue he still has with him and copies the following words on the page facing Carlotta's portrait: 'When I make the sound—a flower—out of the oblivion to which my voice relegates all contours, something other than the visible petals arises musically, the fragrant idea itself, the absent flower of all bouquets' (Mallarmé, 'Crisis in Verse,' trans. T. G. West). Now that Leibel is free, Scottie asks him: 'What does an old wooden house at Eddy and Gough Street have to do with Carlotta Valdes?' 'Oh, it was hers. It was built for her many years ago by ... a rich man, a powerful man. She came from somewhere small, to the south of the city. Some say from a mission settlement. Young, yes, very young. And she was found dancing and singing in a cabaret by this man. And he took her and built for her the great house in the Western Addition. And there was a child.... His wife had no children. So, he kept the child and threw her away.... And she became the sad Carlotta, alone in the great house, walking the streets alone, her clothes becoming old and patched and dirty; and the mad Carlotta, stopping people in the streets to ask: "Where is my child? Have you seen my child." ... She died by her own hand.' Once outside the bookshop, Midge entreats Scottie: 'Now then, Johnny-O, pay me!' 'For what?' 'For bringing you here. Come on, tell!' While driving her home, he begins to answer some of her questions. As they reach her apartment, she complains: 'You haven't told me everything.' 'I've told you enough.' 'Who's the guy and who's the wife? ... I know. The one who phoned, your old college chum, Elster. And the idea is that the beautiful mad Carlotta has come back from the dead and taken possession of Elster's wife? ... I think I'll go take a look at that portrait.' He goes to tell Gavin Elster about his findings. Elster appears to be impressed with Scottie's progress and gives him additional pieces of information: 'My wife, Madeleine, has several pieces of jewelry that belonged to Carlotta. She inherited them. Never wore them. They were too old-fashioned—until now.' 'Now, Carlotta Valdes was what? Your wife's grandmother?' 'Great-grandmother. The child who was taken from her, whose loss drove Carlotta mad and to her death, was Madeleine's grandmother.' 'Well, I think that explains it. Anyone could become obsessed with the past with a background like that.' 'She never heard of Carlotta Valdes.' 'She knows nothing of a grave out at Mission Dolores? Or that old house on Eddy Street? Or the portrait at the Palace of the Legion of ...?' 'Nothing.' 'Well, how do you know all these things she doesn't?' 'Her mother told me most of them before she died.' 'Why wouldn't she tell her daughter?' 'Natural fear. Her grandmother went insane, took her own life. Her blood is in Madeleine.' In his 'Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology' (1975), Nicolas Abraham writes: 'The phantom is a formation of the unconscious that has never been conscious—for good reason. It passes in a way yet to be determined—from the parent's unconscious to the child's....<sup>52</sup> What haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others....53 The special difficulty of these analyses lies in the patient's horror at violating a parent's or a family's guarded secret, even though the secret's text and content are inscribed within the patient's own unconscious.'54 And he writes in 'The Phantom of Hamlet, or The Sixth Act preceded by The Intermission of "Truth": "Haunted" individuals are caught between two inclinations. They must at all costs maintain their ignorance of a loved one's secret; hence the semblance of unawareness (nescience) concerning it. At the same time they must eliminate the state of secrecy; hence the reconstruction of the secret in the form of unconscious knowledge. This twofold movement is manifest in symptoms and gives rise to "gratuitous" or uncalled for acts and words, creating eerie effects: hallucinations and delirium, showing and hiding that which, in the depths of the unconscious, dwells as the living-dead knowledge of someone else's secret.'55 And Anne Ancelin Schützenberger continues in The Ancestor Syndrome: 'It is a secret that cannot be told, often a parent's shameful secret, a loss, an injustice.... From a transgenerational perspective, a person who suffers from a ghost leaving the crypt suffers from a "family genealogical illness," from an unconscious loyalty, from the consequences of something unsaid that became a secret. From a psychoanalytical perspective, Abraham and Torok perceive

in this kind of manifestation "a formation of the dynamic unconscious that is found there not because of the subject's own repression but on account of a direct empathy with the unconscious or the rejected psychic matter of a parental object."'56 Again, Scottie follows Madeleine's car. This time she drives toward the jutting point of old Fort Winfield Scott, parks her car and walks to the water's edge. After a while, she leaps into the water. Scottie dashingly saves her from drowning. He then takes her unconscious to his apartment, undresses her, tucks her in his bed, and hangs her drenched shirt, skirt, bra, and panties to dry. During their subsequent conversation in the living room, it becomes clear that she does not recall jumping in the bay. His phone rings in the bedroom. When he returns to the living room after informing her husband about her suicidal attempt then soothing him by stressing that she is presently fine, he discovers that she has already put on her clothes and left. But he shortly notices that she forgot (?!) her presently dry panties, on which traces of menstrual blood are visible. The next day, he again follows her from her apartment building only to discover that she has driven to his place to leave him a thank-you note under his door. He approaches her, picks up the note, reads it, then asks her: 'Where are you going?' '... I just thought that I'd wander.' 'Oh, that's what I was going to do.... Well, don't you think it's kind of a waste for the two of us ...' 'To wander separately?' During their trip, she tells him that she is haunted by a recurrent dream but seems unable to clearly remember it. When he returns home, he discovers another note; it is from Midge. He drives to her apartment. 'Since when do you go around slipping notes under men's doors? ... 'What have you been doing?' 'Wandering. What have you been doing?' '... I've gone back to my first love: painting.' 'Oh, good for you. I've always said you were wasting your time in the underwear department.' Would he have the same opinion were he interested in the traces of the fluid she squirted during orgasm on her underwear? Probably not. 'Well, it's a living. But I'm really excited about this.... You want to see? ... I thought I might give it to you.' He comes around to face the canvas. It is a copy of the Portrait of Carlotta. He starts to complement her on it—'It looks exactly like the original: the eyes and the hair are the same ... so is the dress ... '—when he

notices something and suddenly stops, as if entranced: 'Is the painting finished?' 'No ...' He feels momentarily relieved, but when she continues with 'I still have to add one of the shoes,' he feels paranoid. 'Are you sure that only one of the shoes is missing?' 'Yes.' He quickly realizes that she may have misunderstood his question to mean: 'Are you sure that only one of the two shoes, not both, are missing?' So, he anxiously rephrases his question: 'Are you sure that beside the missing shoe there is no other missing element? What about the bouquet?' 'The bouquet?' 'Is the bouquet finished?' 'Yes, it is. Why are you asking?' He asked because one of the flowers in the Carlotta Valdes portrait is missing from her copy! He suddenly feels that he's either the victim of a conspiracy or starting to lose his mind and develop paranoid ideas of reference. He leaves abruptly. She gasps in exasperation: 'Oh! Marjorie Wood! You fool!' Marjorie Wood turned out to be a painter, in a radical sense: what (other) flower is





absent from any of the world's bouquets and whose name, as happens when I am trying to wake up from a nightmare, I am unable to utter? It is a flower that has unexplainably appeared in the world from a dream or a painting. At dawn, after a sleepless night, he hears insistent knocks on his door. It is Madeleine. 'The dream came back again.... It was the tower again and the bell and the old Spanish village—clear, so very clear for the first time, all of it.' 'Tell me.' 'It was a village square, and a green with trees, and an old whitewashed Spanish church with a cloister. Across the green, there was a big, gray wooden house with a porch and shutters and a balcony above; a small garden; and, next to it, a livery stable with old carriages lined up inside.' 'Go on.' 'At the end of the green, there was a whitewashed stone house with a lovely pepper tree at the corner ...' '... and an old wooden hotel from the old California days? And a saloon: dark, with low ceilings with hanging oil lamps?' 'Yes!' 'It's all there. It's no dream. You've been there before, you've seen it.' 'No, never.' 'Madeleine, a hundred miles south of San Francisco, there's an old Spanish mission—San Juan Batista it's called—and it's been preserved exactly as it was a hundred years ago, as a museum. Think hard, darling, think hard: you've been there before, you've seen it.' 'No, never, I've never been there. Oh Scottie, what is it? I've never been there.' He proposes that they drive there so she can check for herself that the place is no dream. At this point, her blood on a flower and the fluid she squirted on her panties during orgasm were no longer enough for him as traces of her: he wanted her whole body but as a trace of itself. At Mission San Juan Batista, she suddenly exclaims, "Too late ... There's something I must do," and runs away from him up the church tower. We can view the scene in Vertigo in which Judy, impersonating Madeleine, reaches the top of the church tower and sees Madeleine's husband placing his hand over his wife's mouth to prevent her from screaming then throwing her to the ground way below as providing Judy with an out-of-body experience (Vertigo shows a woman who looks at herself not primarily in a mirror but first in the oil portrait of her great-grandmother, whose unjustly traumatic life and death she unconsciously guesses, and then in an out-ofbody episode), one that complements her trances: while in the trance

state, she is a body dissociated from consciousness, in the out-of-body state she is a consciousness detached from the body. And it is the latter body, a discard, that Scottie first sees on being released from the Park Hill Sanitarium after undergoing treatment for acute melancholia following Madeleine's death: Judy looks crass, garish, trashy in the company of her coworkers at I. Magnin department store. He picks her out and wraps her by placing her body in the clothes of Madeleine, her hair under the blond dye of Madeleine's hair color, and her feet in the shoes of Madeleine. Attired as Madeleine and surrounded by the green penumbra issuing from the hotel sign just outside her window, Judy appears ethereal, as if she were not fully embodied, as if she were out of her body; then when he takes her coldly in his arms, she appears to be the discarded body in an out-of-body episode. A few days later, preparing to go to dinner at Ernie's, the restaurant where he first glimpsed her as Madeleine, she asks him to help her put on her necklace. While doing so, he recognizes that it is the same necklace Carlotta Valdes wears in her portrait at the Palace of the Legion of Honor. He now suspects that he was a madeto-order witness in a scheme devised by Gavin Elster to murder his wife and inherit her fortune, and that the woman before him had impersonated Madeleine. He drives her back to Mission San Juan Batista in order to confront her about her complicity in the murder of Madeleine, but also in the hope of witnessing her undergo, on top of the church tower, an outof-body experience in which she would become two bodies, a material one and a subtle one, the latter looking at the former. As he forces her to reenact before him Madeleine's ascent on the staircase, he halts at a certain spot and remarks: 'This was as far as I could get, but you went on. Remember? The necklace, Madeleine. That was the slip ... I remembered the necklace. There was where you made your mistake, Judy: you shouldn't keep souvenirs of a killing. You shouldn't have been that sentimental.... When you got up there ... why did you scream?' 'I wanted to stop it, Scottie. I ran up to stop it. As soon as I ascertained that you had left the staircase, I quickly ran down to check if she was still alive. I couldn't feel the slightest difference between this dead body and mine. All I could find between this dead body and mine were obvious similarities!57' 'Gavin

Elster must have given the necklace to you as a recompense.' 'Yes.' 'What did he say as he gave it to you?' 'He did not say anything since he did not give it to me in person. We saw each other only twice after that horrible scene at the top of the church tower. My relationship with him was bound to abruptly end given that I had fallen in love with you and that I reminded him of his late wife and thus of his murder of her. Already when he saw me the first time after the murder, he was perturbed, as if he were seeing a ghost, and asked me, who had, out of habit, put on one of Madeleine's dresses, to go immediately to the bathroom and change into my clothes, and to never again wear those of Madeleine. When I came out of the bathroom in my own clothes, he asked me to no longer wear my hair in a bun. As I expected, a few days later I found his key to my hotel room on my table—he also left me some money. A few nights later, as I was looking for clean panties in one of my drawers, I found the necklace. He must have put it there as a surprise farewell gift to me when he returned the key. So, you see, if I was reluctant to change into Madeleine's clothes and have her hair style when we began to go out again, it was not only because I wanted you to love me, not her, but also because I had already been instructed by Gavin Elster first to do so then to avoid doing so.' That, like the flower earlier, the necklace, too, could be from the painting gave him, who had just conquered his acrophobia by accompanying Judy all the way to the top of the church tower, another kind of vertigo. The same way he insisted to drive her, as a Madeleine, to Mission San Juan Batista in part so that she, as Madeleine, would be convinced that the place she, as Madeleine, had considered a figment of her dream is an actual one, he presently insists to check that the necklace is still in the painting. They drive back to the city. 'All we can do now is kill the time left before the Palace of the Legion of Honor opens its doors—still sixteen hours.' 'That's a terribly long time....' 'No. You mustn't be afraid.'58 In the background, the lighted signs of nightclubs.... She is walking, he is following.... Then we hear her voice in an interior monologue, loud and uncontrolled: 'He's going to come toward me, he's going to take me by the shoulders, he's going to kiss me.' ... Instead of coming toward her he's moving farther away. She doesn't turn back.<sup>59</sup> When they arrive at the museum the next morning, they discover that

Madeleine's husband bought the portrait of the great-grandmother of his late wife a few months earlier." "Since the technology to do a seamless digital remake is not yet available, can you come up with another remake, one whose events would take place in Amsterdam?" "Why Amsterdam?" She felt vexed that he would ask this question: "This way, if I am accepted at either the Rijksakademie or DasArts, I would still be able to see you during the pre-production or the actual videotaping." "Notwithstanding my compelling attachment to you, my beloved, this is not a sufficient reason to do a remake there. Hitchcock filmed part of Foreign Correspondent, 1940, in Amsterdam. If he did not film Vertigo, 1958, there, too, it must be because he thought San Francisco rather than Amsterdam is the most felicitous location for it." Seeing that his answer caused her to be dejected, he reviewed the matter, and, to his gratifying surprise, came to the conclusion that Amsterdam is a most fitting locale for a contemporary remake of Vertigo with new actors. "Isn't Amsterdam, with its illustrious seventeenth century maritime history; its Netherlands Maritime Museum, which occupies the old arsenal of the Dutch navy; and Renzo Piano's nearby National Center for Science and Technology (NEMO), housed in a waterfront building that alludes to a ship, a good setting for the first meeting between Madeleine's husband and Scottie? 'How did you get into the shipbuilding business, Gavin?' 'I married into it.... Scottie, do you believe that someone out of the past, someone dead, can enter and take possession of a living being?' 'No.' 'What would you say if I told you that I believe this has happened to my wife?' 'Well, I'd say take her to the nearest psychiatrist or psychologist or neurologist or psychoanalyst—or maybe just plain family doctor. I'd have him check on you too.' 'I have done so! And he gave me two books to read: Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis, vol. 1, and Anne Ancelin Schützenberger's The Ancestor Syndrome: Transgenerational Psychotherapy and the Hidden Links in the Family Tree.' Feeling that he was abrupt, Scottie changes the subject: 'How long have you been back?' 'Almost a year?' 'And you like it?' 'Amsterdam has changed. The things that spell Amsterdam to me are fast disappearing.' Is he referring to the 2002 elections, when the Pim Fortuyn List, which ran on an anti-immigration platform, "came from nowhere" to win 26 seats, becoming the second biggest force in the 150-member Second Chamber of parliament? Or is he referring rather to the colonial times of the East India Company? 'I'd like to have lived here then. The color and excitement ... the power ... the freedom.' But the Amsterdam of the seventeenth century was the locus and time of 'the power ... the freedom' from a different perspective, given that one of the great thinkers of power and freedom was born and lived in Amsterdam until he was excommunicated by its Jewish community in 1656: Baruch Spinoza. In the 'Index of the Main Concepts of the Ethics' in Deleuze's concise Spinoza: Practical Philosophy, we find the two entries 'Freedom' and 'Power,' in the former of which one can read: 'Man is not born free, but becomes free or frees himself, and Part IV of the Ethics draws the portrait of this free or strong man (IV, 54, etc.). Man, the most powerful of the finite modes, is free when he comes into possession of his power of acting, that is, when his conatus is determined by adequate ideas from which active affects follow, affects that are explained by his own essence. Freedom is always linked to essence and to what follows from it, not to will and to what governs it.'60 Isn't Amsterdam, where walking or bicycling along one of the city's concentric canals brings one back to one's starting point, a fitting location for the scene in which Scottie follows Madeleine from her apartment building only to find himself back at his own house (she wanted to leave him a thank-you note under his door)? Isn't this flat city in a region (the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg) that used to be called the Low Countries, a fitting location for someone suffering from acrophobia? In such a remake, Scottie follows Madeleine not to the Palace of the Legion of Honor as in the original, but to the Rijksmuseum, with its panoply of great portraits, by Frans Hals, Rembrandt, Vermeer, etc. There he loses track of her amidst the throng of people in front of Rembrandt's famous painting The Night Watch, 1642, and dreads momentarily that she has disappeared; but then he espies her and follows her at a distance to an empty room where she sits in front of a portrait. He soon learns from the attendant that the painting in question is the Portrait of Carlotta. This short visit to the Rijksmuseum rouses his interest to learn more about Dutch art. He soon discovers and is fascinated by the work of the Dutch graphic artist M. C. Escher, especially his two works Ascending and Descending (1960), where "the water forms a closed loop, forever flowing downwards under gravity," and Waterfall (1961), which "depicts a closed loop or pathway everywhere rising (and everywhere falling from the other direction)" (Chris Mortensen, Steve Leishman, Peter Quigley, and Theresa Helke). He will remember these two vertiginous lithographs while repeatedly having the impression that the ground is receding during his unsuccessful attempt to follow Madeleine all the way up a church tower (the effect was cinematically achieved by 'a track-out combined with a forward zoom'61)." His beloved kissed him joyfully, then, after some thought, suggested that he call such a remake The Following Story. "That's a felicitous title for a remake of Vertigo, where for much of the film a man follows a woman, but where also there is a (mournful) caesura around the film's middle. But it happens to be the title of a novel by the Dutch writer Cees Nooteboom." What then would be another felicitous title for such a remake? He settled on: Amsterdam: City of Vertigo.

#### 2. Mind My Business

Dedicated to the "M.O.B. [Minds Own Business] ist" William S. Burroughs

"Most of the trouble in this world has been caused by folks who can't mind their own business, because they have no business of their own to mind, any more than a smallpox virus has." 62

William S. Burroughs

In one of Hitchcock's films, two strangers meet accidentally on a train. The first man intends to marry the woman he loves once his divorce with his unfaithful wife is finalized, and the other man hates his father. "Some people are better off dead, like your wife and my father, for instance.... Let's say that you'd like to get rid of your wife. Let's say that you had a very good reason. Now, you'll be afraid to kill her. You know why: you'll

get caught. And what would trip you up? The motive. Ah! Now, here's my idea; it's so simple. Two fellows meet accidentally, like you and me. No connection between them at all, never saw each other before. Each one has somebody that he'd like to get rid of, so—they swap murders! Each fellow does the other fellow's murder, then there is nothing to connect them. Each one has murdered a total stranger." For a series of Hitchcock films (Strangers on a Train, 1951; North by Northwest, 1959; Psycho, 1960, etc.), I would propose the generic title: Mind My Business. If the mother figures prominently in these films, it is to a large extent because she is—if we view the matter from the perspective of the infant once he has attained a minimal sense of separation from his mother and achieved a rudimentary ego—the first one to mind the protagonist's business. It is possible that later in life, he'll wish for a repeat of this situation—becoming aware then that no experience of being minded by someone one already knows prior to his doing so (the mother, a friend, a relative ...) can equal that of being minded fully by a stranger. In Hitchcock, becoming an adult does not entail that I should mind my own business, i.e., both not interfere in the business of others and conduct attentively my personal business; but rather that I have to either have the good luck of coming across a stranger who will replace my mother as the one who will mind my business, or else actively try to lure some stranger to do this for me. From this perspective, an infantile man is someone who still relies on the no longer appropriate person, his mother, to mind his business instead of enticing some new, appropriate stranger to do that. In Psycho, the sheriff tells Lila that the silhouette she saw in the house overlooking the motel where her missing sister, Marion, was last seen cannot be Norman Bates' mother, since, ten years earlier, the latter poisoned the man she was involved with when she found out that he was married, then fatally took a helping of the same stuff, Strychnine, and was buried in Greenlawn Cemetery. But in the final scene of the film, after the apprehension of Norman, and in the presence of the sheriff, who does not object to what he hears, the psychiatrist advances a different explanation of what transpired, one that he "got from the mother" of Norman. After living with her son for many years, she met a man. It seemed to Norman that

she "threw him over" for that man, so he killed both of them. Since, according to the psychiatrist, "matricide is probably the most unbearable crime of all—and most unbearable to the son who commits it," Norman tried to erase the crime, at least in his own mind, first by stealing her corpse, hiding it in the fruit cellar, and treating it to preserve it, then by functioning at times as a medium for her thoughts, speech, and behavior. And because he was pathologically jealous towards her, he presumed that she was as jealous towards him. When Marion arrived at the motel and Norman was perversely aroused by her, at one point peeping through a small hole in the wall at her undressing in her motel room, his "jealous mother" was provoked, and "she" killed her. For my part, I prefer to consider the film's events from the perspective of the aforementioned Hitchcockian motif of minding the other's business. Having found out that the man with whom she was involved was married, the mother poisoned him and then, wanting to commit suicide but unable to do so, asked her son to kill her. Once he acquiesced and minded her business to commit suicide—by killing her, he had to find a way to make her fulfill her side of the implicit bargain: I mind your business and you mind mine. In Hitchcock, one can never legitimately complain: mind your own business (as is clear in Rear Window, where the protagonist, a photographer with a cast leg who gazes through binoculars as well as a long-focus lens at his neighbors for much of the film, discovers a murder), since one of the motifs in Hitchcock's universe is: mind my business ... and I'll mind yours. Rather, the paradigmatic Hitchcockian complaint is Bruno's recurrent one in Strangers on a Train, which can be formulated thus: "I have minded your business [by killing your unfaithful wife, who made an infuriating about-face, refusing to sign the divorce papers], but you have not minded mine [by not murdering my disrespectful father]!" This must also have been Norman's complaint in Psycho in the aftermath of his murder of his suicidal mother. Norman's weirdness is clear in his expectation that his dead mother's unfinished business will be respected, that his mother will keep her part of the implicit bargain from beyond the grave. He therefore steals her corpse, hides it in the fruit cellar, mummifies it, then begins to function at times as a medium for her thinking, speech, and behavior so she would mind his business. By repeatedly stabbing Marion in the shower, the "mother" minded her son's business, revealing thus that his desire is less to peep at his young female motel quest than to stab her to death. There is thus a major difference between Norman's murder of his mother, and his separate murders of the three young women at his motel: Norman did the first at the request of, and therefore for his (depressed) mother; but he committed the subsequent three murders, through the detour of his "mother," to assuage his own desire. In Vertigo, Scottie is frustrated not because Madeleine's husband has staged his desire for him but because he does not continue to do so once he has reached his own goal: to kill his wife and inherit her fortune. When exasperated Scottie tells Judy, "What happened to you? Did he ditch you? ... What a shame!" he is also thinking about himself, since he feels that he too was discarded by the husband, a stranger who proved that he could mind Scottie's desire better that he himself can: "He made you over just like I made you over, only better. Not only the clothes and the hair, but the looks, the manner and the words, and those beautiful phony trances." Hitchcock's universe is thus not a paranoid one: Scottie's problem is not that someone is constructing, unbeknownst to him, a fictionalized world for him; but rather that the other, having reached his goal, will stop doing so.63

#### 3. Bury Me Dead

Jesus Christ, "the life" (John 11:25), made of burial alive at the moment of organic demise a nonaccidental, unavoidable circumstance for Christians. <sup>64</sup> The two earliest examples are: Lazarus, since the latter, through his belief in Jesus, was alive ("He who believes in me will live, even though he die" [John 11:25]) when he was buried ("Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up" [John 11:11]); and, obviously as well as paradigmatically, Jesus Christ (who said, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights

in the heart of the earth" [Matthew 12:39-40]). Basically, every real Christian is buried alive. Consequently Chesterfield's "All I desire for my own burial is not to be buried alive" is a most unchristian statement and desire. In Hitchcock's The Trouble with Harry, 1955, Captain Wiles fires three bullets while hunting rabbits. Looking for the rabbit or rabbits he hopes he has shot, he instead discovers that one of his bullets hit a "No Shooting Sign" and a second punctured a beer can. He then comes across a man lying on the earth with blood seeping from his forehead. "What in Hades were you doing here anyway?" He searches through the jacket of the unconscious man and finds a letter with his name and address: Mr. Harry Worp, 87 Maple Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts. "Well, Worp, you're a long way from home." How far is Hades from Boston? "With the looks of it, you won't get back for Christmas." He decides to bury him incognito. But while dragging him to a secluded spot, he is seen by Miss Gravely. She asks him: "What seems to be the trouble, captain?" "Well, it's what you might call an unavoidable accident. He's dead." Is getting shot in the woods by a hunter firing at rabbits an unavoidable accident? Not really. What might be an example of an unavoidable accident? Dying of a heart seizure while lying half-naked in the bathtub. Lightly kicking the body and detecting no response, Miss Gravely replies: "Yes. I would say that he was—of course that's an unprofessional opinion." She leaves after promising to tell no one. On the point of resuming his task, he hears approaching voices. He hides and sees Mrs. Rogers along with her child, who had discovered the body before Captain Wiles and had immediately run to fetch his mother, head toward the body. Her child now asks her: "Why don't he get up and do something?" "He's asleep. He's in deep sleep—a deep, wonderful sleep." "Will he get better?" "Not if we're lucky." Exeunt mother and son ... only for a tramp to appear. He notices the body, approaches it, kicks it, apparently to check that it is dead, removes its shoes, puts them on, then walks away. Enervated by so much stress, the captain is overcome by sleep. While he is in that state, a painter, Sam Marlowe, appears, begins to draw a shrub, notices two feet sticking from behind it, yells to the person in question to remove them, then, getting no response, approaches him and, checking his pulse, comes to the conclusion that he is dead. This, too, is an unprofessional opinion, subject therefore to rectification. He starts a pastel portrait of the body. If he is truly an artist, then his pastel portrait, once actually finished, would give him a professional evaluation regarding "when one is dead and when one lives" (Shakespeare, King Lear). At this point, Captain Wiles wakes up, approaches the painter, and recommends burying Harry. The painter objects at first that "the authorities like to know when people die." Since his words also imply that the authorities do not like to be inopportuned with false reports about someone's death when he is still alive, it comes as no surprise that he shortly promises to help Captain Wiles bury Harry if Mrs. Rogers doesn't intend to notify the police about the body. At this point, they become aware that the doctor is walking in the direction of the body while engrossed in a book. They quickly hide. He trips over the body, looks for his glasses and book, turns distractedly toward Harry and says: "Oh, I beg your pardon." The doctor, who can give a professional opinion, has treated the body as that of a living person. He then resumes his engrossed reading while walking away. To Marlowe's "We don't know guite what to do with Harry. [We] thought you might have some suggestions," Mrs. Rogers responds: "You can stuff him for all I care" (an advice the Norman Bates of Psycho will follow). She then tells Marlowe that Harry is the older brother of her late first husband, the uncle of her son, and her current husband. "I've wanted to explain about Harry a lot of times, but nobody would understand .... But you—you've got an artistic mind. You can see the finer things.... As soon as Arnie was born, I moved away to where I thought Harry could never find me. I changed my name ..." She adds that Harry, with whom she is separated, managed to find her whereabouts that morning: "Did you see his mustache and his wavy hair?" "Yeah, but when I saw him, he was dead." "He looked exactly the same when he was alive." She confesses that she hit him on the head with a milk bottle, and that he staggered up towards the woods. Her son shows up with a dead rabbit, which he then takes to Captain Wiles and gives it to him since he's the one who shot it. Shortly, Marlowe and Captain Wiles, each carrying a shovel, meet again to bury the corpse. After finishing the burial of the body, Marlowe admonishes Cap-

tain Wiles: "If you must kill things from now on, I wish you'd stick to rabbits ..." Remembering the dead rabbit the child brought to him, Captain Wiles comes to the conclusion that he didn't kill Harry: "I only fired three bullets.... One for the shooting sign, one for the beer can ... and one for the rabbit!" Captain Wiles decides to unearth Harry. "Even if you didn't kill him, why go digging him up ... ?" "I'll have the shakes whenever I see a policeman ..." Once the body is unearthed, Marlowe ascertains that, indeed, the wound was not inflicted by a bullet, but by a blow with a blunt instrument. Worried that this may incriminate Mrs. Rogers, of whom he's beginning to be enamored and who had admitted both that she wanted Harry dead and that she hit him on the head, he recommends that they rebury the corpse. Captain Wiles decides to assist him out of gratitude for his previous help. Shortly after, while visiting Captain Wiles, Miss Gravely confesses to him: "I'm grateful to you for burying my body." "Your body?" "The man you thought you killed ... was the man I hit over the head with the leather heel of my hiking shoe." It turns out that dazed from the blow on his head by his wife, Harry had mistaken Miss Gravely for her and pulled her into the bushes. "We fought ... My shoe had come off in the struggle, and I hit him as hard as ever I could." Notwithstanding Captain Wiles' advice to the contrary, she is adamant that they should let the authorities know about the matter and therefore that they should first unearth Harry again. After she digs him up, the two go to see Marlowe and Mrs. Rogers to inform them about what they just did and that Miss Gravely intends to tell Calvin Wiggs, the deputy sheriff, that she killed Harry Worp in self-defense. Mrs. Rogers' response is: "Frankly, I don't care what you do with Harry, as long as you don't bring him back to life." When Marlowe points out that if this matter comes out, then all the details of Jennifer's marriage will become public property, the four decide to rebury Harry. After doing so, for the third time, they meet again at Jennifer Rogers' house, where she accepts Marlowe's marriage proposal. But he comes to the realization that "before we can get married, you're gonna have to prove that you're free! To prove that you're free, you'll have to prove that Harry..." "... is dead." They decide to unearth him again so as not to have to wait seven years for the presumption of

death. The doctor happens to pass by just as they finish digging him up again and sees the body. They arrange to meet him at Mrs. Rogers' house to examine the body. They place Harry half-undressed in the bathtub then clean and iron some of his clothes. Jennifer then puts some adhesive tape on the cut Miss Gravely made on his head with her hiking shoe. But before the doctor arrives, the deputy sheriff does. He had come across the portrait Marlowe did of Harry and had been struck by its matching "the description of a tramp with stolen shoes and a wild story about a corpse." "Sam, what I wanna know is where did you paint it and who is it?" "First of all, it's not a painting. It's a drawing. Matter of fact, it's a pastel." "Sam, I ain't educated in fancy art [and, I would add, in judging whether someone is definitely dead], but I do know the face of a dead man when I see one, and this is it." "Calvin, perhaps I can educate you to 'fancy art.'" He takes the portrait from the deputy sheriff 's hand. "See this? Portrait of a sleeping face: a man relaxed, far removed from earthly cares ... Instead of creating a sleeping face, I could have chosen an entirely different set of artistic stimuli." While sketching, he says: "Now, a raised eyelid, perhaps ... a line of fullness to the cheek ... [a] lip that bends with expression. There!" It is only now that the pastel is actually finished. He shows it to him: it is the portrait of a living person. Has the painter "destroyed legal evidence," as the deputy sheriff protests threateningly, or did he, who according to Mrs. Rogers' earlier characterization has an artistic mind and therefore "can see the finer things," uncover thus that the reason they keep unearthing Harry after repeatedly burying him is that he is not dead, but still alive? What's the trouble with Harry? He is being (repeatedly) buried alive. At this point, the doctor comes in and the Deputy Sheriff leaves. Marlowe leads the doctor to the bathroom. Did the following words pass through the doctor's mind on seeing Harry's state, "With the looks of it, you won't get back for Christmas"? When Marlowe comes out, Mrs. Rogers asks him: "What did the doctor say?" "He said for me to get out. I didn't like the look in his eyes, either. Something seems to be bothering him." Aren't these the words we would except to hear were Harry in critical condition? After finishing his examination, the doctor's diagnosis is: "It was his heart. He had a seizure." That is how Harry died; he died of a seizure while lying half-naked in the bathtub. But what about the wound in his forehead? Judging by the adhesive tape covering it, it must have been suffered before his mortal seizure. When at the end of the film the words "The trouble with Harry is over" are superimposed on the image after Harry has once again been interred, this indicates that this is his final burial since he is now definitely dead. Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry* and *Psycho* complement each other regarding problems with burial: while in the first someone is being buried alive, and consequently unearthed again and again, until he definitely dies; *Psycho* deals with the unearthing of someone who is definitely dead to carry through her, mummified, a vicarious, possessed life.

## Reality Is as Distant in Psychosis or Deep Trance as the Film Set Is from the Finished Film

These words bear repeating: Reality is as distant in psychosis or deep trance as the film set is from the finished film. And just as reality does nonetheless sometimes appear in the former conditions, the film set on rare occasions enters the picture in the finished film! Hitchcock, who cautioned against respecting the integrity of the set during the filming, recommending that one be concerned only with the film images that will be extracted from the set, the arrangements into which they will enter and the off-screen they will suggest, nonetheless reinscribed a set in many of his scenes through the presence in the film's diegesis of anomalies of the sort one encounters normally only at the filming phase. Truffaut: "To inject realism into a given film frame, a director must allow for a certain amount of unreality in the space immediately surrounding that frame. For instance, the close-

up of a kiss between two supposedly standing figures might be obtained by having the two actors kneeling on a kitchen table." Hitchcock: "That's one way of doing it. And we might even raise that table some nine inches to have it come into the frame. Do you want to show a man standing behind a table? Well, the closer you get to him, the higher you must raise the table if you want to keep it inside the image."65 In North by Northwest, the clothes that are too short for their ostensible owner, but regarding which the protagonist's mother's comment is that they "are perfect," are an instance of the appearance of the filmic set in the diegesis. When later in the same film, a crop-dusting plane sprays a section of the field devoid of crops, the film spectator may feel that that plane was supposed to be matted on images of a field awash with crops, and therefore that he or she is unexpectedly witnessing the set in the film. We therefore witness a more sophisticated relation with the film set in North by Northwest than in Hitchcock's Rope, with its absence of cuts.66 The protagonist of Fritz Lang's Secret Beyond the Door (1947) is an architect who is obsessed with reconstructing the felicitous atmospheric rooms in which certain infamous crimes took place. He does not make do with reproductions of the items in the rooms but purchases and transports to his house the original items. Like the film set, which is extra-diegetic, the seventh reconstructed room, which is a duplicate of the bedroom of his new wife, is not to be witnessed since the murder for which it is the perfect setting has not yet happened. Indeed, the architect is entranced when in the room: he sees it without seeing it. I could not suppress a smile of recognition when I saw his worried wife take hold of a flashlight before she headed to that room. Bazin: "The screen is not a frame like that of a picture but a mask which allows only a part of the action to be seen.... We might say of the cinema that it is the little flashlight of the usher."67 When the taboo against witnessing the last room is transgressed by her, the uncanny effect one has is that of seeing the set in the film. These examples from Hitchcock and Lang present ways for the set to appear in film other than the much more explored, actually exhausted, self-reflexive manner of showing part of the crew and the production equipment in the film.

# Otherworldly or Unworldly Birds Irrupting in a Radically Closed Region

A radically closed space is one that is disconnected from the environment but open to the diagram (for example, the Red Room in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, 1992), or to an unworldly elsewhere, or to nothing (the one referred to in the Latin *ex nihilo*, out of nothing).

There are radical-closure filmmakers, for example, David Lynch; radical-closure novelists, for example, Alain Robbe-Grillet; radical-closure painters, for example, Francis Bacon; and then there are painters who occasionally produce radical-closure paintings, for example, Van Gogh (Wheatfield with Crows), filmmakers who occasionally make radical-closure films, for example, Buñuel (The Exterminating Angel) and Hitchcock (The Birds).

Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) gives the following connotation to the expression "it is the end of the world" advanced by a drunkard in response to the report that birds have attacked the town's school-children, and to the expression "it's a small world" jestingly proposed by Mitch in response to Melanie's statement that she's an acquaintance of his friend Annie: the world is radically closed. One should not yield to the temptation to interpret the subsequent very high angle shot of the burning town square, with birds soon appearing in the frame from the sides, as a bird's eye view, i.e., as the visual perception of one of the offscreen birds, but should view it as a *bird's eye view* (the technical term for "a shot from a camera directly overhead at a distance, sometimes taken from a crane or a helicopter"), resisting considering the shot as a humorous reflexive cinematic conflation of the two ways of interpreting a "bird's eye view." For interpreting the shot in the former manner would imply the exview."

istence of an offscreen space behind the camera, from which the birds would be coming and which would be homogeneous with what we see onscreen, when that shot implies rather the absence of offscreen (the border of the radical closure does not reside in the cordon established shortly after by the police around the area afflicted with the attacks of the birds, but is delineated by the frame in the air), its frames marking the limit of the radical closure.

In Hitchcock's *The Birds*, where are the birds, with their artificial, electronic sound, coming from? They are not migrating, moving from one area of the world to another, but, in the shot over the burning town square, are irrupting into the world from the diagram, in this instance from the opening credits sequence<sup>68</sup> showing abstract birds flying in an indeterminate space.<sup>69</sup> Hence the disorientation of these abstract birds as they emerge from the diagram of the credits sequence into the world, at times crashing lethally into windows and walls even on full moon nights (in Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows*, the crows painted on the yellow of the field do not merely seem to be touching the wheat due to a perspectival effect but are, in their disorientation, colliding or on the point of colliding with it); and hence their swaying movement, which is an adjustment not only to the wind but also to a new, worldly medium.

The two best cinematic versions of the birds of Van Gogh's Wheatfield with Crows (July 1890) can be seen and heard near the middle of Hitchcock's The Birds (1963), when the abstract, artificial birds, issuing from the opening credits sequence, irrupt from behind the school building with a sound out of this world; and in the section "Crows" of Kurosawa's Dreams (1990), when electronic birds fly over the wheat field. These two films confirm that the crows in Van Gogh's painting are unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure, rather than worldly birds that either were invisibly resting in the field or flew over it from behind the horizon.

Hitchcock: "Suspense ... is setting up a situation whereby the audience is given the privilege of knowing all the facts which the characters in the movie do not know. For instance, we are sitting here as characters in a movie with a bomb timed to go off at 11 o'clock. We don't know

it. But the audience does.... Meanwhile, the unsuspecting characters are indulging in small talk. Take away knowledge of the bomb and the talk is dull.... Without the suspense, all you have is surprise. That is, the bomb goes off at 11 o'clock, surprising the audience and the characters.... Surprise is much inferior to suspense." In radical-closure films such as *The Birds*, Hitchcockian suspense is abrogated and we switch to surprise—the first, unexpected attack of a bird breaks with the principle of alerting the spectator to the dangerous element—and then, past the first irruption, to free-floating anxiety.

In Hitchcock's The Birds, while Mitch considers that he has sealed the house by placing boards over all the openings, it turns out that he did not succeed in doing so. What he is oblivious about is that, unless he manages to somehow open the radical closure in which the house is situated by making it a relative closure, whatever he does to seal the house will fail, because the radical closure, whose limit in the sky is indicated by the high-angle shot over the burning town square, is allowing the irruption of unworldly entities in relation to which the house that was relatively closed by Mitch is permeable. <sup>71</sup> In Tarkovsky's Solaris, since in the cosmonaut's room, where he alone is present, two heavy trunks block the doorway, and since after Hari's appearance he ascertains that the two trunks have not been displaced, it is manifest that she did not enter through the door—she is an ahistorical, unworldly entity that irrupted fully formed in the room ... and in her dress. And in the film's coda, unworldly rain, without entering through any opening, irrupts inside the unworldly duplicate of the family house that irrupted in the sentient ocean of planet Solaris' radical closure. 72 Indeed, most instances of radical closure are in the form of spaces that seem open (since placing walls or doors would close the space merely relatively), for example, the open room in which the guests and their hosts find themselves imprisoned in Buñuel's The Exterminating Angel, and the sky over the town in the very high-angle shot of the burning gas station in Hitchcock's The Birds. Attempting to prevent the unworldly birds from irrupting in the house by sealing it with boards is equivalent to trying to stop something that moves in a four-dimensional space by closing every opening in a

three-dimensional one! One has instead to somehow open the radically-closed space in order for what appears in it to do so from the edge of the frame rather than suddenly from anywhere in the space; and in order for anxiety to be reduced to and replaced by suspense. Thus, being inside a house or outside it entails the same risk in relation to this unworldly element: in *The Birds*, while the teacher is killed outside her house, the farmer is killed inside his house, and the four protagonists do not face a heightened danger from the unworldly birds when they leave the ostensibly re-sealed house and walk toward the car amidst the latter.

An area's radical closure frequently affects it with an objective disorientation: in a manner similar to that of the protagonist on the staircase in Maya Deren's Meshes of the Afternoon (1943), a film where we encounter a radical closure of space since the running protagonist never catches up with a mysterious figure but keeps arriving at the same spot and having to go sideways; and to that of the standing figure in Bacon's Painting (1978), who extends one of her legs in the direction of the door knob to try to turn the key with her toes, appearing as a result to be standing on the door, thus implying a displacement of the horizontal and vertical directions in the room, The Birds's Melanie slides against the lamp in tilted shots that are symptomatic of an objective tilting of the radically-closed space. During the birds' first attack on the house, had Hitchcock resorted to some tilted shots, including of the hung painted illustration of Mitch's father, then showed the father's painted illustration on the wall to be still tilted in the aftermath of the birds' attack, I would most probably, notwithstanding the commonsensical hypothesis that a bird must have accidentally displaced the painted illustration slightly, have felt anxious on seeing Mitch's mother head towards the hung painted illustration to adjust it, as if by readjusting the position of the titled painted illustration she would be readjusting the position of the radically-closed space, the latter becoming objectively tilted (if on her way to adjust the painted illustration, she would have noticed some broken thing, for example, a vase, and veered toward it to pick up the pieces, this suspenseful delay would have confirmed my suspicion, exacerbating my anxiety).

While most people would find the concept of a radical closure in which unworldly, ahistorical fully formed entities irrupt incredible, many of the same people would announce an end of the world were an entity external to the world to irrupt in it, whether the latter be the unworldly, diagrammatic birds that irrupt over the school from the opening credits sequence in Hitchcock's The Birds; the previously-transcendent God incarnating as Christ; or the unworldly voices and figures the schizophrenic encounters in the world, for example, the voices and "fleeting-improvised-men" (this is the English translation of the term used by the voices to describe such men) that Daniel Paul Schreber encountered while interned at a mental hospital. Indeed, in most cultures, prodigies are an omen announcing the end of the world. If there is a temporal and/or spatial end of the world, then we may witness unworldly entities. Can we definitively deduce from the absence of unworldly entities that the world has no spatial or temporal end? No, because there is at least one mechanism by which the world can have an end and yet hide these marvels: by localizing them in another radical closure, one that is "in" the world. In the case of the physical universe, which has an end in the singularity of the Big Bang, black holes provide that additional radical closure. Black holes shield us from at least one of the consequences of the original singularity of the Big Bang: irruptions of unworldly, ahistorical entities.

Cinema has produced its own bestiary, one that cannot be reduced to sundry representations of animals in the world: the rabbits of David Lynch's *Rabbits* (2002) and Gore Verbinski's *The Lone Ranger* (2013); the room-sized spider of Denis Villeneuve's *Enemy* (2013; I recommend the following Arabic title for this film: *istrātījiyyat al-'ankabūt* [*The Spider's Stratagem*, the title of a 1970 film by Bernardo Bertolucci]); the frogs of Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia* (1999); the birds of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963). A disturbance in the symbolic order or the establishment of a radical closure does not so much produce these as make it possible for them to appear.

Deleuze and Guattari wrote that "animal and child refrains seem to be territorial.<sup>73</sup> ... The refrain is essentially territorial, territorializing, or reterritorializing."<sup>74</sup> The refrain not only establishes a territory for as

long as it lasts but also secures it—when people try to secure a territory established by a refrain, this implies that they misperceive and hence misunderstand what the refrain accomplishes. Michel Chion wrote regarding a scene in Hitchcock's The Birds, a film concerning a radical closure: "As in myths and legends, where music has the power to cast a spell on monsters, here it is as if the children's song were both attracting and warding off the birds that gather around the school. When the music is over, the birds attack—as if the music constituted a protective barrier or momentary stay of execution."75 I think Chion erred in qualifying with "as if," and twice at that, the magical shielding effect of the refrain sung by the school children; if anything, what needs to be qualified here is that it is the "children's song"—while singing it, soon enough it is no longer their song since while initially, before it is repeated the modicum number of times for it to function as a refrain and hence as a magical shield, it can be interrupted by events and people other than the ones performing it, too, then only by those performing it, once it has become a refrain radically not even those performing it (as well as their instructor), who are at that point entranced by it, and who would appear to be lip-synching it, can stop it. Leading to this scene, on several occasions birds had unexpectedly attacked various people in Bodega Bay, California, for example, a gull had attacked the film's female protagonist, Melanie Daniels; then a flock had attacked a gathering of children during the birthday party of one of them, Cathy; and earlier that day Cathy's mother had come across an acquaintance's disfigured corpse, his eyes having presumably been pecked by birds, and entreated Melanie to promptly bring Cathy back from school. When Melanie arrives at the school, the teacher, while leading the children in song, motions her that they would soon be finished and directs her to while the time in the schoolyard. Notwithstanding that she had promised Cathy's mother to bring her daughter back from school promptly, Melanie does not attempt to persuade the teacher to interrupt the song and immediately send the students home but follows the teacher's directions (I would imagine that were it Hitchcock and Chion who were entreated by the mother to bring her daughter safely from the school, they would have recommended to the teacher to command

the children to leave the school while continuing to sing the refrain—I myself would have). She sits on a bench facing the school building. Unbeknownst to her, a crow soon alights on the jungle gym behind her. The continuing refrain can be heard in the schoolyard: "... I brought my wife a horse one day. / Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, mo, mo, mo! / She let the critter get away. / Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey bombosity, knickety-knackety, retro-quo-quality, willoby-wallaby, mo, mo, mo! ..." In a tight medium shot taken from an angle that does not show the jungle gym, she lights a cigarette and begins smoking while the refrain continues. When Hitchcock reverts to the previous framing, we can see that there are now four crows on the jungle gym. We revert back to her still smoking. Then, behind her back, two more crows alight on the jungle gym on which seven others can now be seen. She seems increasingly impatient with the continuation of the refrain, turning again and again anxiously in the direction of the school building. Then she apparently hears what sounds like the flapping of a bird's wings. She turns in the direction of the faint sound and sees a crow. She follows its flight with her eyes: it initially moves laterally then descends toward the jungle gym, revealing to us and to Melanie that many more birds, tens, are now assembled on the jungle gym. Why is it that, unlike with the last bird, Melanie did not hear the approach of the other birds? That Melanie did not hear any sound that would have betrayed their approach and then follow with her eyes their flight to the jungle gym, and that there was not enough time for all these birds to have assembled one by one or two by two during the continuing refrain is due to the circumstance that Bodega Bay was a radical closure or part of a radical closure then and that they did not reach the jungle gym from the vicinity or from behind the horizon but, unworldly, irrupted there out of the out of the opening credits sequence. Were the other birds waiting for one last bird to join the flock before starting the attack? No, that crow is a natural bird rather than, as in the case of the others, an unworldly entity that irrupted in the radical closure, and so, I would assert, did not join them in their subsequent attack. Had the classroom been sealed by boards over all the openings, whether doors or windows, this would not have stymied the attack of the unworldly birds, since they, who do not

come from the environs, could have suddenly unnaturally irrupted in the classroom. The unworldly birds are waiting because the refrain, which is acting as a magical shield for the children who are singing it, is still in progress. Having seen the large number of ominously assembled birds, Melanie, alarmed, heads to the school, initially gingerly, so as not to alarm and provoke the birds, then at a brisk pace, ostensibly in order to warn the teacher of the impending danger. Hitchcock must have intuited that she cannot make the teacher and the students discontinue the refrain even by alerting them to the menacing birds assembled outside, so he had the refrain come to a stop just as she reaches the classroom's door (were it the case that the refrain could have been interrupted, there would have been no narrative and/or artistic reason to have it last so long, especially in a suspenseful film; moreover, given that the refrain was acting as a magical shield protecting the children from the attack of the birds, then, even were it possible for her to interrupt it, it would have been counterproductive to do so). Since, while she is heading to warn them to discontinue their singing, the refrain, having been fully sung, comes to a stop, she is not confronted with her and others' inability to interrupt it, and so, one would assume, she presumes that were they still singing when she entered the classroom, she could have made them interrupt the refrain. So, I can very well imagine in this respect the following rigorous variant of Hitchcock's film: the refrain continues even after she reaches the door to the school building, enters the classroom, and tries to stop it, with the result that Melanie comes to the realization that it cannot be interrupted until it is fully sung.

# Are There Doubles in Hitchcock's Films?

Are Charles "Uncle Charlie" Oakley and his niece Charlotte "Charlie" Newton doubles in Shadow of a Doubt (1943)? Are Madeleine and Judy, the woman who impersonates Madeleine in a scheme by Madeleine's husband to murder his wife, and whom Scottie, having become infatuated with her as Madeleine, later models on Madeleine, doubles in Vertigo? Is Roger Thornhill, an advertising executive, and George Kaplan, a fictious agent created by a USA government intelligence agency to mislead a ring of spies doubles in North by Northwest? We can go about answering these questions by analyzing these films, for example, checking whether upon seeing Madeleine on top of the tower, Judy feels that she is in the presence of her double—she doesn't. A surer way to do it is to check whether Hitchcock wasted the opportunity to have a double in Rear Window, a film that presents a situation that warrants if not reguires the presence of one—if he did, then that would indicate that he is not a filmmaker of doubles and, consequently, that the aforementioned examples aren't of doubles. Having broken his leg while photographing at close range a car race, professional photographer L. B. "Jeff" Jefferies is confined to a wheelchair. Ostensibly out of boredom, he watches his neighbors, who include a traveling costume jewelry salesman, Lars Thorwald, and his bedridden wife. One night, he hears a woman's scream and then witnesses Thorwald make repeated trips carrying a suitcase in the inclement weather! The next morning, he notes that Thorwald's wife is absent and sees him washing a large knife and handsaw. He suspects that Thorwald has murdered his wife and shares his suspicion with his girlfriend, who, intrepid, climbs up the fire escape to Thorwald's apartment to look for evidence there. Having spied on his neighbors first with naked eyes, then with binoculars, then with a telephoto lens, and then observed his girlfriend in Thorwald's apartment, what would be the next, culminating step in Rear Window were Hitchcock a filmmaker of doubles? He would have seen "himself," more precisely and uncannily, his double in one of the apartments facing him. Do we witness this in Hitchcock's film? No. When Thorwald discovers that the woman who broke into his apartment is not acting alone but is in cahoots with Jeff, he heads to the latter's apartment and tries to strangle him. While being apprehended by the police, Thorwald lets go of Jeff, who falls out of his window, breaking both legs. Then there is a coda. It shows Thorwald's apartment being refurbished in preparation for a new tenant; and Jeff's girlfriend, a fashion model, closing the book she appeared to be reading, Beyond the High Himalayas, a subject related to his job as a photographer, and starting to look at a fashion magazine once she ascertains that he has fallen asleep—which implies that Jeff, too, confined once more to a wheelchair, would revert sooner or later to spying on his neighbors. Who would be the most fitting though uncanny new tenant? Is Hitchcock/his screenwriter giving himself/him a second chance by adding the coda? A second chance to do what? To have the voyeur Jeff see his double in one of the facing apartments. The film ends before the arrival of the new tenant, the coda having merely shown a happy ending to the stories of the other neighbors in the apartments facing Jeff. Did Hitchcock end the film too soon? No, for he is not a filmmaker of doubles.

## **AKA**

Unlike in other Hitchcock films dealing with the theme of the wrong man (for example, *The 39 Steps* [1935]), where the protagonist is correctly identified as the person he is but mistaken for the one who killed some man or woman or committed some other crime, in *North by Northwest* (1959) we have, in a radicalization of this theme, a compound kind of wrong man: its protagonist Roger Thornhill is not simply mistaken by the police for the one who murdered Lester Townsend at the United Nations headquarters in New York, but he is also mistaken (or is he?) by foreign agents for someone else, the US agent George Kaplan. The film begins with a Manhattan advertising executive who, running late for a meeting,

continues his dictation to his secretary in the elevator of the corporate building where he works. Upon leaving the elevator, he interrupts his dictation briefly to respond to the greeting by the elevator starter, "Mr. Thornhill," with "Night, Eddie." Having tried unsuccessfully to flag a cab, and then seeing a taxi pull up before a man waiting for one, Thornhill darts over and opens the door, excuses himself, "I have a very sick woman here—you don't mind, do you?" and, before the other man has time to respond, thanks him and hops in the cab after nudging his reluctant secretary inside. When she reproaches him, he responds, "I made him feel like a good Samaritan." "He knew you were lying." "In the world of advertising, there's no such thing as a lie. There's only the expedient exaggeration. You ought to know that." Soon after joining at the Plaza Hotel what seems to be two out-of-town sponsors to whom he is then introduced by a business acquaintance, a pageboy enters the room and moves among the tables calling out: "Paging Mr. George Kaplan!" While he is doing so, the following conversation takes place. Thornhill: "I told my secretary to call my mother, and I just remembered, she's not going to be able to reach her in time." "Why not?" "Because she's playing bridge at the apartment of one of her cronies ..." "Your secretary?" "No, my mother" (here, after the taxi episode, is a second instance of someone taking the place of another, this time through misidentification due to a misreading of a linguistic message). Thornhill signals the pageboy to come closer: "I have to send a wire. Could you send it for me if I write it out for you?" "I'm not permitted to do that, sir, but if you'll follow me ..." Two foreign agents observing this conversation from a distance are unable to overhear it but note that a man signaled the pageboy as he was calling for Kaplan, the US agent they were tasked to kidnap. From a structural perspective, Kaplan is not necessarily the one who responds to the call because he recognized himself in the name "Kaplan," for that presupposes subjectivity, but rather the one who appears to respond when the call for Kaplan is made. While heading to make his phone call, he is intercepted by the two foreign agents and kidnapped as Kaplan. I would note that had Thornhill not replaced another man by usurping the latter's turn for a cab (it probably would be too neat were that man's name Kaplan), he would have ar-

rived slightly later for his meeting, after the pageboy had finished calling for Kaplan, and hence would not have been mistaken for and thus replaced by Kaplan. As the car in which he is being kidnapped moves past the gate of a mansion, Thornhill notes the name of the owner, "Lester Townsend." He is made to wait in one of the mansion's rooms. Soon, a distinguished-looking man of about forty joins him and remarks: "Not what I expected: a little taller, a little more polished than the others!" the structural manner of determining identity used by his underlings seems here to yield to the imaginary one, the one in terms of the image. Thornhill responds, rather sarcastically: "I'm so glad you're pleased, Mr. Townsend." Thornhill is here using a structural manner of determining identity: he assumed that his interlocutor is Townsend since he appears to be the master at the Lester Townsend mansion. But having resorted to the structural manner of identifying someone, he then switches to the imaginary one, the one through images, combined to the symbolic one, for example, through the name, while already aware that his interlocutor would suspect these, "I suppose it wouldn't do any good to show you ID cards ... a driver's license, things like that?" and indeed the man who appears to be his interlocutor's assistant responds, "They provide you with such good ones." He objects, "I'm not Kaplan!" "I do wish you would reconsider." Indeed, he should reconsider whether he is Kaplan! "At present, you are registered in room 796 at the Plaza Hotel in New York as Mr. George Kaplan of Detroit." "Really?" "In two days, you are due at the Ambassador East in Chicago. And then at the Sheraton-Johnson Hotel in Rapid City, South Dakota." He objects again: "Not me!" While he believes that they know if not nothing then next to nothing about him (since they appreciate that he is rather tall and polished), certainly less than he does, since they mistook him for Kaplan, it turns out that, unbeknownst to him, they know more about him than he does: structurally, were he (still) Thornhill he would have, the day after escaping them and reporting them to the police, gone to the appointments his secretary had set for him, "Bigelow at 10:30 is your first for tomorrow. The Skin Glow rehearsal's at noon. Then lunch with Falcon and his wife ... [at] Larry and Arnold's," or at least called her to postpone them, or apologized for not showing up to

those he was supposed to meet—instead, he does what Kaplan is expected to do: he will be in room 796 at the Plaza Hotel in New York and answer the phone from it; then, the following day, (having escaped an assassination attempt) he will be present at the Hotel Ambassador East; and then, a few days later, he will stay briefly at the Sheraton-Johnson Hotel in Rapid City. They also believe that he will try to botch their plans and threatens to play a major role in retrieving the precious material they wish to move abroad and in their apprehension by the CIA, and they are proved to be right, notwithstanding his denial! Initially it would appear that he is mistaken for Kaplan, but it should quickly become clear that he can no longer be said to be Thornhill, at least not unequivocally, since the identity determined structurally is neither a lie nor an expedient exaggeration, indeed it ultimately trumps the manner of establishing identity in an imaginary manner, through the image, and by extension, through the body, and symbolically, for example, through the name. But let's backtrack and proceed step by step. After escaping his kidnappers, he heads to the Plaza Hotel, ostensibly to meet Kaplan and get him to clear up the perplexing situation, and bribes his mother to "put on that sweet innocent look you do so well and ask for the key to Room 796" from the front desk. As he inserts the key in the lock while looking about furtively, a chambermaid emerges from another room, sees him and interpellates him: "Just a minute, please!" Startled, then relieved when she continues, "Will you be wanting me to change your bedding, sir?" he<sup>76</sup> responds: "Well ... yes ... but not right now ..." She goes off down the corridor. He opens the door and leads his mother into the room, "You saw that? She thought I was Kaplan. I wonder if I look like Kaplan." Instead of reasoning, "I had the key to the room that's registered under the name of Kaplan and was on the point of entering it, so she must have assumed that I am Kaplan," a structural manner of determining identity, he presumes that she has seen Kaplan before, and therefore that the reason she mistook him for Kaplan is that he looks like Kaplan, that his body is similar to Kaplan's, at least from the other end of the hallway, so he resorts to the other way of identifying someone, through the image, or, the latter's source, the body: he surveys the hotel room, looking for some photograph or ID of Kaplan, to check whether he and Kaplan look alike. The room appears to be lived in: there's an open suitcase on one of the chairs; a white shirt on another chair; a half-empty glass on the desk; and a notebook next to the phone on another table. But there's no photo of Kaplan. He rings for the chambermaid, and then continues his survey of the hotel room by checking the bathroom, from where, after inspecting the comb on the shelf, he announces to his mother: "Mr. Kaplan has dandruff." That's a difference between him, who does not have dandruff, and Kaplan, at the level of the body. The door buzzer sounds. Thornhill opens the door. Standing there is the chambermaid; he asks her: "Do you know who I am?" "You're Mr. Kaplan." "When did you first see me?" "Outside the door—out in the hall a couple of minutes ago. Don't you remember?" "Is that the first time you laid eyes on me?" "Can I help it if you're never around, Mr. Kaplan?" It is the first time she laid eyes on him, so the (bodily) image is not relevant here for the determination of identity. He then receives a concise lesson in the structural manner of determining identity. "How do you know I'm Mr. Kaplan?" "Of course, you are. This is Room 796, isn't it? So, you're the gentleman in Room 796, aren't you?" "All right ... thanks." While he is rather surprised by her answer, he shouldn't be, since he himself had used a similar reasoning when he assumed that the distinguished man who entered the room where he was held while kidnapped was Lester Townsend because he appeared to be the owner of the mansion whose gate had the inscription "Lester Townsend." The door buzzer sounds again. He opens the door. A valet enters carrying a suit enters and asks, "Hang it in the closet, Mr. Kaplan?" "Please.... Did I give it to you personally?" "Personally?! No. You called down on the phone and described the suit to me, said it would be hanging in your closet." Thornhill does not seem to pay much attention to the circumstance that the voice of Kaplan, at least on the phone, seems to be indistinquishable from his, at least to the valet. The valet leaves. Again, after starting with the structural manner of establishing identity, there's a switch to the one in terms of the image and the body, since, after remarking to his mother, "I'm beginning to think that no one in the hotel has actually seen Kaplan—maybe he has his suits mended by invisible weav-

ers," and thus being reminded of the suit the valet has just brought, Thornhill takes off his jacket and puts on one from the closet. The sleeves are several inches too short. His mother remarks: "I don't think that one does anything for you." He then picks a pair of trousers from the closet and holds them parallel to his. They are markedly shorter. His mother remarks: "Now, that's much better." Her response can be viewed as facetious but also as implying that the identification by the image and the body no longer matters in this case, that it is trumped by the structural manner of determining identity. Thornhill persists nonetheless in trusting only the manner of determining identity in terms of the body and the image, noting, "Obviously, they've mistaken me for a much shorter man!" The phone rings. His mother cautions him not to answer it. He disregards her advice. Again, we have both modes of identification during the phone call. "It's good to find you in, Mr. Kaplan." "Who is this?" "We met only last night and still you do not recognize my voice. I should feel offended." "Yes, I know who you are." It is the voice of one of the previous day's kidnappers; we're back to the determination of identity through the body. But then, when "Thornhill" continues, "I'm not Mr. Kaplan," we switch back to the structural manner of determining and establishing identity: "You answer his telephone, you live in his hotel room ... and yet you are not Mr. Kaplan! Nevertheless, we are pleased to find you in." After escaping again the two men trying to kidnap him, he heads to the United Nations' General Assembly Building to try to confront his kidnapper, the man he believes to be Lester Townsend. There, he inquires at the information desk, "Where will I find Mr. Lester Townsend?" "Mr. Lester Townsend of UNIPO? Did you have an appointment, sir?" "Well, yes. He expects me." "Your name, please? "My name?" "Yes, please." "Kaplan-George Kaplan." Is this simply a lie or a symbolic, albeit unconscious, acknowledgement that he's (by then) Kaplan? Another attendant, at the communications desk of the Public Lounge, then pages Mr. Lester Townsend for him. Shortly, a distinguished-looking man of about sixty approaches the attendant, who then turns to the one who asked her to page Townsend: "Mr. Kaplan?" "Yes." "You wanted to see Mr. Townsend. This is Mr. Townsend." The indicated man extends his hand while saying:

"How do you do, Mr. Kaplan?" In disbelief, "Thornhill" tells the attendant: "This isn't Mr. Townsend!" While amiable, the man is adamant: "Yes, it is!" "There must be some mistake. Mr. Lester Townsend?" "That's me. What can I do for you?" "Are you the Townsend who lives in Glen Cove?" "That's right. Are we neighbors?" "A large, red-brick house with a curved, treelined driveway?" "That's the one." "Thornhill"/"Kaplan" is here himself using the structural manner of determining identity. As they converse, one of the foreign spies, who had followed "Thornhill" to the UN building, throws, while hiding behind a wall, a knife into Townsend's back, instantly killing him. Probably hoping that Townsend is still alive, "Thornhill" instinctively removes the knife from the body. As he does so, a press photographer snaps a shot of him standing over Townsend's dead body while holding the bloody knife. "Thornhill" flees the scene of the crime. Shortly after, at a CIA conference room, a man reads from the front page of an evening newspaper featuring the ostensibly incriminating photo of "Thornhill" holding a knife over a dead body and the headline DIPLOMAT SLAIN AT U.N.; ASSASSIN ELUDES POLICE EFFORTS: "The photograph has been identified as that of Roger Thornhill, a Manhattan executive ..." That's a switch to a manner of determining identity in terms of the image. On a train to Chicago, where he hopes to find Kaplan at the hotel Vandamm had mentioned as Kaplan's next, reserved destination, a woman, Eve Kendall, a CIA agent planted in Vandamm's spy ring of foreign agents, and that he had never met before, appears to treat him both as Thornhill, helping him, whom she knows to be falsely accused of being the killer of Townsend, escape the police, and, unbeknownst to him, as Kaplan, as she conspires with Vandamm to send him to a purported meeting where he is to be assassinated. Soon after arriving by Greyhound Bus at the deserted location where he is to meet Kaplan, about an hour-and-a-half's drive from Chicago, he sees a low-flying biplane that lets loose a trail of powdered dust. He doesn't pay much attention to it; it is presumably crop dusting. Each time a vehicle on the highway approaches the spot where he is waiting, he expects it to come to a stop and Kaplan to step out of it, but each time he is disappointed, since none of the vehicles stops. Then he notices a flivver head to the highway from

the intersecting dirt road. A man gets out of the car and stands across the highway from him. Thornhill stares at him, wondering if he is George Kaplan. The film must be back to identification by image and body: the man could be Kaplan since he is shorter than "Thornhill," indeed short enough for the suit that was brought to Kaplan's hotel room from the cleaners to fit him perfectly. "Thornhill" approaches him—I would imagine that he would not have done so were the man as tall as him or taller. I also imagine that as he tries to start a conversation with the man with the opening observation, "Hot day," he checks whether he has dandruff. But then he and, through the man's answer, the film switch from identification through the body or, derivatively, the image, to identification through the symbolic, here the name: "Then your name isn't Kaplan." "Can't say it is, ... cause it isn't." The man notices then the plane and opines, "Some of them crop-duster pilots get rich if they live long enough." Then, just before he gets onto the bus, he peers at the plane again, and, bemused, remarks: "That's funny: that plane is dusting crops where there ain't no crops!" So, it was not only "Thornhill" who did not notice the stain of a plane dusting where there are no crops;77 the man who could very well be a farmer also missed the crop-dusting plane as a stain the first time he noticed it, being struck by it as a stain only the second time around. After being attacked by the plane and managing to avert getting killed as a result, and tracking Eve to an auction house where he finds her in the company of Vandamm and where his behavior as a jilted lover arouses the latter's suspicions, he is contacted by the CIA chief, "Professor," who, limited, treats him as definitively and solely Thornhill and tells him in no uncertain terms that there is no such agent as George Kaplan, that the latter is a decoy invented by the CIA to divert the attention of Vandamm's spy ring from finding out and killing the real CIA agent planted in their midst, Eve, as they did the two previous ones, and then asks him to meet Vandamm to dispel the latter's nascent suspicions of Eve, which he triggered inadvertently by making her appear to be emotionally involved with him, a government agent from Vandamm's perspective. Thornhill, aka Kaplan, agrees. The meeting takes place in a cafeteria giving onto Mt. Rushmore. "Suppose I tell you that I not only know when you're leaving the country tonight but the latitude and longitude of your rendezvous and your ultimate destination [this must have been viewed by Vandamm as an acknowledgment by his interlocutor of what he believed all along: that he is no other than Kaplan].... Perhaps you'd be interested in the price ..." "The price?" "For doing nothing to stop you." "How much did you have in mind?" "I want the girl.... Turn her over to me. I'll see there's enough pinned on her to keep her uncomfortable for the rest of her life. You do that, and I'll look the other way tonight." "She really did get under your skin." "We're not talking about my skin. We're talking about yours. I'm offering you a chance to save it." "To exchange it!" "Put it any way you like." In Hitchcock's film, Eve approaches Vandamm at this point to inform him that she's leaving, only for an altercation between her and "Kaplan" to ensue and result in her shooting him, apparently fatally. This part of the scene is weak, unconvincing, because it would exacerbate any perceptive witness' suspicion due to its neatness, and because it exhibits a failure on the part of Hitchcock to observe his dictum that "the more successful the villain, the more successful the picture,"78 since during it Vandamm reacts to the fight and the apparent killing uncharacteristically as a gullible person, something that is later noted by his assistant, who responds to his boss's assertion, "She shot him in a moment of fear and anger—you were there, you saw it yourself," with, "Yes, and thereby wrapped everything up into one very neat and tidy bundle. She removed any doubts you may have had about her.... She gave herself an urgent reason to be taken to the other side with you ... in case you decided to change your mind," then points a gun at him and shoots him point blank, then, as Vandamm is taken aback that he is unharmed, explains, while pointing to the gun, "The gun she shot Kaplan with. I found it in her luggage. It's an old trick. Shoot one of your own to show that you're not one of them. They've just freshened it up a bit with blank cartridges." This failed part of the scene is a symptom that it usurps the place of a markedly more fitting, indeed indispensable scene. Unintentionally and while unaware that he is doing so, Hitchcock provides us with a description of the omitted scene in his book of interviews with Truffaut: "I wanted to have a long dialogue scene between Cary Grant and one of the factory

workers as they walk along the assembly line. They might, for instance, be talking about one of the foremen. Behind them a car is being assembled, piece by piece. Finally, the car they've seen being put together from a simple nut and bolt is complete, with gas and oil, and all ready to drive off the assembly line. The two men look at it and say, 'Isn't it wonderful!' Then they open the door to the car and out drops a corpse!" "That's a great idea!" "Where has the body come from? Not from the car, obviously, since they've seen it start at zero! The corpse falls out of nowhere, you see! ..." "... Why did you drop the idea? ..." "... We couldn't integrate the idea into the story."79 And yet this corpse does not really fall out of nowhere but is integral to the story and the film, since it is called for by all the characteristics and actions attributed by the CIA to its decoy George Kaplan: the hotel rooms registered under his name, the clothes that were sent to the cleaners under his name, the dandruff on the comb in his hotel bathroom, etc. It is symptomatic that in the same interview in which, unawares, Hitchcock describes the omitted scene, an indispensable one, he, as it were defensively, even if unconsciously so, mentions a scene he resisted omitting: "When it [the film] was edited, they [M-G-M] put on a lot of pressure to have me eliminate a whole sequence at the end of the picture; I refused." "Which sequence was that?" "Right after the scene in that cafeteria where people look at Mount Rushmore through a telescope. You remember that Eva Marie Saint [the actress who played Eve Kendall] takes a shot at Cary Grant [the actor who played Roger Thornhill—and George Kaplan]. Actually, she only pretends to kill him.... Well, in the next sequence he's taken to the woods to meet the girl." "When the two cars come together? But isn't it a key scene?" "It's indispensable because it's truly their first meeting since Cary Grant has learned that she is James Mason's [the actor who played Vandamm] mistress.... My contract had been drawn up by MCA, my agents, and when I read it over, I found that, although I hadn't asked for it, they'd put in a clause giving me complete artistic control of the picture, regardless of production time, cost or anything. So I was able to say politely, 'I'm very sorry, but this sequence must remain in the picture."80 Is this scene actually indispensable? Not really; the scene that's really indispensable is the one Hitchcock, without any external pressure, did not shoot and include in the film! Where would the omitted scene, slightly revised, with the dialogue no longer between "Thornhill" and one of the factory workers but between "Thornhill" and the CIA chief, "Professor," fit? It would fit at either of the following two junctures of the film. It could have followed the exchange proposed by "Kaplan" to Vandamm to dispel the latter's suspicions, in which case the film's producers would have been right to demand that Hitchcock cut the scene of the meeting of Eve and "Thornhill" in the woods since the information about her complicated situation could have been conveyed to the film's spectators through the dialogue that would have taken place between the "Professor" and "Thornhill," who, having been additionally informed by the "Professor" that Vandamm intended to take Eve with him, and having seen the body of what must be Kaplan fall from the car, which allows him to reclaim his body as Thornhill, then chooses to do everything he can to save Eve. Or the scene could have been added after Thornhill accomplishes all that Kaplan was set to do by those who invented him, that is, after he helps apprehend the foreign agents and recovers the coveted, national security material (the MacGuffin) that was on the point of being moved outside the country. The limited CIA chief would have been surprised not only once, on discovering that Vandamm and his ring of foreign spies had mistaken a Manhattan executive by the name of Roger Thornhill for the CIA's fabricated decoy George Kaplan, but twice, the second time on seeing a corpse fall from the car whose industrial assembly he witnessed from beginning to end, when a less limited person, specifically someone savvy regarding structuralism, wouldn't be surprised, in particular the second time around, unless the idea was to indefinitely misappropriate Thornhill's body and provide Kaplan with it for keeps. The omitted scene implies that Hitchcock and/or his screenwriter (whoever conceived it) was/were aware or intuited that for Thornhill to regain his identity, to reclaim his body from Kaplan, the latter has to be provided with a body—not just any body, but one that has dandruff and that would have fit perfectly in the suit brought from the cleaners to the hotel room registered under his name. Now that there is a body, indeed a more fitting body for Kaplan to

claim than that of the man who used to be called Thornhill, we can move to the final scene of Hitchcock's film, where Eve has in the interim become Miss Thornhill. Is that all-round neatness? No, since while it would be neatness at the symbolic level, providing Kaplan with a body, so that Thornhill would be able to reclaim his, materially an extra body has been created ex-nihilo unexplainably.81 In this restituted version of Hitchcock's North by Northwest, the body would work at the three Lacanian registers: the imaginary: Roger Thornhill's body, tall and without dandruff; the symbolic: George Kaplan's body implied by the check in and out records at the Ambassador East in Chicago, the suit brought from the cleaners to the Plaza Hotel room registered under his name and the small pieces of dead skin on the comb in the same room, so a shorter body with dandruff; and the real: the corpse that falls from the car that's industrially assembled from beginning to end before the eyes of Thornhill and the CIA chief, whose team invented Kaplan as a decoy to draw the ring of foreign spies' attention away from the actual CIA agent in their midst. By not including the aforementioned, indispensable scene in the film, Hitchcock turned North by Northwest into a partial narrative and artistic failure, though a commercial, critical, and academic success (at least during the period in which North by Northwest was made, to be a successful filmmaker one needed to subtract the [Lacanian] real).82 Jean-Luc Godard opines in the chapter "The Control of the Universe" of his Histoire(s) du cinéma that "Alfred Hitchcock has been the only poète maudit to achieve success." Notwithstanding Godard, Hitchcock was not a poète maudit; the author of Blood of Mugwump (1996), Doug Rice, and Japanese artist Toshio Saeki are examples of the usual poète maudit, 83 the one who does not meet with success, and David Lynch, the filmmaker of, among others, episode 8 of the third season of Twin Peaks (2017), Inland Empire (2006), Rabbits (2002), Mulholland Drive (2001) and Lost Highway (1997), is an example of a poète maudit who exceptionally met with critical, academic, and popular success (something to be valued only when it happens during revolutionary times), if not the only poète maudit to do so, while the Sufi al-Hallaj of the shath ("theopathic" utterance) ana alhaqq (I am the Truth/Real, i.e., God) fame, a keen defender of the damned

par excellence in Islam, Iblīs (in the chapter "Tā' Sīn al-azal wal iltibās" of his al-Tawāsīn, he wrote: "There had been no monotheist [muwahhid] comparable to Satan [Iblīs] among the inhabitants of heaven.... God had said to him 'Bow down [before Adam]' 'Not before another [than You]!' 'Even if My curse falls upon you?' ... Moses met Satan on Mt. Sinai and said to him: 'O Satan! What keeps you from bowing down?' 'What keeps me from doing it is my preaching of a Single Adored One; if I had bowed down, I would have become like you. For you were called to only once, "Look toward the mountain!" and you looked; 84 while I was called to a thousand times, "Bow down!" and I did not bow down ...'85 'You have set aside a Commandment [of God]' 'It was [to Him] a trial and not a Commandment'"86), is an example of a poète maudit who met with a success esoterically befitting this kind of poet, for instance, having implored God in the presence of people gathered at the Manşūr Mosque in Baghdad, "Between me and You there's an 'I am' that's crowding me. Ah! Remove with Your 'I am' my 'I am' from between us," and then reportedly entreated people, "God has made (the spilling of) my blood lawful for you, therefore, kill me!" and predicted, "My death will be in accordance with the religion of the cross," he ended up being condemned to be crucified and appears to have died on the cross.87 If Hitchcock met with success, not only popular but also critical and academic, it was not, notwithstanding Godard ("if Alfred Hitchcock has been the only poète maudit to achieve success, it is because he was the greatest creator of forms of the twentieth century"), because he was the greatest creator of forms of the twentieth century—there have been many greater creators of forms among twentieth century painters (Francis Bacon, etc.), filmmakers (Tarkovsky, Parajanov, Sokurov, Bokanowski, Brothers Quay, 88 etc.), etc.—but rather because he compromised, was not radical enough, thus made films that are partial artistic failures, as implied by the many remakes and other reworkings of his films by other filmmakers and artists, including me (Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo [2016]), and by the remake he did of one of his films, The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934 and 1956)—one could view Gus van Sant's Psycho (1998), largely a "shot-for-shot remake," as unExplicit and Implicit Variations on Hitchcock

consciously implying that Hitchcock's *Psycho* is, exceptionally among his films, not a partial artistic failure since it did not require a revision in the form of a (significantly)<sup>89</sup> variant remake.

### **Endnotes**

- 1 Pascal Bonitzer, "Hichcockian Suspense," in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London; New York: Verso, 1992), 18.
- 2 The two short conceptual films What Did One of the Neighbors Miss During His Photographic Assignment Abroad? and Eyeing a Boring Couple Unself-consciously complement each other.
- After Hitchcock made *Vertigo*, 1958, the novel *D'entre les morts* (*From Among the Dead*), 1954, by Boileau-Narcejac, on which the script of the film was based, feels like a weak, unsuccessful variation on Hitchcock's film!
- "Griesinger ... shows quite clearly that ideas in dreams and in psychoses have in common the characteristic of being fulfilments of wishes. My own researches have taught me that in this fact lies the key to a psychological theory of both dreams and psychoses.... If I proceed to put forward the assertion that the meaning of every dream is the fulfilment of a wish, that is to say that there cannot be any dreams but wishful dreams. I feel certain in advance that I shall meet with the most categorical contradiction. 'There is nothing new,' I shall be told, 'in the idea that some dreams are to be regarded as wish-fulfilments.' ... It does in fact look as though anxiety-dreams make it impossible to assert as a general proposition ... that dreams are wish-fulfilments; indeed they seem to stamp any such proposition as an absurdity. Nevertheless, there is no great difficulty in meeting these apparently conclusive objections. It is only necessary to take notice of the fact that my theory is not based on a consideration of the manifest content of dreams but refers to the thoughts which are shown by the work of interpretation to lie behind dreams. We must make a contrast between the manifest and the latent content of dreams. There is no question that there are dreams whose manifest content is of the most distressing kind. But has anyone tried to interpret such dreams? to reveal the latent thoughts behind them? If not, then the two objections raised against my theory will not hold water: it still remains possible that distressing dreams and anxiety-dreams, when they have been interpreted, may turn out to be fulfilments of wishes" (The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, volume IV [1900], The Interpretation of Dreams [First Part], translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson [London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1958], 91, 134–135).
- 5 Oxford Dictionary of English, 3rd ed., 2016.
- The answer is yes if one agrees with David Deutsch: "Displace one note and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase and the structure would fall.' That is how Mozart's music is described by Peter Shaffer's 1979 play *Amadeus*. This is reminiscent of the remark by John Archibald Wheeler with which this book

- [Deutsch's *The Beginning of Infinity*] begins, speaking of a hoped-for unified theory of fundamental physics: '... how could it have been otherwise.' Shaffer and Wheeler were describing the same attribute: being hard to vary while still doing the job. In the first case it is an attribute of aesthetically good music, and in the second of good scientific explanations" (David Deutsch, *The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World* [London: Allen Lane, 2011], 353).
- While it would appear that the most fitting places for Scottie to revisit following the death of his beloved Madeleine (but prior to his hospitalization) would be ones where it seemed, at least initially, that she had disappeared mysteriously, for one would then be more likely to expect her to as suddenly and mysteriously reappear, as it were from death, for example, McKittrick Hotel, where Scottie saw her enter, then open the window shutters of one of the rooms, only to then be told by the manager at the front desk that she had not yet come that day and to be shown that her room was indeed empty, Scottie does not revisit these places in Hitchcock's film (nor does he do so in my variation on it!)!
- 8 I ended the Q & A with: "OK, we stop—until another variation?"
- Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 102.
- The unconscious is not limited to unavowed and repressed wishes but encompasses also those expresseds (gestures, words, etc.) that have an affinity with a different context than the actual state of things in which they insist.
- Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, edited, translated, and with an introduction by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 173.
- Anne Ancelin Schützenberger, *The Ancestor Syndrome: Transgenerational Psychotherapy and the Hidden Links in the Family Tree*, trans. Anne Trager (London: Routledge, 1998), 48.
- Later in the film, he is shot at close range by the spy ringleader; appears, by the expression on his face, to have been hit; and falls to the floor. Then there is a fade to black. Only then is it revealed in a somewhat unconvincing manner that he was saved by the copy of the Church Hymnary that was in the coat of the husband of the woman who gave him refuge the night before. He had to appear to die for appearing to have killed his guest "Annabella." Is it accidental that he who had ostensibly died then speaks in the name of another (in the same letter in which Nietzsche wrote, "This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral," he asserted, "Every name in history is I"), a parliamentary candidate, thus someone who himself intends to speak in the name of many others, those he aims to represent?
- "I'djaz, literally 'the rendering incapable, powerless,' since the second half of the 3rd/9th century [the] technical term for the inimitability or uniqueness of the Kur'ān in content and form.... Based essentially on Kur'ān XVII, 88 and X, 38, where it is declared that men and djinn, even were they to combine their ef-

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forts, are incapable of producing anything equaling as much as a single sūra of the Book" (G. E. von Grunebaum, I'djāz," Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed., http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/idjaz-SIM\_3484). "From early on, the road bifurcated into two main sets of ideas: there were those who located the miracle in the Qur'an itself, and there were those who located it in something outside it. The latter approach was represented by the theory of the so-called 'sarfa.' First propounded by the Mu'tazilite Nazzām (d. 835–45), its main thrust was that it was not the construction of the Our'an itself that was the miracle, but rather God's deflection (sarf) of people from imitation, depriving them of both motivation and ability. Nazzām thus believed that 'if the Arabs were left alone they would have been able to compose pieces like those of the Qur'an.' He also, however, partly located the miracle in the Qur'an itself insofar as it contained knowledge of 'ghuyūb' — information which it would not have been humanly possible to come by, prophetic material being a prime example. Thus, to support the theory of sarfa was not incompatible with simultaneously supporting other elements of  $i'i\bar{a}z$ , and this holds true of other supporters of the theory apart from Nazzām.... This theory was not embraced by all Mu'tazilites; apart from Nazzām, Hishām al-Fuwatī (d. before 833), 'Abbād ibn Sulaymān (d. 864) and Abū Mūsā al-Murdār (d. 840) are said to have taken it up, while the Imāmī Shī'ī Mu'tazilī al-Sharīf al-Murtadā (d. 1044) was perhaps the last to do so ..." (Sophia Vasalou, "The Miraculous Eloquence of the Our'an: General Trajectories and Individual Approaches," Journal of Our'anic Studies 4, no. 2 [2002]: 30).

- If "Truth lies not in one dream, but in many dreams," this can be because life is a "dream within a dream" (Ibn al-'Arabī), one from which we wake up by dying (according to a tradition attributed to the prophet Muhammad: "People are asleep, and when they die, they awake") in the *barzakh* (literally, "isthumus"), and then wake up again from the latter at the final resurrection.
- The quote is from the *Rear Window* script by John Michael Hayes.
- Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 327–328.
- 18 Ibid., 126.
- 19 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. and newly ed. James Strachey, introduction by Gregory Zilboorg (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 7.
- Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945) shows the same basic situation: a man impersonates the identity of the last person he met before the trauma—witnessing the murder of his psychiatrist—that triggered his psychogenic fugue. What was the last thing L. B. Jefferies was doing before being assaulted by a murderer? He was playing an "amateur sleuth."
- A similar situation occurs in Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, 1959: when Roger O. Thornhill, an advertising executive, is mistaken by two members of a spy

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ring for George Kaplan, a purported agent of a US Intelligence Agency, and spirited away to the estate of United Nations employee Lester Townsend, which is being used by the spy ring during the owner's absence at the UN, the following dialogue takes place between the abducted man, who has remarked the nameplate at the entrance of the estate, and the man who questions him there, actually the ring leader, Phillip Vandamm: "Not what I expected—a little taller, a little more polished than the others ..." "I'm so glad you're pleased, Mr. *Townsend*." "My secretary is a great admirer of your methods, Mr. *Kaplan*" (my italics).

- André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. II, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 35.
- Regrettably, while in *Vertigo*'s screenplay, by Samuel A. Taylor and Alec Coppel, we read, "We find Midge standing nearby, smiling across at Scottie, *who is seated in a wheelchair* ..." (my italics), in the film Scottie is shown seated in a chair instead.
- I admire rigor in naming, but also rigor in misnaming (Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, Alain Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle* [1963], David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* [2001]).
- In the opening scene of Lynch's Mulholland Drive (written by Lynch), a woman suffers a car accident. Drained, she falls asleep. The next scene begins with two men, Herb and Dan, sitting at a table at Winkie's Restaurant on Sunset Boulevard. Herb: "Why did you want to go to breakfast if you're not hungry?" Dan: "I just wanted to come here." "To Winkie's?" "This Winkie's.... I had a dream about this place.... It's the second one I've had, but they were both the same. They start out that I'm in here, and I'm scared like I can't tell you. Of all people, you're standing right over there, by that counter. You're in both dreams and you're scared. I get even more frightened when I see how afraid you are and then I realize what it is: there's a man in the back of this place.... I can see him through the wall. I can see his face and I hope I never see that face ever outside a dream..." "So, you came to see if he's out there?" (Gilles Deleuze: "What reason [for travel] is there, ultimately, except seeing for yourself, going to check something, some inexpressible feeling deriving from a dream or nightmare, even if it's only finding out whether the Chinese are as yellow as people say, or whether some improbable color, a green ray, some bluish, purplish air, really exists somewhere, out there. The true dreamer, said Proust, is someone who goes to see something for himself ..." Negotiations, 1972–1990, trans. Martin Joughin [New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, 78). When Herb picks up the bill and goes to the cashier to pay, Dan remains seated! Had a repetition compulsion not been at work, he would have either insisted on paying the bill, going himself to the counter to do so; or else, on seeing his friend on the point of standing and walking to the counter to pay, he would have hurriedly accompanied him there. While paying the bill, Herb looks over at Dan. From Dan's point of view, Herb is standing at the same spot as in the dream. When they go outside, Dan apprehensively leads the way to the rear of the building. Suddenly a bum's blackened face appears from behind the corner and stares into Dan's eyes. Dan falls unconscious—or dead? Did he see that face again outside

a dream? Or was the whole scene another dream, so that he saw again that face in a dream? Is the dream in question that of the woman we saw falling asleep at the end of the previous scene? If it is a dream, what is the wish that's behind it? The sleeping woman (played by Laura Harring) must already apprehend that she's in a radical closure, and therefore that she is subject to the unsettling and uncanny exhaustive variation undergone in such a closure, where the names, characteristics and roles of those imprisoned in it as well as the relationships between them are going to be permutated among them (the sleeping woman's various names include Rita and Camilla Rhodes), and where death does not function as a definitive "issue" out of the radical closure. The most basic trigger of the compulsion to repeat is not the death drive, but the threat of an exhaustive variation (is the Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics a manner of evading this threat of exhaustive variation in the same universe, by making these variations happen in parallel universes?). The wish that the sleeping woman's dream intimates is initially the suspension of the exhaustive variation in a radical closure through repetition of the same events, and then, given that the compulsion to repeat is linked to the death drive, the escape from such a variation through a different figure of death, a final cessation (which is how the scene at Winkie's possibly ends). If instead of being repeated in all the intonations and manners of saying it (questioning, ordering, telegraphic, etc.—see Raymond Queneau's Exercises in Style), a sentence is repeated in an identical manner and intonation by the same person, then the variation stops and the closure is no longer radical. When the diegetic filmmaker, who is casting for his new film, is presented by the real, behind-the-scenes producers of his film with a photograph of an actress and told by them, "This is the girl," he is perceptive enough to grasp sooner than later that he has not only to choose that actress for the lead role in his film, but also to indicate his choice not by pointing to her or telling her, "The role is yours," or telling his executive producer, "She's perfect for the role," but by saying: "This is the girl."

26 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in Feminist Film Theory: A Reader, edited and introduced by Sue Thornham (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 64-65. Did woman originally induce anxiety? Freud: "It is self-evident to a male child that a genital like his own is to be attributed to everyone he knows.... This conviction is energetically maintained by boys, is obstinately defended against the contradictions which soon result from observation, and is only abandoned after severe internal struggles (the castration complex).... The assumption that all human beings have the same (male) form of genital is the first of the many remarkable and momentous sexual theories of children" (Sigmund Freud, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, volume VII [1901–1905], translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson [London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974], 195). And Freud elaborates on this in the footnote added in 1920: "Both male and female children form a theory that women no less than men originally had a penis, but that they have lost it by castration." Unlike with Mulvey, to me the castration anxiety is triggered or reactivated only in peculiar situations. In cinema, it is films where the woman is possessed by a male entity (William Friedkin's *The Exorcist*, 1973; Rupert Wainwright's *Stigmata*, 1999) that truly produce an anxiety of castration, since with the superimposition of a male voice over a female body, the woman is viewed at some level as a man lacking a penis. In *The Exorcist*, during the exorcism, one of the two priests attacks the sneering creature of *jouissance* that the possessed girl who frequently talks with a male voice has become, screaming: "You son of a bitch." At the level of the diegesis, the threat presented by the woman possessed by a maleficent male entity is double: from the entity possessing her, and that of triggering a castration anxiety.

- Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Ibid., 62.
- 28 Ibid., 67.
- 29 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 297.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 347.
- 31 The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, volume IX (1906–1908), Jensen's "Gradiva," and Other Works, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1959), 215–216.
- 32 Ibid., 218.
- 33 Ibid., 217.
- The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, volume XXI (1927–1931), The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and Its Discontents, and Other Works, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1981), 155.
- 35 "Fetish," *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fetish.
- Octave Mannoni, "I Know Well, But All the Same ..." translated by G. M. Goshgarian, in *Perversion and the Social Relation*, ed. Molly Anne Rothenberg, Dennis Foster, and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
- 37 The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, volume XXI (1927–1931), 152–153.
- Jacques Lacan: "Love is giving what one does not have" (Écrits: A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan [London: Routledge Classics, 2001], 194).
- 39 "Whoever is not subject to the dreamwork mechanisms of condensation, displacement, etc., but always appears as himself or herself, and when he or she does not appear thus is not to be interpreted as himself or herself is not to be represented by

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an actor" (Jalal Toufic, *Forthcoming*, 2nd ed. [Berlin: e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2014], 142).

- 40 The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. IV (1900), The Interpretation of Dreams, 1st part, 163.
- 41 Sigmund Freud, "On the Transformation of Instincts with Special Reference to Anal Erotism (1917)," in *Character and Culture*, with an introduction by the editor, Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1963), 206.
- Nadar, *Quand j'étais photographe* (Paris: Éditions d'aujourd'hui, 1979) (my translation).
- 43 From the abstract of Olaf Blanke et al., "Neuropsychology: Stimulating Illusory Own-Body Perceptions," Nature 419, no. 19 (September 2002): 269-270: "'Out-of-body' experiences (OBEs) are curious, usually brief sensations in which a person's consciousness seems to become detached from the body and take up a remote viewing position. Here we describe the repeated induction of this experience by focal electrical stimulation of the brain's right angular gyrus in a patient who was undergoing evaluation for epilepsy treatment." Cf. Helen Sewell, "Doctors Create Out-of-Body Sensations," BBC News Online, 8 September 2002 (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/ health/2266740.stm): "The doctors believe the angular gyrus plays an important role in matching up visual information and the brain's touch and balance representation of the body. When the two become dissociated, an out-of-body experience may result.... Professor [Olaf] Blanke told BBC News Online that out of body sensations 'have been reported in neurological patients with epilepsy, migraine and after cerebral strokes ..." Cf. also Pim van Lommel et al., "Near-Death Experience in Survivors of Cardiac Arrest: A Prospective Study in the Netherlands," The Lancet 358, issue 9298 (December 15, 2001): 2039-2045: in this study that included 344 consecutive patients who were successfully resuscitated after cardiac arrest in ten Dutch hospitals, 62 patients (18%) reported a near-death experience, and of these 62 patients 15 (24%) reported an out-of-body experience.
- 44 Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain; foreword by D. F. Pocock (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 79–80.
- When in an October 1965 interview in *Cahiers du cinéma*, the interviewer observed, "There is a good deal of blood in *Pierrot* [le fou]," Godard retorted: "Not blood, red." A missed opportunity: there is no scene of the Eucharist in *Pierrot le fou*—Godard could have repeated: "Not blood," ostensibly for emphasis, only to then add: "... wine—red wine."
- It is fitting that in *La Rampe* the French film critic Serge Daney places "Godardian Pedagogy," the subtitle of his article on the filmmaker of *Le Gai savoir* (co-directed with Gorin, 1969), *Here and Elsewhere* (1976), *Number Two* (1975), and *All's Well* (1972), in parenthesis, since it goes without saying.
- 47 Serge Daney writes in his article "Invraisemblable vérité [the French release title of *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, 1956]: Lang": "I admired this manner of narrating all these stories in one, as if to establish a theorem (I wanted to write this

- article on Lang without using the word 'rigor': I didn't succeed)" (*Ciné journal*, vol. 1/1981–1986, préface de Gilles Deleuze [Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 1998], 30).
- Since Godard is not really interested in the car crash itself, he should have skipped showing it. This is what he elegantly does in *New Wave*, 1990.
- "Lucas Attacks 'Digital Actors' Idea," BBC News, May 17, 2002 (http:// news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/film/1993106.stm). The article goes on: "Star Wars director George Lucas has attacked the idea of using technology to recreate dead film stars. 'It's something we are trying to stop happening, although you can't stop technology and you can't stop change,' he said.... Advances in digital technology have raised the prospect of long-dead stars like John Wayne and Marilyn Monroe being brought back to life on-screen. The technology has already been used in less conspicuous ways. When veteran British actor Oliver Reed died during filming of the Roman epic *Gladiator*, some scenes were digitally altered to make it look as if he was present ..." This may open a can of worms: for example, what about remaking Vertigo with a Vera Miles digital actress in place of Kim Novak, since Vera Miles was Hitchcock's first choice for the film: "Do you know that I had Vera Miles in mind for Vertigo, and we had done the whole wardrobe and the final tests with her? ... but she became pregnant just before the part.... After that I lost interest; I couldn't get the rhythm going with her again" (François Truffaut, Hitchcock, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott, revised edition [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984], 247)?
- Is *Vertiginous Variations on Vertigo* a conceptual film by Jalal Toufic of a Hitchcock film, *Vertigo*? Or is it the Hitchcock film as it exists in another, variant branch of the multiverse?
- Hitchcock: "Had the picture [Foreign Correspondent] been done in color, I would have worked in a shot I've always dreamed of: a murder in a tulip field.... We pan down to the struggling feet in the tulip field. We would dolly the camera up to and right into one of the tulips, with the sounds of the struggle in the background. One petal fills the screen, and suddenly a drop of blood splashes all over it" (François Truffaut, Hitchcock, revised edition, 135).
- Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, 173.
- 53 Ibid., 171.
- 54 Ibid., 174.
- 55 Ibid., 188.
- Anne Ancelin Schützenberger, *The Ancestor Syndrome*, 45–48.
- The last two sentences are from *Hiroshima mon amour*, text by Marguerite Duras for the film by Alain Resnais; trans. Richard Seaver; picture editor: Robert Hughes (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 65.
- Ibid., 52. In a present-day remake, they would go to the cinema to pass some of the long remaining time. The film playing there would happen to be Leos Carax's *Les Amants du Pont-Neuf* (1991), in which the two protagonists manage to

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get into the Louvre Museum after closing time and look at various paintings in candlelight. It is after leaving the film that they wander through the city waiting for the Palace of the Legion of Honor to open its doors.

- 59 Ibid., 80.
- Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 70–71.
- François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, revised edition, 246.
- William S. Burroughs, *The Adding Machine: Selected Essays* (New York: Seaver Books, 1986), 16.
- From this perspective, Hitchcock's *The Wong Man*, which is based on a true story, is an anomaly, *the wrong film*, since it shows a man unjustly mistaken for someone else *who is unaware of his existence*.
- Most people assume that to know about Chinese culture, or Muslim culture, or European culture, or Christian culture, one would have to learn not only about its language, politics, customs, rituals, media, sports, but also about its conception or conceptions of death (can we rigorously speak about a Christian conception or conceptions of death? Death is pre-Christian, since in Christianity Jesus Christ is the life, so when he comes or by his mere existence death is in a fundamental way no more, so if for someone death continues to exist, then he or she would be, even in the twentieth century, a pre-Christian), but this is to treat death as one aspect of culture, when it, as undeath rather than as physical demise, is not part of culture but belongs to tradition ("The domain of culture encompasses any endeavor, process, 'activity' in which someone else could replace one, while the domain of tradition includes only those adventures in which one cannot be replaced by another [albeit one may assume in them every name in history]" [Jalal Toufic, *Postscripts* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet; Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2020), 74–75]).
- François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, revised edition, 200–201.
- I am disregarding the few cuts that were imposed by the necessity of changing film rolls and that pass imperceptibly since the respective shots end and start on an object filling the screen.
- André Bazin, What Is Cinema? vol. I, 105 and 107.
- The kind of topological space that allows the sky over the town in the high-angle shot to connect directly with the credits sequence—beyond the mundane space presented in the intermediate shots—echoes and somewhat corresponds to Melanie's boat trip, a shortcut between the town and Mitch's family's house across the lake (we see Mitch take the customary, longer trip by road in order to rejoin her at the town center); indeed, it is in this space of the shortcut that a bird reaching the space of the lake from the credits sequence first attacks Melanie. My mixed-media work *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ* (1997) included a loop (*A Line of Flight from One Radically Closed Space to Another*) of the following reedited shots from Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963): a "cut on movement" from the electronic

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birds flying in an indeterminate plane in the credits sequence to birds assembling in the playground of a school and then irrupting from behind the school building to attack the schoolchildren, the attacking birds thus appearing to come from the credits sequence.

- In Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977), the eponymous protagonist arrives late for her appointment at a cinema theater with Alvy (who is performed by Woody Allen) to watch Bergman's *Face to Face*. He hurriedly inquires of the ticket clerk: "Has the picture started yet?" "It started two minutes ago." Exasperated, he exclaims: "That's it! Forget it! I can't go in." His companion pleads with him: "Two minutes, Alvy!" "We've blown it already. I can't go in in the middle." "In the middle? We've only missed the titles—they're in Swedish!" It would have been felicitous were the film they were going to watch either one where the credits are crucial for its diegetic intelligibility, for example, Hitchcock's *The Birds*; or Godard's *Band of Outsiders* (1964), in which around eight minutes into the film a narrator recapitulates: "For latecomers arriving now, we offer a few words chosen at random: 'Three weeks earlier ... pile of money ... an English class ... a house by the river ... a romantic girl."
- 70 *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews*, vol. 2, ed. Sidney Gottlieb (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), 87.
- 71 He may unconsciously "forget" to close some opening in the house to rationalize how the birds managed nonetheless to enter.
- The snow that falls inside the Russian church that had just been looted and damaged by the Tartars in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1969) is a worldly, natural snow.
- 73 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translation and foreword by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 303.
- 74 Ibid., 300.
- 75 Michel Chion, *Film: A Sound Art*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 169.
- It is disappointing that Ernest Lehman's script still refers to him at this point unqualifiedly as Thornhill.
- On the stain in Hitchcock's films see Pascal Bonitzer's "Hichcockian Suspense."
- François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, revised edition, 191.
- 79 Ibid., 256–257.
- 80 Ibid., 251.
- 81 "Unexplainably" since *North by Northwest* does not deal with a radical closure, where an unworldly, fully-formed ahistorical body can suddenly irrupt.
- A contributing factor to the success of the film is that it privileges the imaginary mode of determining identity, the one in terms of the image, since for most people, including the film's protagonist, who at no point ends up questioning his identity

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as it appears on his IDs, the identification in terms of the image, or, more generally, the body, trumps the structural one.

- Who is the damned? Is it the one who is confronted with a choice both of whose alternatives would damn him? It is worse than that; he is the one who would be damned whether he acquiesces to choosing between these two damning options or refuses to choose between them. Of the damned, it is accurate indeed to say: damned if you do and damned if you don't.
- "Moses ... said: My Lord! Show me (Thy Self), that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou wilt not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain! If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless. And when he woke he said: Glory unto Thee!" (Qur'ān 7:143, trans. Pickthall).
- "And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis" (Qur'ān 2:34, trans. Pickthall).
- Quoted in Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, vol. 3, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 309–311.
- 87 It was actually another, Jesus Christ, who was crucified in his place; see my essay "The Crucified" in my book *What Was I Thinking?* (Berlin: e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2017).
- It should go without saying that Sokurov, Bokanowki, and Brothers Quay are not only twentieth century filmmakers but also twenty-first century ones.
- Albeit one that's in color, unlike the original, which was in black and white; uses different actors; and in which, unlike in the original, Norman Bates clearly masturbates (offscreen) while peeping at his hotel guest.

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**Jalal Toufic** is a thinker and a mortal to death. He was born in 1962 in Beirut or Baghdad and died before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois. His books, several of which were published by Forthcoming Books, and which include What Was I Thinking? (e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2017), The Dancer's Two Bodies (Sharjah Art Foundation, 2015), and Forthcoming (2nd ed., e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2014), are available for download, free of charge, at his website: www.jalaltoufic. com. He has made over fifteen films, which include essay films and conceptual films; short films (7 minutes, 8 minutes, etc.), feature-length films (110 minutes, 138 minutes, etc.), and "inhumanely" long films (72 hours, 50 hours); films that he shot and films in which all the images are from works by other filmmakers (Hitchcock, Sokurov, Bergman, etc.). His work, along with that of artists and pretend artists, has been shown in the 6th, 10th and 11th Sharjah Biennials; the 9th Shanghai Biennale; the 1st Asia Biennial & 5th Guangzhou Triennial; MoMA PS1; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Centre Pompidou; ZKM; Kunsthalle Fridericianum; MAXXI; FKA Witte de With; Deichtorhallen Hamburg, etc. He was Director of the School of Visual Arts at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (Alba) from 2015 to 2018. He is currently Professor of film studies at the American University in Cairo.

With a passion for Hitchcock rivaling Scottie's for Madeleine, Jalal Toufic strips and redresses five of the director's films, weaving them together and plucking out unexpected insights at their crossroads. Not since Chris Marker's *La Jetée* has kleptomania yielded such rich invention.

Joan Copjec, Professor of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, author of Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists and Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation



