

ISSN 1751-8229

**Volume Six, Number Three**

## **The Sublime Stupidity of Alfred Hitchcock**

**Kyle Barrowman** - graduate of the Cinema Studies program at Columbia College in Chicago.

Over the course of a career that spanned six decades, beginning in England in the 1920s as the silent cinema was approaching its apex and ending in the 1970s amidst the postclassical American cinema revolution, Alfred Hitchcock succeeded in transcending time, genre, even cinema itself. Based on the fecundity of his prolific canon, “Hitchcock” has become totemic for a remarkably variegated (if not antinomic) series of theoretical precepts in the film studies community, all symptomatic of the particular academic zeitgeist. Beginning with the idealistic and cinephiliac veneration of Hitchcock-as-auteur in the 1950s and 1960s, which reached its zenith with the publications of Robin Wood’s (1965) heraldic auteurist analysis and Francois Truffaut’s (1967) book-length interview, Hitchcock was eventually colonized by “Second Wave Feminism” in the 1970s and 1980s, portrayed as a misogynist whose films were viewed as ideologically-predetermined symptoms of an antediluvian male chauvinist and whose filmmaking style allegedly exemplified the intrinsic problems of classical Hollywood storytelling.<sup>1</sup>

As the feminist colonization of Hitchcock gave way to more tempered appraisals of his filmography, scholars in the field of “Hitchcock Studies” began trying to consolidate past Hitchcock scholarship in an effort to encompass the totality of Hitchcock’s artistry and its hermeneutic implications. Tania Modleski (2005/1988), for example, sees the Hitchcock *oeuvre* as housing a clash between authorship and ideology that challenges and decenters, but does not completely devalue, the notion of directorial authority. Wood, on the other hand, in his 1989 revision of his original 1965 monograph, maintained the original schematization of Hitchcock-as-auteur, but rather than promulgating the ubiquitous binary theoretical claims apropos of

Hitchcock's misogyny/phallocentrism, he sought to illuminate the complexity of Hitchcockian morality, which, "with its pervading sense of the inextricability of good and evil" (Wood 1989: 63), speaks to neither misogyny nor phallocentrism, but instead, to an artist conflicted about the perceived "impossibility of successful human relations within an ideological system that constructs men and women in hopelessly incompatible roles" (Wood 1989: 378).

Working from this latter vantage point, Wood's postulation that interpretations of Hitchcock's films necessitate a "psychoanalytical account" of the nature of love and romance (Wood 1989: 377) becomes axiomatic, and if there is anything that can unify the activities of Hitchcock Studies scholars over the past two decades, it is the frequency with which scholars have appealed to psychoanalytic concepts, especially of the Lacanian variety, in their exegetical efforts. On this front, Slavoj Žižek is undoubtedly the most renowned Hitchcockian/Lacanian exegete. As it relates to the centrality of psychoanalysis to Hitchcock Studies, Žižek's project of rescuing classical Lacanian doctrine from its inappropriate Althusserian/feminist politicization found a useful ally in Hitchcock, whose films represent for him fertile ground on which to illuminate neglected/misunderstood Lacanian concepts. What was once an innocuous observation regarding an apparent compatibility between Hitchcock's films and psychoanalysis has been reified in the scholarship of theorists such as Wood and Žižek; in an effort to extend both the Wood-inspired project of analyzing the evolution of Hitchcock's philosophy of filmic romance and the Žižekian project of asserting a Lacanian anchor to Hitchcock's films, the ensuing exegesis will take as its premise that *le trait unaire* of Hitchcock's cinema is the Lacanian dictum "there is no such thing as a sexual relationship."

As Lacanians such as Žižek and Bruce Fink (1995) have lamented in their writings, since the publications in French and English of Lacan's writings and seminars, many scholars have discussed aspects of his doctrine, including his work on sexuality, despite lacking a firm grasp on his thinking. They concede that it is much easier to fixate on one of Lacan's more provocative postulations (e.g. "there is no such thing as a sexual relationship") in an attempt to use it as evidence in what are ultimately egregious sophisms; as Žižek has admirably shown in the many engagements with Hitchcock's cinema he has provided over the years, what is necessary for the most productive reading of Lacan (and thus for the most productive Lacanian reading of Hitchcock) is a willingness to struggle through his circuitous, contradictory, at times impenetrable ruminations in order to isolate and assess the "fundamental concepts" of Lacanian psychoanalysis, to consider how recurring concepts such as the *objet petit a*, the phallus, desire, lack, etc., are explicated in particular writings and lectures and to assess their evolution over the course of his prolific career. Echoing, too, the complaints of Hitchcock Studies scholars

apropos the unfair feminist attack on Hitchcock's alleged misogyny, the fundamental problem facing those exploring either the Lacanian or the Hitchcockian discourse is to sift through the ostentation and the polemics to locate the original, transcendental site of thought. And in so doing, the unmistakable insight is the remarkable proximity, even identity, of their respective philosophical discourses. If there is any tenability at all in Žižek's claim that Spinoza, Hegel, and Althusser serve as atemporal rejoinders to one another (Žižek 1993: 140), then certainly a similar relationship can be imagined between Hitchcock and Lacan as transcendently linked philosophers. Rather than being situated in opposition to one another, however, their contemporaneous struggle to formulate a stance regarding the foundational antinomy of subjectivity, the (impossible) sexual relationship, found them ultimately united in the unmistakably Hegelian "parallax gap" of epistemological tenuity versus constitutive ontological incompleteness.<sup>2</sup>

For Lacan, "there is no such thing as a sexual relationship" serves as the solidification of years of theorizing the nature of desire in the human subject. Brusquely posited, the scandalous nature of Lacan's claim is plainly evident. Beyond the ostentation, however, resides a nuanced reading of subjectivity that cuts to the core of Lacanian thought; a particularly elucidatory passage from the seminar where Lacan offered his most thorough interrogation of the nature of love and romance serves at once to clarify his meaning and highlight one of his "fundamental concepts."

What constitutes the basis of life, in effect, is that for everything having to do with the relations between men and women [...] it's not working out. It's not working out, and the whole world talks about it, and a large part of our activity is taken up with saying so. Nevertheless [...] this sexual relationship, insofar as it's not working out, works out anyway—thanks to a certain number of conventions [and] prohibitions (Lacan 1999/1973: 32-33).

Embracing notions of mediation, prohibition, etc., is crucial in Lacanian psychoanalysis, for desire, as such, is never "fulfilled," including in the ideal sexual relationship where the two halves of the human subject are alleged to unite in bliss to form a whole. In marked disavowal to this position, for as long as narrative has been the driving force of film, the primary narrative concern of "mainstream" cinema apropos of subjectivity has been to reify the ideal rather than confront the reality. Thus, Hitchcock's cinema, in tandem with Lacanian psychoanalysis, strives to move past stereotypical ideological commonplaces in an effort to penetrate the innermost regions of the collective psyche.

Looking at Hitchcock's films, the irreducible antagonisms of sexual difference frequently constitute their narratological core, particularly in his American films. Prior to the start of his Hollywood career, Hitchcock's portraits of romantic relationships were noticeably light and airy pairings based more on cinematic convention than on personal belief. This is not to say that the films are worthless to the field of film studies; in specifically looking to explore his maturation as a philosopher of filmic romance, however, it is his American films that offer the greatest salience regarding his views on romantic unions between men and women struggling within the discursive realm of patriarchy. For Wood, *Rebecca* (1940) marks the establishment of the "central structuring tension" (Wood 1989: 231) of Hitchcock's American films, that of the impossibility of a harmonious romantic union between a man and a woman that successfully sutures the wounds of subjectivity. Modleski cautions against minimizing Hitchcock's misogyny and against asserting "equality in suffering" (Modleski 2005/1988: 67) between the male and female characters in Hitchcock's films, but this is as a result of her polemical feminist agenda rather than from something determined through interpretation to be intrinsic to Hitchcock's cinematic expression. Her biased preoccupation with exploring what in Hitchcock's films were *not* his intention (a holdover from the bleak "death of the author" days in film studies) caused her to miss the obvious fact that the Hegelian "essence" of Hitchcock's cinema is this very "equality in suffering," with Hitchcock favoring neither male nor female subjectivity and instead seeking to illuminate the fundamental problems of subjectivity as such.

The most explicit treatment of mutual suffering is to be found in *Notorious* (1946), Hitchcock's first major filmic treatise on the complex nature of romance. In an effort to analyze Hitchcock's films *en masse*, a historical contextualization that situates *Notorious* (and later, *Vertigo* [1958] and *Marnie* [1964]) against a set of control films can help to justify the proposition that Hitchcock's films offer a unique, singular, and evolving vision. The most obvious control is classical Hollywood cinema, a well-known model that can serve to establish dominant stylistic and narrative practices. What makes the study of Hitchcock's films so intriguing is how, as a result of his early battles with producers and studio personnel, most notoriously David O. Selznick, for creative control over his films, Hitchcock's own films (*Rebecca*, *Suspicion* [1941], and *Spellbound* [1945] in particular) can serve as an index of the classical Hollywood model, while his later films (*Notorious*, *Vertigo*, and *Marnie* in particular) can serve as "cracks in the universal," as Kantian symptoms of the ontological inconsistency of the classical model. By analyzing the particular mode of the narrative functioning in his early American films and the presence of cracks in the ontological stability of their classical processes of narration, the subversive nature of his later films can be more clearly registered in its radicality.

With its unambiguous appropriation of psychoanalysis as its narrative axis, the treatment of its subject matter causes *Spellbound* to function as a paradigm case of classical Hollywood distortion.<sup>3</sup> The prologue that introduces the film reads as follows:

Our story deals with psychoanalysis, the method by which modern science treats the emotional problems of the sane. The analyst seeks only to induce the patient to talk about his hidden problems, to open the locked doors of his mind. Once the complexes that have been disturbing the patient are uncovered and interpreted, the illness and confusion disappear...and the devils of unreason are driven from the human soul.

This sanitized view of the psychoanalytic process combined with the rosy conception of an ultimately untroubled subjectivity speak less to Hitchcock's moral ambivalence and more to the classical Hollywood project of constructing a "cinema of integration." As conceived by Todd McGowan, the cinema of integration is constituted by an "intermixing of desire and fantasy" wherein the cinema "works hand in hand with the functioning of [the dominant] ideology" (McGowan 2007: 115) so as to support its structure by obscuring the cracks in the universal, the irreducible antagonisms of subjectivity. The clash between Hitchcock and his producers, however, inadvertently created (in films ostensibly "integrated" and with the requisite "distortion") films that "lay bare the ideological function" (McGowan 2007: 155) of the relationship between the cinema and the dominant ideology. The infamous battle over the ending of *Suspicion* virtually exposes the workings of fantasy, makes transparent the attempt to shield the film from the Real. The alterations made for the film version of *Rebecca*, wherein the protagonist did not *really* kill his first wife, thus allowing (an albeit ambiguous) reconciliation between him and his current wife, work similarly.

Having already made and fought battles over *Rebecca* and *Suspicion*, *Spellbound* comes at a point in Hitchcock's career where his vision has matured to a point where it is literally impossible, even with Selznick insisting on the paradigmatic distortion of the field of subjectivity, for the cracks in the ontological stability of classical Hollywood narration to remain hidden. *Spellbound* progresses towards the inevitable "happy ending" marriage between the previously disturbed protagonist and his unwaveringly loving and devoted psychoanalyst, but due to Hitchcock's presence, the phantasmatic cathexis of this denouement is negated in favor of an ambivalence that borders on pessimism. Early in the film, Dr. Constance Petersen (Ingrid Bergman) is discussing the duplicity of love with (the man she believes to be) Dr. Anthony Edwardes (Gregory Peck).<sup>4</sup> Juxtaposed with the opening prologue, Dr. Petersen's views on love are nothing short of radical perversity, identifying love's winsome splendor as the collective cancer plaguing society. She feels the problem with love is that people conceptualize it as one

thing but experience it as another, the very definition of an antinomy in the Kantian sense. “Love” as such is “*Gedankending*,” an “object-of-thought,” something that is conceptually possible but experientially impossible (Žižek 1993: 109). Dr. Petersen contends in this early segment that it is all too easy to imagine love and far too difficult to locate it empirically; the fact that the romantic coupling at the film’s end is in marked contrast to its previously asserted contention that such a harmonious union is *sensu stricto* impossible is far from a hypocritical compromise of Hitchcock’s position, however. Hitchcock achieves the limit of his success by introducing the crack in the universal, by exposing the workings of fantasy while Selznick, meanwhile, was impotently attempting to use it as a means of seduction.

The exponentially greater subversiveness of *Notorious* is due to Hitchcock’s ability, as producer and director, to foreground his project of exposing the workings of fantasy as the main narrative concern rather than being forced to surreptitiously insert it as narratological subterfuge. *Notorious* is unabashedly concerned with the “astringent criticism” of the “male system” of patriarchy concomitant with Hitchcock’s growing fascination with the impossibility of the sexual relationship (Wood 1989: 326). To understand the dialectical trajectory of Hitchcock’s treatment of this theme, a comparison to the trajectory of Lacan’s thinking apropos of the Imaginary-Symbolic-Real triptych and the place therein of the sexual relationship can help to shed light on the specificities of Hitchcock’s evolution as a filmic philosopher. Early in his career, Lacan was fascinated by Saussurean semiotics, asserting in early seminars the primacy of the signifying network in structuring subjectivity; in his next phase, Lacan amplified his preoccupation with the Symbolic, moving to a structuralist conception that conceived of language as an inescapable totalization of subjectivity; following this hyperbolic fascination with the Symbolic, Lacan subsequently retreated to analyzing the ways in which the Imaginary, in its search for “homeostatic balance,” is constantly troubled by the intrusion of the Symbolic, how subjectivity is essentially a battle between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, with the Real being conspicuously absent, given no more consideration than representing a functioning nonentity; in the last phase of his teaching, Lacan compensated for previous neglect of the Real by giving it the “main accent” of his teaching, completely restructuring his Imaginary-Symbolic-Real triad by asserting that it is the Symbolic, not the Imaginary, that is governed by the pleasure principle and primarily concerned with achieving homeostatic balance, and that the Real represents a kernel at the very center of the Symbolic, a “traumatic element” that disrupts that balance.<sup>5</sup>

The implications of these evolving conceptions of the struggle of subjectivity come to bear on the subject as he/she approaches the concluding moment of analysis. From the perspective of Lacan’s initial phase, the “final moment of analysis” is reached when the subject

is able to “narrate” his/her history “in its continuity,” when the subject’s desire is acknowledged and narrativized. Later in his teaching, however, when the Symbolic was conceived as a monstrous totality “having a mortifying effect on the subject” by “imposing on [the subject] a traumatic loss,” the final moment is reached “when the subject is ready to accept this fundamental loss, to consent to symbolic castration as a price to be paid for access to [his/her] desire” (Žižek 2008/1989: 145-147). In the last phase of his teaching, Lacan extends the cathectic acknowledgment of the lack constitutive of desire in a much more radical way, with the final moment being identified as when the subject “fully assumes his or her identification with the sinthome, when he or she unreservedly ‘yields’ to it, rejoins the place where ‘it was,’ giving up the false distance which defines [the subject’s] everyday life” (Žižek 1993: 60).

Discernible in this complex matrix is the conspicuous Hegelian accent on the later stage of Lacan’s thinking apropos the “final moment of analysis.” Žižek’s fondness for the Hegelian dialectic has been anything but a secret; all the same, the extant Lacanian exegeses of Hitchcock’s films, including those conducted by Žižek himself, have yet to give sufficient focus to Hitchcock’s *Hegelian* Lacanianism. One way to do so is to identify in the Hegelian matrix of Lacan’s evolving conceptualization of the psychoanalytic process the dialectical trajectory of Hitchcock’s cinema, from his early, classical films such as *Suspicion* and *Spellbound* through his powerfully subversive transitional films such as *Notorious* and *Vertigo* up to *Marnie*, his culminant disquisition. Looking at his early films, the previously discussed project of masking the traumatic Real through a phantasmatic veil of happiness and fulfillment is the impetus, receiving, by Hitchcock standards, its most paradigmatic realization in *Spellbound*. Already present in the paradigm, however, is the crack in the universal, the kernel that forever resists symbolization, and it is the failure of symbolization, the assumption of the constitutive lack, that becomes the focus of the transitional films, first in *Notorious* and then in its most radical negativity in *Vertigo*. What becomes visible by the end of *Marnie*, what makes it the logical conclusion of Hitchcock’s career of film philosophizing vis-à-vis his proximity to Lacan, is the Hegelian shift from epistemological doubt to ontological certainty.

Prior to making that Hegelian shift, though, both Hitchcock and Lacan endured years of metaphysical struggle, returning again and again to the impossibility of the sexual relationship. For Hitchcock, this focus manifested, in its Symbolic determination, in every film made from *Notorious* up to *Marnie*, regardless of genre and time period. Marking the first explicit treatise on the subject, *Notorious* reveals many of the fundamental narrative elements making up Hitchcock’s films. First and foremost, the narrative anchor is the inevitable depiction of a relationship between a troubled man and a troubled woman, each of whom is suffering in their

sexed identities. For Lacan, the “formulae of sexuation” indicate the antinomic positioning of men and women in the ideological framework. As observed by Žižek, the purpose of the formulae of sexuation is to solidify this antinomic structuring mathematically, where the “masculine” side of the function “implies the existence of an exception,” whereas the “feminine” side of the function features “a particular negation” which “implies that there is no exception” (Žižek 1993: 56). The conclusion to be reached is, of course, that the relationship between “masculine” and “feminine,” i.e., between men and women, is antinomic as opposed to the stereotypical conception of men and women being situated at contrary poles.

The radicality of the formulae of sexuation is in the form of its contradistinction to the commonplace notion that men and women, as opposite poles akin to the yin and yang, “fill out” the other, that, together, they make up a positive, ontologically-consistent unit charged with the power to resolve the antagonisms of subjectivity. Analogously, the radicality of Hitchcock’s “formulae of filmic sexuation” is in its contradistinction to the commonplace notion that the male lead and the female lead, after experiencing narrative conflict and after having their relationship threatened, come together in the end to live happily ever after. *Notorious* and *Vertigo* are the two most notable films concerned with reifying the antinomic functionality of the Hitchcockian formulae of filmic sexuation, the latter serving as a more aggressively negative rendering of the former’s conclusion.

The romance that anchors *Notorious* is between a U.S. government agent named Devlin (Cary Grant) and the daughter of a convicted Nazi conspirator, Alicia Huberman (Ingrid Bergman). As Modleski notes, even though it does not seem to offer much by way of a feminist reading, *Notorious* does manage, by virtue of a dialectic of excess and lack, to expose some of the problems inherent in women’s positioning in patriarchy (Modleski 2005/1988: 56). Recalling the sagacious remark from Lacan about how the patriarchal system does not just *create* Woman but “puts her to work” (Lacan 1999/1973: 131), *Notorious* can be seen as a “sweeping denunciation of masculinist politics” (Wood 1989: 360) that casts the male lead in the role of the antagonist charged with proving that there is indeed “a male way of botching the sexual relationship” (Lacan 1999/1973: 58). Assessing Devlin psychoanalytically, he quite conspicuously represents the archetype of the “obsessional neurotic,” one who stages punishment for realizing his desire; one who “builds up a whole system enabling him to postpone the encounter” with the *objet petit a*; one who perceives in the Other *too much* enjoyment, the immediate encounter with whom “would be unbearable because of its excessive fullness, which is why he postpones the encounter”; and one who is ultimately tortured by the web of his own contradiction and indecision (Žižek 2008/1989: 218).



Devlin appears at several points in *Notorious* to be on the cusp of a healthy relationship with Alicia, but something invariably prohibits the realization of this success. He recruits her to spy for the government, puts her in the arms (and the bed) of another man, even puts her in Death's arms, all to punish her in a roundabout effort to punish himself. Richard Allen asserts that Hitchcock's films pose the question of whether romantic love "harbors a murderous [and] self-annihilating desire" (Allen 1999: 226), but judging by *Notorious*, acting like this is a question for Hitchcock seems rather obtuse; for Hitchcock, romantic love *is undeniably and inescapably constituted by such negative components*, and based on the invariability of something emerging as a prohibition to the romantic relationship between Devlin and Alicia, it becomes clear that Hitchcock is intentionally portraying the erotic pleasure of the budding relationship, most famously rendered in the extended kissing sequence, and its fantasy of fulfillment *explicitly as fantasy*. By making so conspicuous the phantasmatic qualities of their early and fleeting happiness, Hitchcock succeeds in illuminating the frustratingly paradoxical fact that fantasy is a means by which "to take its own failure into account" (Žižek 2008/1989: 142). The Imaginary thus senses the Real, senses the insufficiency of its Symbolic structuring of reality, and is thus a kind of defense mechanism, a bandage impotently shielding against a virulent cancer.

It is only from this vantage point that the subversive power of the film's ending can be fully rendered apropos the impossibility of the sexual relationship. Due to the fact that the film ends not with Devlin and Alicia but instead with the resolution of the surrounding Nazi/spy plot, scholars who have analyzed *Notorious* in the past have failed to fully register the radicality of the film's Lacanian thesis. Modleski, for example, assesses the film's central issue as being the possibility of love as a redemptive force (Modleski 2005/1988: 60), which can be called the "positivity" interpretation, while Richard Abel views the denouement as staging Devlin's and Alicia's reformation "in guilt" (Abel 2009/1986: 165), which can be called the "positive negativity" interpretation. What is indicative in both interpretations is the ultimate registering of positivity, of optimism, even if, as in Abel's case, it is a significantly problematized and contingent optimism. Neither interpretation is able to register in *Notorious* the radical negativity of the denouement, which stems from the failure to appraise the relationship as confronting Devlin and Alicia with "the falsity of [their] own subjective position" (Žižek 2008/1989: 67). Depicting narcissistic love at its purest, the love between Devlin and Alicia depicts a vicious tautological loop proving the Lacanian theory that "one sees in one's partner what one props oneself up on, what one is propped up by narcissistically" (Lacan 1999/1973: 87).

Adding a paradoxical viciousness to this tautological loop, it is for what she is *not* that Alicia expects to be desired for and loved by Devlin,<sup>6</sup> a result of her discursive positioning within

patriarchy. Devlin wants Alicia to be the Madonna, but he repeatedly forces her to be a whore and then repudiates her for it. Alicia, for her part, knows the consequences of her actions, knows that, by going ahead with her spying and keeping up the relationship with the Nazi she has been charged with keeping tabs on, that she is alienating Devlin, yet she relentlessly adheres to the aggressive “self-punishing neurosis” (Lacan 2006: 101) constitutive of her entrapment in the patriarchal realm until it brings her to the precipice of death. Their final moment of ostensible reconciliation in the car near the end of the film, while appearing to be the moment that Devlin finally “fully redeems himself” by “expressing his rejection of masculinist politics altogether in favor of identifying himself with a woman and rescuing her from victimization and death” (Wood 1989: 360), *is actually the exact opposite*. Falling in line with Modleski and Abel vis-à-vis the inability of scholars to register the radical negativity of the denouement, Wood misses the way Devlin *fails* to rescue Alicia from victimization and death, the way he *fails* to redeem himself, indeed, *that Devlin is the source* of Alicia’s victimization and death, and the way to register this radical negativity is to register it retroactively, to confer upon the film its proper radicality after registering the even more severe negativity in *Vertigo*, the logical extension of *Notorious*.

Since Hitchcock never explicitly kills Alicia in *Notorious*, he left open the possibility for more optimistic exegetes to surmise that there was a happy ending waiting for Devlin and Alicia on the other side of the end credits. But considering how Hitchcock’s pessimism regarding romance only increased in the years following *Notorious*, the only feasible interpretation of its conclusion is to accept as inevitable Alicia’s death following hers and Devlin’s concomitant realization of the traumatic truth that there is no such thing as a sexual relationship. Their commensurate self-punishing neurosis laid bare the fact that each, as a result of their antinomic discursive positioning within patriarchy, had nothing to offer the other but their own lack, and, as incisively asked by Žižek: If the subject cannot render to its other what this other lacks, “what can it return to it if not *the lack itself*?” (Žižek 1993: 123). The antinomic formulae of sexuation thus confer the caliginous certainty that, as opposed to “the mutual filling out of their respective lacks,” all that exists on which to form even the most tenuous male/female connection is “the very lack they have in common” (Žižek 1993: 123).

From *Notorious* up through *Vertigo*, Hitchcock’s attitude towards this undesirable truth was one of pure negativity. There is nothing positive to take away from the relationship between Devlin and Alicia in *Notorious*, and as if he felt he did not make the point strongly enough, Hitchcock set out in *Vertigo* to show, with not a trace of ambiguity, the inescapability of the realization that the harmonious romantic union is merely a (self)destructive fantasy.

Considering its canonicity in film studies and the understandable ubiquity of exegeses in Hitchcock Studies, *Vertigo* has been thoroughly mined by innumerable scholars working from various analytic positions. While, “in itself,” *Vertigo* has been remarkably elucidated by the scholars who have engaged it over the years, it has yet to be appropriately situated as a step towards Hitchcock’s Hegelian/Lacanian shift to be achieved in *Marnie*. Both Modleski and Žižek have shrewdly observed the terrifying implications of *Vertigo* vis-à-vis male subjectivity and its reliance on Woman when Woman, in Lacanese, “does not exist”; by failing to analyze Hitchcock *en masse*, however, neither scholar succeeds in recognizing in *Vertigo* a progressive step in Hitchcock’s evolution from *Notorious* and pointing towards *Marnie*.

The end of *Vertigo*, the most famous portion of this canonical classic, has always been of particular interest to scholars. For Wood, *Vertigo* is a spectacular achievement in the critique of patriarchy, standing tall as “a denunciation of male egoism, presumption, and intransigence” (Wood 1989: 242). Scottie (James Stewart), due to his obsessive fascination with a “fantasy” Woman at the expense of Judy (Kim Novak), the “real” woman in front of him, brings about the death of both the “fantasy” and the “reality,” leaving him with nothing but the emptiness of his own (self)destructive desire. In an effort to make her mirror his desire, the desire of Man, Scottie “destroys woman’s otherness”; in his desperate, narcissistic effort to “sustain a sense of himself,” he initiates “the end of woman” (Modleski 2005/1988: 96). What is important to recognize in these claims from past *Vertigo* exegetes is the exact duplication of the denouement in *Notorious*. Devlin and Scottie, due to their obsessive fascination with a fantasy Alicia/Judy/Madeleine/Woman, at the expense of the real woman in front of them, kill the fantasy and the reality and are left with nothing but their own subjective emptiness. Thus, by *Vertigo*, Hitchcock has successfully killed off Woman; all that is left is Man and his (self)destructive phantasms. Recalling Modleski’s earlier warning about refusing the notion of equality in the suffering of Hitchcock’s male and female characters, it would appear, based on the psychological and physical violence done to the women in his films, that Hitchcock did, indeed, favor male subjectivity by at least “protecting” it from death. The counter to this erroneous conclusion, however, is contained in the aforementioned observations made by Žižek and, ironically, Modleski herself: If, from *Notorious* to *Vertigo*, Hitchcock’s matrix has adhered to the Lacanian dictum “Woman does not exist,” i.e., Woman as a signifier for a universal entity is devoid of her ontological solidity, then, *mutatis mutandis*, it also adheres to the reverse that “Man does not exist.”

Recalling Žižek’s and Fink’s lamentations vis-à-vis simplistic and erroneous conceptualizations of Lacanian doctrine, Lacan’s proclamation “Woman does not exist” is a

favorite among detractors who see it as indicative of Lacan's ignorant phallogocentrism. As Žižek has shrewdly shown, what is missing from these insensitive readings of the *dixit* is how Man's nonexistence is inextricably bound up with the nonexistence of Woman. The "ultimate male fantasy" vis-à-vis Woman, as sagaciously illuminated by Žižek, is that, beyond that which is submitted to the phallic order, there exists an "ineffable, mysterious 'beyond'," some unfathomable feminine essence (Žižek 2005: 64). So, when Lacan uses the term "Woman," it is in reference to the patriarchal conceptualization of this ineffable feminine essence, *and it is precisely this* which does not exist. And in *Vertigo*, this is the horrifying realization towards which Scottie was always approaching. Judy's first death, as Madeleine, was the emergence of Scottie's symptom, but in true Lacanian fashion, the symptom is that which "will continue not to be understood until the analysis has got quite a long way" (Lacan 1988/1954: 159). Scottie does not understand that Madeleine, i.e. his fantasy conceptualization of Woman, was destined to die as a confirmation of her nonexistence, and to repress this fact, he sets out, in the second half of the film, to recreate this spectral entity. But repression is no solution, and for as hard as he tries, Scottie inevitably experiences a "return of the repressed," of the past trauma that "only takes on its value in the future" (Lacan 1988/1954: 159). This return of the repressed is what confers upon the ending its placement "among the most disturbing and painful experiences the cinema has to offer"; by becoming "too aware that the fantasy *is* fantasy, and too aware of it as imposition on the woman" (Wood 1989: 387), Scottie experiences "subjective destitution," that which, at this low point in the experience of subjectivity's radical negativity, appears to be the moment that precedes the annihilation of the subject.

At this point on the path of subjectivity, Scottie, as the anthropomorphized subject, stands (literally) before a precipice. The iconic final image of *Vertigo* where Scottie stands looking down into the abyss of subjectivity in which Woman has just reached her demise implies the imminent death, too, of Scottie as Man. The notion "Woman is a symptom of Man" means, as previously asserted, that the death of Woman yields the death of Man, and faced with this eschatological conceptualization of subjectivity, Otto Weininger proposed "collective suicide" as the only remaining option for those seeking salvation.<sup>7</sup> In its literality, this proposition is anathema; metaphysically, however, it is tautological. The end of *Vertigo* stages the "coming into operation" of the Symbolic "in its most radical" form, a moment which, according to Lacan:

Ends up abolishing the action of the individual so completely that by the same token it eliminates his tragic relation to the world [...] The subject finds himself to be no more than a pawn, forced inside this system, and excluded from any truly dramatic, and consequently tragic, participation in the realization of truth (Lacan 1988/1955: 325).

If Man only exists *qua* Woman, i.e., if the subject only exists *qua* its symptom, then the only way to participate in the “realization of truth” is to conceive of the symptom as “sinthome.” Returning to the previously postulated Hegelian/Lacanian shift, what Hitchcock’s characters have gradually realized through their narrative ordeals is that the annihilation of the symptom is not an annihilation of their problem but *an annihilation of themselves*, of their very being. Devlin and Scottie, as representatives of the patriarchal order, of the phallic regime, must recognize the “radical ontological status” of the symptom as sinthome: The symptom is literally “the only point that gives consistency to the subject,” it is the choosing something, the symptom, over nothing, i.e., over “radical psychotic autism, the destruction of the symbolic universe” (Žižek 2008/1989: 81). This realization of the Hitchcock protagonist does not, however, open the door for “positivity” or “positive negativity” interpretations of his later work; more precisely, a late film like *Marnie* reveals “abstract negativity,” reveals identification with the symptom, “giving up the false distance” and “tarrying with the negative.” *Spellbound*, as an Imaginary film *par excellence*, resolves itself via the self-deception of the fantasy of the fulfilled sexual relationship, of the “moving out” and away from the symptom; *Notorious* and *Vertigo*, meanwhile, shift the emphasis from the Imaginary to the Symbolic, staging the denial of the possibility of fantasy conferring upon them ontological stability and finding the protagonists accepting symbolic castration, of the lack constitutive of desire.

Where *Notorious* and *Vertigo* see their protagonists err is in their belief that, in the *film noir* tradition of the hard-boiled detective’s conquering of the chimerical *femme fatale*, by breaking down the Woman, revealing “an entity without substance” (Žižek 1991: 65), they would cure themselves. What they come to realize, embodied in the final cripplingly enervated image of Scottie in *Vertigo*, is that the symptom, while unquestionably something that “causes a great deal of trouble,” should nevertheless be embraced, for “its absence would mean even greater trouble: total catastrophe” (Žižek 2008/1989: 85). This “total catastrophe” is what awaits Devlin on the other side of the end credits of *Notorious*. This is what Scottie had the chance, upon meeting Judy, to avoid, but what he could not help but reenact through his own ignorance. And this is what Mark Rutland (Sean Connery) in *Marnie* succeeds in avoiding. He is given the same second chance as Scottie, but he refuses to allow history to repeat itself and instead identifies with his symptom.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike *Vertigo*, the complete lack of canonicity evident in the place *Marnie* occupies in the Hitchcock canon explains the large-scale academic failure to situate it as the sublime achievement of Hitchcock’s cinematic philosophizing. Even Žižek fails to see in *Marnie*

Hitchcock's apotheosis, instead marking it as the first indication of Hitchcock's artistic "disintegration" (Žižek 1992: 5) following the "closure" of his filmic "system" with *The Birds* (1963).<sup>9</sup> Only Wood, due to his recognition of the predominance in Hitchcock of the failed sexual relationship, has been able to see in *Marnie* a culmination. Through the bewildering relationship between Mark and the titular Marnie (Tippi Hedren), Hitchcock's ambition at last sees him postulate a universality of subjectivity, a postulation that brings him face-to-face with the Freudian/Hegelian "*Ungeschehenmachen*,"<sup>10</sup> the sublimity of negativity. Countering both the "positivity" and the "positive negativity" interpretations of Hitchcock films from past scholars and embracing "abstract negativity," *Marnie* necessitates an interpretation that recognizes within the film the Hegelian/Lacanian process of taking the impossibility of the sexual relationship from the epistemological level and concretizing it on the ontological level. The end of *Notorious* serves as a *disavowal* of the impossibility of the sexual relationship, while *Vertigo* serves as *acquiescence* to it, both cases remaining on the level of epistemological obstacle; Hitchcock achieves his Hegelian/Lacanian shift in *Marnie* by showcasing the *transcendence* of the epistemological obstacle as it becomes ontologically constitutive.

As perspicaciously apprehended by Wood, Mark "represents a new stage in the development of Hitchcock's heroes" based on the way he "sees clearly and accepts the fact of the inextricability of good and evil," the fact that "every moral action carries within it its inextricably interwoven thread of immorality" (Wood 1989: 182). Where Wood goes astray in his interpretation, though, is in his overzealous embracement of Mark as remarkably "free of inner compulsions and of his own past life" (Wood 1989: 182). For Wood, the relationship between Mark and Marnie mirrors perfectly the relationship between the analyst and the analysand. Mark is an avatar of the "subject presumed to know"; the analyst is presumed to know in advance the significance, the meaning, of the analysand's psychological discordance, a knowledge that is a necessary illusion since "only through this supposition of knowledge can real knowledge be produced" (Žižek 2008/1989: 210). It is the illusory nature of Mark's totemic position as the subject presumed to know that is missed by Wood but intuited by Murray Pomerance, who recognizes, in Mark's arrogant acceptance of his totemic status, "a man in masquerade" (Pomerance 2004: 146). Judging the relationship from Wood's perspective, Mark has succeeded in his constitution of an identity. All he has to do to achieve a successful relationship is "fix" his troublesome female counterpart. From Pomerance's more nuanced Jungian perspective, however, Mark, too, has failed in his bid for an identity, and through his attempts to fix Marnie he will find that he, too, is in need of psychological overhaul.<sup>11</sup>

Nowhere is Mark's insufficiency more clearly discernible than in the film's controversial rape scene. After getting married, Mark and Marnie embark on a honeymoon that cannot see its traditional consummation due to the fact that Marnie is psychologically incapable of engaging in sex. At first, Mark cavalierly accepts this as just one of the many hurdles he will have to overcome in winning Marnie's heart, but after a while, he becomes agitated and sexually frustrated, and following a night of hard drinking, he enters Marnie's bedroom and, over her protests, forces her to have sex with him. Pomerance points out how, "in a society where the *droit du seigneur* was still largely unquestioned," Mark's rape was, for Hitchcock, an indication of male desperation, he was showing "a male spectacularly failing" (Pomerance 2004: 153). And this failure is of the utmost importance vis-à-vis Mark's failure in constituting an identity. Returning to the Lacanian notion of sexed identities, Mark obviously believes himself to be a male, to be constituted by a masculine identity. His hyperbolic masculinity, however, rather than a positive aspect of his personality, is his greatest hindrance. His "symbolic death," which follows his raping of Marnie, is therefore his death as a sexed being, as a stereotypically masculine subject. In short, his symbolic death is the death of Man. For Pomerance, Mark "must learn to be in life without the agency of masculinity" (Pomerance 2004: 146), he must transcend "his need to be male in all things before being human" (Pomerance 2004: 147), and the only way he can do this is by recognizing the impotence of the phallic order, indeed, of the phallus itself.

Contrary to some of the more simplistic appraisals, in Lacanian doctrine, the phallus is not the male sexual organ. As Lacan himself explicitly states, the relationship between a subject and the phallus "forms without regard to the anatomical distinction between the sexes" (Lacan 2006: 576). The phallus is, at its most perversely paradoxical, "an index of its own impossibility" (Žižek 2008/1989: 175); for Mark, however, the positivity of the phallic signifier has not yet registered its constitutive lack, he has not yet recognized it as a signifier of castration. It is via his abysmally failed sexual conquest that Mark experiences the "forced choice" that defines castration: "If he cannot, he cannot; but even if he can, any attesting to his power is doomed to function as a denial," as a "masking of his fundamental impotence," which "just confirms, in a negative way, that he cannot do anything," and "the more he shows his power, the more his impotence is confirmed" (Žižek 2008/1989: 176). Mark believes, based on his familial importance, his dignified social status, and a myriad of other hollow corroborations, that the positivity of the phallus constitutes his identity, and by experiencing the horrifying impotence that comes with his raping of Marnie and his causing her to attempt suicide, Mark kills the phallic

signifier and experiences what Joe McElhaney astutely identifies as an “unwitting form of self-exposure” (McElhaney 2006: 90).

If Mark’s empyrean task is to transcend his masculinity and dissolve the potency of the phallus, then Marnie’s task is to dissolve the potency of the maternal superego. Seeing how the discursive realm in which they exist is that of patriarchy, it is necessarily from a patriarchal perspective that Marnie’s relationship with her mother, Bernice (Louise Latham), must be viewed. From this viewpoint, “the deficient paternal ego-ideal makes [patriarchal] law ‘regress’ towards a ferocious maternal superego” (Žižek 1991: 99). By “restoring” patriarchal law, Mark would appear to be reinstating the phallic order, restoring the potency of the phallus. In reality, what appears is an example of the “Hegelian Universal,” that which “can realize itself only in impure, deformed, corrupted forms” (Žižek 2008/1989: 166). By way of an example, Žižek talks of democracy and how it “makes possible all sorts of manipulation, corruption, the rule of demagoguery,” etc., but then points out how, “as soon as we eliminate the possibility of such deformations,” democracy itself is lost (Žižek 2008/1989: 166). “Real” democracy is therefore a fantasy formation that carries with it an obscene double, and too far a retreat into fantasy leaves open the possibility for this Real obscenity to emerge.

The notion of patriarchy is a similar Universal. Patriarchy, like democracy, is a “necessary fiction”; as a metonym for the social order, for “reality,” patriarchy itself is a metonym for Man, and for Marnie/Woman, just as for Mark/Scottie/Devlin/Man, she cannot exist without her symptom. She spent her entire adult life fighting against men, against the patriarchal order, in favor of the “ferocious maternal superego”; the ending seeks then to achieve transference, to renounce the maternal superego and its phantasmatic (self)destructiveness and to embrace patriarchy in its “abstract negativity.” Wood adoringly recalls the ending of the film in the following passage:

At the end of the film, after her recalling of the past, Marnie kneels again in the same position [as in the beginning] beside her mother’s chair. Close-up of Mrs. Edgar’s hand reaching out to touch her daughter’s hair. Then, instead, she moves restlessly: “Marnie, you’re achin’ my leg.” Marnie gets up, resigned. Mark Rutland takes her, and strokes and tidies and smoothes her hair with his hands, saying, “There, that’s better,” and Marnie accepts the action. The moment—so unobtrusive and unforced—is perhaps (more even than the flashback) the climax of the film: it expresses, with that simplicity which is the prerogative of genius at the height of its powers, the transference toward which the whole film has been progressing (Wood 1989: 183).

This transference is the restoration of the patriarchal order, but in an “impure” and “deformed” articulation. As noted by Lacan, “any shelter in which may be established a viable, temperate



relation of one sex to the other necessitates the intervention” of “that medium known as the paternal metaphor” (Lacan 1979/1964: 276). This “temperate relation” is what Žižek, in his most inspired and articulate reading of Lacan’s “there is no such thing as a sexual relationship,” marks as the shift from “there is no such thing as a sexual relationship” to “there *is* a non-relationship.”<sup>12</sup> This shift synthesizes Žižek’s thought on all three of its primary levels: Kantian (“negative judgment” to “infinite judgment”), Lacanian (“there is no such thing as a sexual relationship” to “there *is* a non-relationship”), and, of course, Hegelian (“determinate reflection” to “reflexive determination”). This shift is “the key dialectical shift” (Žižek 2012: 798), the shift that makes visible the shared sublimity of Hegel, Lacan, and Hitchcock. The core of Lacanian psychoanalysis, at its most Hegelian, intersects with the core of Hitchcock’s cinema at the end of *Marnie*, where a temperate and deformed relationship between Mark and Marnie seems tenable under the auspices of an impure but nevertheless reasonably functional form of patriarchy. When Mark and Marnie exit Marnie’s mother’s house, they reenter the same world from which they were ostensibly trying to escape, and nothing has changed in the external, which is the key to unlocking the power of the Hegelian/Lacanian dialectical shift.

The conclusion of *Marnie*, which serves equally as the conclusion of the Hitchcockian project of philosophizing on the impossibility of the sexual relationship, is therefore in direct contrast to *Spellbound*, *Notorious*, and *Vertigo*. *Spellbound* conforms to Lacan’s original, simplistic conceptualization of the “final moment of analysis” wherein the subject is able to narrate his/her own history “in its continuity,” where Dr. Edwardes is able to accept his true identity and verbalize his past trauma as a means of psychological exorcism; *Notorious* and *Vertigo*, in their radical negativity, progress to the later stage of Lacanian doctrine wherein the subject accepts symbolic castration, resigned to the lack constitutive of desire that cannot be exorcized and from the overwhelming power of which one can only wilt under. *Marnie* subsumes and then transcends these prior conclusions. Mark, for his part, is ostensibly placed in the same positions as Devlin and Scottie where he must accept his symbolic castration, whereas Marnie, for her part, ostensibly finds her “cure” in successfully narrating and thus exorcizing her past trauma. But Hitchcock does not stop there. By including the moment where Marnie’s mother again pushes her away and sends her into Mark’s arms, Hitchcock forces the realization that the only thing capable of “curing” the subject is neither the fantasy of a return to a pre-traumatic bliss nor resignation to the lack constitutive of desire; rather than trying to abolish, to exorcize the negativity inherent in subjectivity, one must, in Hegelese, find the supreme power of the Spirit:

The life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being (Hegel quoted in Žižek 1993: ix).

For Lacan, the subject is “cured” upon realizing that the path of subjectivity is not from a question to its answer, but instead, is just “an enormous question mark” (Lacan 1992/1960: 325) recalling the Möbius strip.<sup>13</sup> This notion supports the ambiguity with which Hitchcock ends *Marnie*; Wood points out the lack of “a positive force that can destroy the sense of precariousness and fragility” inherent to the “imperfect and bewildering world” (Wood 1989: 197) depicted, a lack that Hitchcock has taken from the epistemological level and concretized on the ontological level, recalling Lacan’s identical Hegelian achievement. There is no “solution” posited by Hitchcock to the impossibility of the sexual relationship, the fundamental antinomy of subjectivity, just as there was no solution posited by Lacan. Žižek calls Lacan’s *Encore* seminar his “ultimate achievement and deadlock” (Žižek 2012: 18), a fittingly paradoxical compliment that serves equally as countenance for *Marnie*, Hitchcock’s most insightful and bewildering masterwork. As perspicaciously observed by Juliet Mitchell (1990/1974), psychoanalysis does not exist to “solve” subjectivity; rather, psychoanalysis is tasked with analyzing the intersubjective network in which the subject spends his/her lifetime “tarrying with the negative.” From this perspective, then, Alfred Hitchcock stands as one of the most dedicated, challenging, and ambitious psychoanalysts of the cinema, using the classical romantic paradigm as the means by which to steer his philosophical filmic discourse towards the realization of “sublime stupidity,” which Lacan defined as “the highest point of what lies below” (Lacan 1999/1973: 13), and it is on this sublime and suitably paradoxical meridian that both men will spend eternity tarrying with the negative in their amaranthine cultivation of Spirit.

## Notes

The best candidate for starting this trend in film studies is Laura Mulvey with her (in)famous essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (2009/1975).

<sup>2</sup> Žižek has long hung his conceptualization of the Hegelian dialectic of the “epistemological obstacle” versus the “positive ontological condition” on the Lacanian hook of the impossibility of the sexual relationship, but as his more recent work suggests, he has begun to conceptualize this dialectic as not just the way to understand the (impossible) sexual relationship but the way to understand subjectivity as such. For this recent development in Žižek’s thought (or, at the very least, his most explicit embracement of it), see *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (2012).

<sup>3</sup> Todd McGowan explores the notion of “distortion” in classical Hollywood cinema in *The Real Gaze: Film Theory after Lacan* (2007).

<sup>4</sup> It is revealed later in the film that Edwardes is actually a psychologically disturbed war veteran who witnessed the real Edwardes’ murder and fell victim to amnesia as a psychological defense against his traumatic childhood memory of accidentally killing his brother.

<sup>5</sup> For Žižek’s elaboration on these shifts, see *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (2008/1989: 145-147).

<sup>6</sup> Lacan elaborates on this paradox of love in “The Signification of the Phallus,” which can be found in Bruce Fink’s translation of Lacan’s *Écrits* (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Žižek offers a sustained reading of Weininger in *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (1993: 187-189).

<sup>8</sup> And Marnie, too, for her part as the “other half” of the Subject (speaking to Hitchcock’s previously asserted quest for a universality of subjectivity) is faced with an identical dilemma and is equally successful in her bid at “tarrying with the negative.”

<sup>9</sup> For Žižek’s elaboration on *The Birds* and its place in the “Hitchcockian system,” see *Looking Awry* (1991). It would be impossible to do justice to the breadth and complexity of Žižek’s various insights into Hitchcock’s cinema here, but suffice it to say that his basic premise (i.e., that to which his puzzling indifference towards *Marnie* can be attributed) vis-à-vis the Hitchcockian system is the indomitable “reign of maternal law,” which he alleges “defines the kernel of the Hitchcockian fantasy” (Žižek 1991: 106). *Marnie* therefore serves not only as the quintessential Hitchcock film apropos Hitchcock’s distinct Lacanian Hegelianism; considering its ultimate project of, in Lacanese, “removing the veil” that provides the functionality of the maternal law and thus removing the veil that provides the entire Hitchcockian system with the teleological foundation (mis)perceived by Žižek (which, significantly, is in direct contrast to his longstanding project of asserting the necessity of embracing the “negation of negation” in the victory of ontology over epistemology), it is also, in a fashion so perfectly paradoxical that even Žižek would no doubt appreciate the humor in it, at once

the quintessential “anti-Žižek” Hitchcock film *as well as the most Žižekian Hitchcock film of all!*

<sup>10</sup> For Žižek’s elaboration on this concept, see *Interrogating the Real* (2005: 33-34).

<sup>11</sup> In *Less Than Nothing*, Žižek makes reference to Jung’s astute observation vis-à-vis the symptom: “We do not cure it—it cures us” (Jung qtd. in Žižek 2012: 301).

<sup>12</sup> Žižek explores at length the insights stemming from Lacan’s *Encore* seminar in *Less Than Nothing* (2012: 739-802).

<sup>13</sup> For Lacan’s elaboration on this concept, see *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book IX: Identification, 1961-1962*.

## References

Abel, Richard (2009/1986) “Notorious: Perversion par Excellence,” in Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland Poague (eds.) *A Hitchcock Reader*, Second Edition. Malden: Blackwell.

Allen, Richard (1999) “Hitchcock, or the Pleasures of Metaskepticism,” in Richard Allen and S. Ishii-Gonzalès (eds.) *Alfred Hitchcock: Centenary Essays*. London: BFI.

Fink, Bruce (1995) *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Lacan, Jacques (1988/1954) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud’s Papers on Technique*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lacan, Jacques (1988/1955) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*, trans. by Sylvana Tomaselli, New York: W.W. Norton.

Lacan, Jacques (1992/1960) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960*, trans. by Dennis Porter, New York: W.W. Norton.

Lacan, Jacques (1962) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book IX: Identification, 1961-1962* (unpublished), trans. by Cormac Gallagher. Available at [http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-IX\\_identification.pdf](http://www.valas.fr/IMG/pdf/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-IX_identification.pdf).

Lacan, Jacques (1979/1964) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, 1964*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Lacan, Jacques (1999/1973) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love, and Knowledge, 1972-1973*, trans. by Bruce Fink, New York: Norton.

Lacan, Jacques (2006) *Écrits*, trans. by Bruce Fink, New York: Norton.

McElhaney, Joe (2006) *The Death of Classical Cinema: Hitchcock, Lang, Minnelli*, Albany: State University of New York.

- McGowan, Todd (2007) *The Real Gaze: Film Theory after Lacan*, Albany: State University of New York.
- Mitchell, Juliet (1990/1974) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Second Edition. London: Penguin.
- Modleski, Tania (2005/1988) *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory*, Second Edition. New York and Oxford: Routledge.
- Mulvey, Laura (2009/1975) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," in Marshall Cohen and Leo Braudy (eds.) *Film Theory & Criticism*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pomerance, Murray (2004) *An Eye for Hitchcock*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Truffaut, Francois (1967) *Hitchcock*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Wood, Robin (1965) *Hitchcock's Films*, New York: A.S. Barnes.
- Wood, Robin (1989) *Hitchcock's Films Revisited*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2008/1989) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Second Edition. London: Verso.
- Žižek, Slavoj (1991) *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj (1992) *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, London: Verso.
- Žižek, Slavoj (1993) *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2005) *Interrogating the Real*. Ed. Rex Butler and Scott Stephens. London: Continuum.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2006) *The Parallax View*, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj (2012) *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, London: Verso.