

Auteur Theory

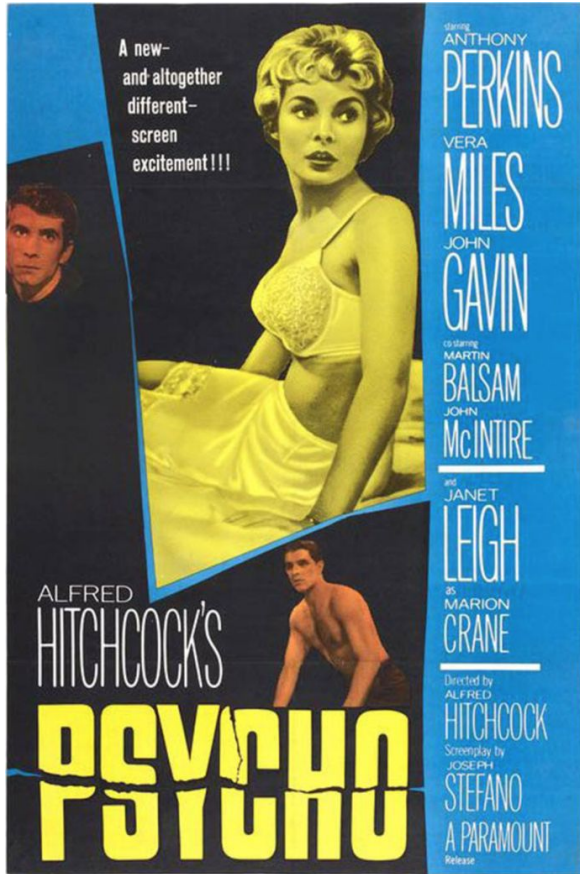
Hitchcock

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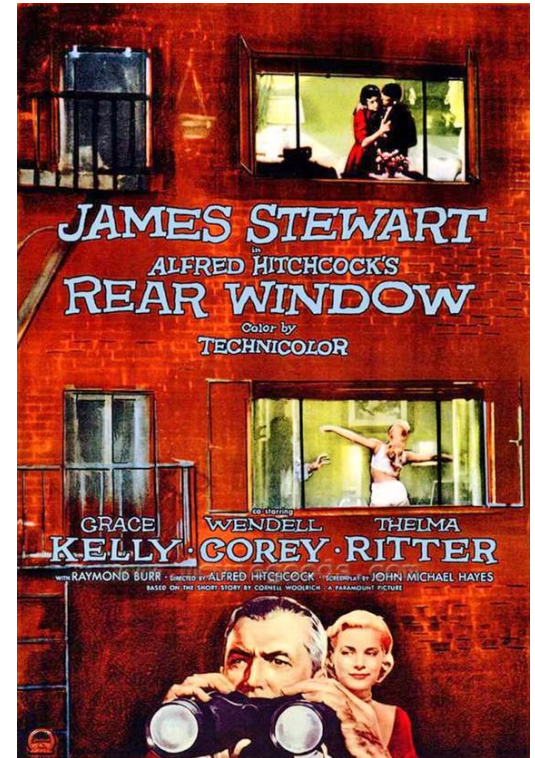
- “Auteur”: a singular artist who controls all aspects of a collaborative creative work, a person equivalent to the author of a novel or a play
- It is a film theory in which the director is viewed as the major creative force, almost equivalent to an auteur
- The Auteur Theory puts the director in a unique and irreplaceable position of personal artistic perspective and defines his/her film as the product of that perspective
- An auteur’s film have recurrent themes, characters, and a distinct visual style

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- The theory was mainly developed by Francois Truffaut’s essay in 1954, “A certain tendency of French Cinema,” and Andrew Sarris with his essay, “Notes on the Auteur Theory” in 1962
- Both essays gave notion that the directors are the equals of great painters, writers, and composers
- The theory also showed and established that the movies were in art form



Hitchcock's "Psycho" and "Rear Window"



1. MacGuffin

- Definition by Merriam-Webster: The MacGuffin is an object, event, or character in a film or story that serves to set and keep the plot in motion despite usually lacking intrinsic importance
- Common examples are:
 - Money
 - Glory
 - Survival
 - A potential threat
 - A mysterious but highly desired item or object
- The MacGuffin may come back into play at the climax of the story, but sometimes it is actually forgotten by the end of the story
- The MacGuffin is used in most of Hitchcock's films, and it certainly appears in both "Psycho" and "Rear Window"



The MacGuffin in "Psycho" is the \$40,000 that Mr. Cassidy left



The MacGuffin in "Rear Window" is Lars Thorwald, as Jeffries grows his curiosity on his private life

2. Technical Competence

- Hitchcock uses the same techniques in “Psycho” and “Rear Window” very effectively to play the audience. This includes his way of setting the plot and controlling the POV of scenes



Psycho



Rear Window

- Both films start with an establishing shot that includes panning to the main character.

3. Recurring Themes

The Role of Gender

- In both films, women are always put in danger by men, either they are eventually killed off by men, or they are saved by the masculine figures. Thus, Hitchcock has a tendency to stress the feminine weakness



Psycho:
Marion is killed by Norman.
Marion's sister, Lila is threatened
by Norman whose mind is now
manifested by his late mother, but
is immediately saved by Sam.



Rear Window:
Lars Thorwald, the villain of the
movie, tries to put an end to his
unhappy marriage by killing his
wife in order to run off with
another woman. Lisa sneaks into
Thorwald's house to find evidence
for his crime, but is endangered as
Thorwald catches her. She is only
saved when the police that Jeff had
called arrives.

(Personal Theory) Marriage is Troublesome

Throughout both films, Hitchcock seems to implicate his definition of marriage as complicated and troublesome. The MacGuffin of both films were initially carried out by the problem of marriage.

Marion needed money to bail Sam out of debt so he can marry her; thus, made her want Cassidy's money.



In the "Rear Window," marriage troubles the protagonist, Jeffries. Jeffries has a beautiful socialite girlfriend, Lisa. While Lisa wants to marry Jeffries, Jeffries is not sure if he is willing to risk his travelling job or have Lisa risk her luxurious life to marry. The film itself nearly spends the first 20 minutes on Jeffries consulting his insurance company's nurse, Stella and discussing with Lisa about settling together.



Not only is Jeffries suffering from the issue, but also the villain of the movie, Thorwald has been having the problem as well. In fact, his unhappy marriage became the motive of his crime where he killed his wife; thus, the marital problem became the origin of Rear Window's MacGuffin.

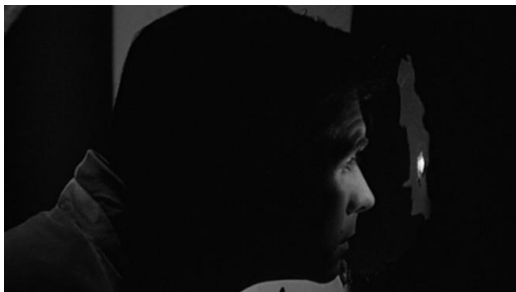


The newly-wed couple in the neighborhood also indicates the troubles of marriage as it starts from the couple spending their first night to them bickering in the ending of the movie.



Voyeurism

- Voyeurism is also one of the recurring themes of Psycho and Rear Window.
- Definition of Voyeurism by Merriam-Webster: Voyeurism is the desires or behaviour of a voyeur such as the practice of obtaining sexual gratification from observing others, or the practice of taking pleasure in observing something private, sordid, or scandalous.



- The film itself starts with a pan and zooms into an opened window where Marion and Sam is seen making out. This makes the audience as a voyeur, as they have just witnessed a couple engage sexually. Later in the film, Norman becomes a voyeur as he peeks into a hole that shows him Marion in her underwear. This creates sexual desires in Norman, eventually leading to his internal mother being angered and stabbing Marion to death.



- In the Rear Window, the main character Jeffries himself is a voyeur. As the plot gradually ascends, other characters, such as Lisa and Stella become a fixed voyeur as well.

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