

## Chapter Six—*Vertigo* (Hitchcock 1958)



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### Cue The Maestro

Indeed, Bernard Hermann's opening musical figure for *Vertigo* (Hitchcock 1958), heard over the Paramount logo (a circle of stars surround the text "A Paramount Release" superimposed on two snow-capped mountains) immediately announces musically the repetitive and circular nature of Scotty's **repetition compulsion**—Freud's term for the human penchant to repeat traumatic events in order to gain mastery over them—as it reinforces the film's own circularity. We hear a rising and falling figure of strings and winds punctuated by a brassy blast. This musical motif is repeated later during Scotty's realization of his fear of heights, produced this time over the "vertigo shot" by a harp glissando which continuously scales up and down the instrument with no discernible root note, and again is disrupted by brass, namely muted trumpets. The rapid

succession of notes ascending and descending depicts musically and stylistically the instability of the vertigo experience as does the “vertigo shot” with its simultaneous double movement forward and backward. The blast of brass is a sort of sobering punch in the stomach, a **musical sting** which emphasizes a particularly terrifying or poignant moment.

### **The Vertigo Shot—the stylized moment *par excellence***

Hitchcock’s famous **vertigo shot**—a tracking in one direction while simultaneously zooming in the opposite direction—is probably cinema’s stylized moment *par excellence* in that it is a technical innovation that translates brilliantly into meaning for this film, although admittedly that meaning is so literal that it practically qualifies as a “Mickey Finn” shot like Spade’s pov in *Maltese Falcon* after being drugged. Irmin Roberts, the second-unit director of photography/cameraman, is credited (though not in the film) for having developed this photographic “trick” done with miniatures placed horizontally. Also called a **contra-zoom shot** or a **trombone shot**, by zooming the lens, in this case, *in* on the subject, while simultaneously tracking out, the subject, according to all accounts, allegedly remains the same size as the background changes through compression. This is an accurate description of later vertigo shots for example in *Jaws* (Spielberg 1975) and *Indochine* (Wagnier 1992) etc., however it is not an accurate description of the effect in *Vertigo* where the subject is minimized as the “sides” of the image expand, creating an unusual three dimensional effect. Rather, the result is that the foreground remains relatively constant, if a bit elongated, as the background recedes.

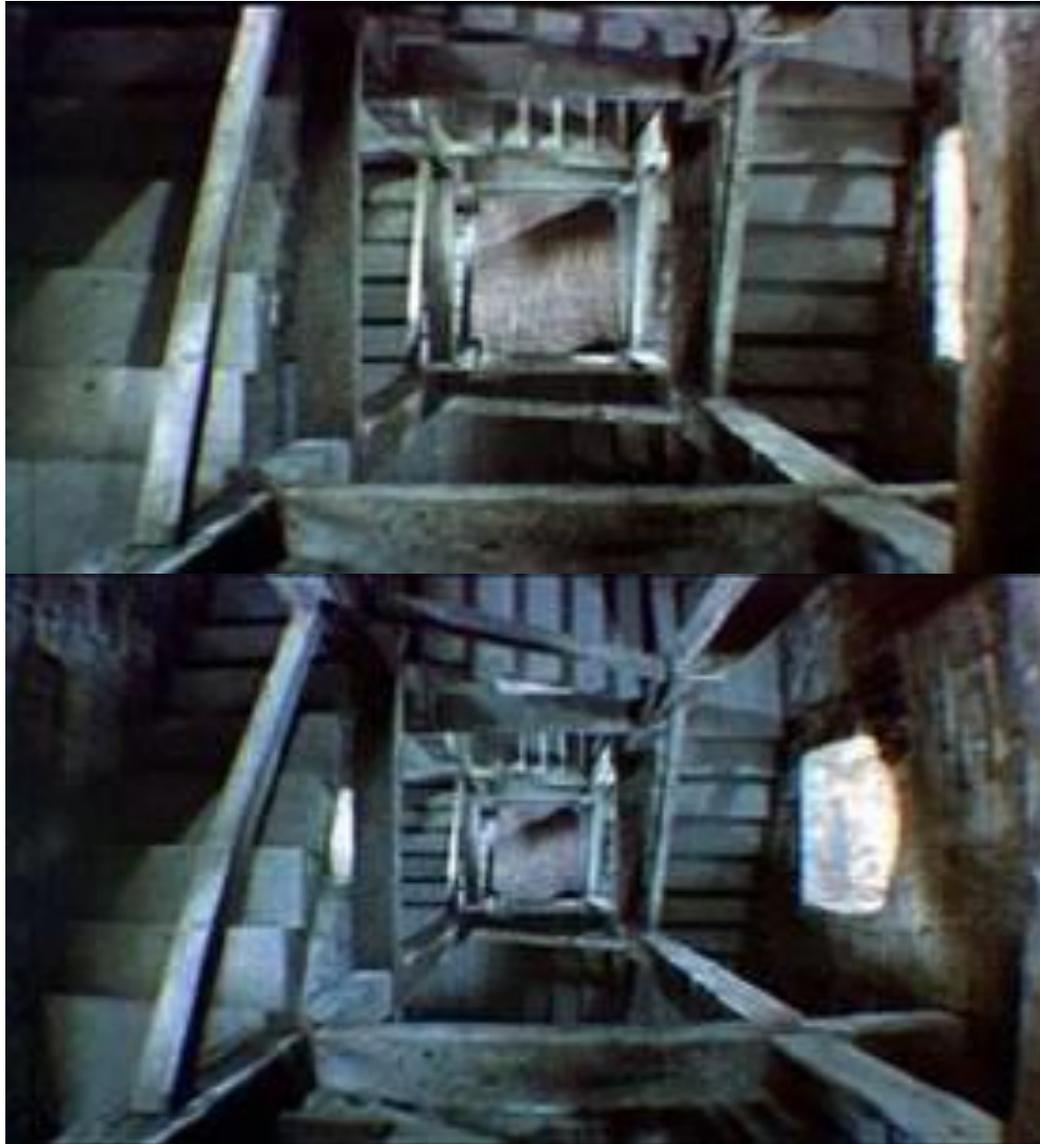


Fig. 1 Stylized moment par excellence, “Vertigo Shot” approaches the literalness of the Mickey Finn shot

Of course the background is the “subject” being zoomed in on and tracked away from.

At the beginning of the film it is the San Francisco cop on the street below, and later it is the stairwell’s ground floor of the San Juan Batista mission. In each case Scotty fearfully gazes at these targets as the audience experiences Scotty’s uncanny POV shot projecting himself to the ground and certain death while simultaneously shrinking away.

## **Title Sequence**

Although Saul Bass is credited with designing the film's title sequence, this work is undoubtedly confined to the swirling images over which the credits are superimposed. The opening images announcing the film, which precede Bass' icons, are pure Hitchcock. The first frames fade in to the lower left quadrant only of what on a second viewing we discover is the face of Carlotta Valdes (Joanne Genthon), who will appear later, "alive" and in the arms of Gavin Elster during Scottie's nightmare. The composition of the image is unbalanced, filling only the left half of the frame. The camera then pans to the left as it zooms in for a choker close-up frozen still of her pursing lips as the name "James Stewart" flies up from below to settle between her nose and upper lip. This movement and title placement is significant in that it associates Stewart and his character with closed lips: Scottie is silenced by Elster after the inquest: "No, there's nothing you have to say to me." Scottie does not speak for a year after his trauma and nightmare. As Stewart's name fades, Carlotta's face is unfrozen as she completes her pursing. The camera tilts up past her nose to rest on her eyes, which shift to the left and then to the right as the name "Kim Novak" flies down from above to rest below the eyes on the bridge of her nose. This shifty-eyed movement clearly connects Novak's character with the femme fatale of *Maltese Falcon* discussed in Chapter 1. False Madeleine/Judy is duplicitous, double-crossing Scotty the detective just as Wonderly/LeBlanc/O'Shaughnessy did to Spade. As Novak's name fades the camera pans left and zooms in on Carlotta's right eye as the title "In Alfred Hitchcock's" flies down and underlines it. Hitchcock, with his authorial camera, will be our eyes

throughout the film as he directs our gaze and aids our voyeurism. Hitchcock's name fades and we zoom in until only the right eye fills the frame. Herrmann's music provides another sting, this time augmented by a gothic organ chord. The eye widens in horror as we detect white miniscule text emerging ever larger out of her iris—"Vertigo"—until it fills the screen and flies up and out of sight. Then the first of the animated swirling images appears again from Carlotta's iris as Herrmann's score continues the repetitive, circular wind and string pattern replete with dramatic brassy blasts. The purple swirl enlarges, filling the frame as it and the eye fade to reveal the co-star list on the right of the frame and an ever-larger blue swirling icon. These circling images continue to appear, enlarge and fade as the rest of the credits unfold.

### **The Ever-Widening Circle**



Fig. 2

The Ever-Widening Circle

Circularity serves several functions in this film: narrative, imagistic, and psychosexual. The narrative is circular in that half way through it, after Scotty's nightmare and rehabilitation, the film seems to start over again as Scotty discovers Judy and attempts to remake her as Elster has already done. After discovering Judy's complicity, Scotty takes her back up to the Mission tower "One final thing I have to do and then I'll be free of the past . . . . One doesn't often get a second chance. I want to stop being haunted." Midge discusses with Scotty in her studio the theory of repetition compulsion: "I asked my Doctor. He said that only another emotional shock could do it [cure acrophobia] and probably wouldn't." Along with the zoom in on Carlotta's eye and text emerging from her iris, the swirling Bass icons announce one of the film's two interrelated global image patterns: circles. Whether subtly placed in Scotty's apartment as a brass wall hanging, the dark wooden ceiling ornament in the McKittrick Hotel lobby seen through Scotty's POV tilt up, the portrait's bouquet of flowers and graphically matched swirl of hair, or more blatantly displayed as the animated vortex or femme fatale's black widow spider web out of which Scotty's decapitated head emerges during his nightmare, Hitchcock populates the film with these icons.





Fig. 3 The gendered circle/web: one of the film's two global image patterns

It becomes clear early in the film in his mincing and swooning scenes with “motherly” Midge that “big boy” Scotty, the confirmed bachelor who wears a corset and noticeably more eyeliner than his female counterpart, has not only a fear of heights, but a fear of, and an uncanny connection to, women as well. This connection is made manifest by the discussion of the women's brassiere Midge is sketching.



Fig. 4 You're a big boy!

The fact that this typically hidden female undergarment “works on the principle of the cantilever bridge,” something Scotty certainly would fear falling from, and that “an aircraft engineer down the peninsula designed,” forges a connection between women and heights. That connection is further specified when Scotty follows Judy to the Empire Hotel as he watches her open one of its windows. At the time of the film the Empire State Building was the tallest skyscraper in the world. Judy's placement in an upper story associates stylistically women to be reckoned with and the heartbroken Detective's fear of heights. The tableau of Judy in the Empire Hotel window forms a graphic match with

false Madeleine when she previously paraded herself at the McKittrick Hotel window, successfully “tricking” the hapless Ferguson with her sudden disappearance from the hotel with the circular shapes.



Fig. 5 Hotel names and a graphic match help forge the connection between women and heights

Keeping in mind the discussion in Chapter 1 of both the often clichéd metaphors of film language and Hollywood’s love affair with Freud (Hitchcock’s most prevailing), it is fair to claim that *Vertigo* expresses feminine power by means of these circles and swirling images. One of the swirling icons designed by Saul Bass actually takes on demonstrably

yonic (vaginal) characteristics and inaugurates the film's synecdochic logic, as it lends insight into film noir's feared femme fatales whose seductions entice the male hero into their circular Black Widow spider webs.

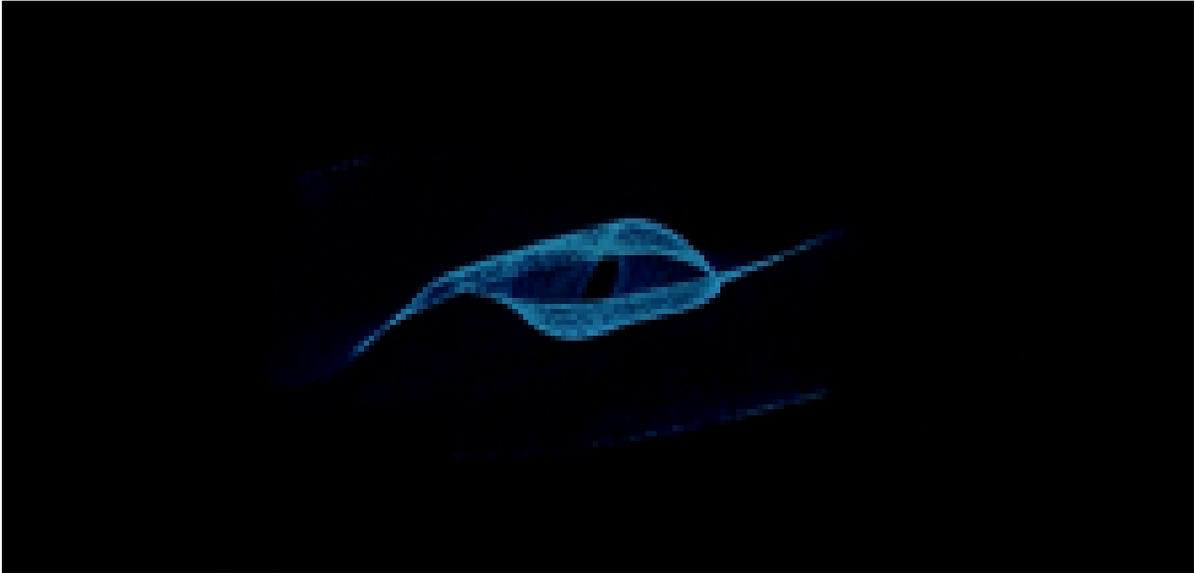


Fig. 6 Title Sequence by Saul Bass displays womb/tomb icons

### *Liebestod*

Like so much of the history of Western literature, this film and the novel from which it springs (*d'Entre les Morts—Among the Dead*) are obsessed with love and death. Witness how composer Herrmann's film score directly lifts the *Liebestod* ("love/death" leitmotif) from Richard Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*. So it comes as no surprise that the film's other global image is that of the tomb. In fact there is a "happy accident" in English whereby "tomb" rhymes with "womb"—from hence we come and towards whence we are destined—notions of mortality and discontinuity, infinity and regress abound. We are presented, mostly in nightmarish form, with the philosophical male dream of the sublime inspired by a reproductive womb envy and mystical pursuit of the door to the infinite. Following 19<sup>th</sup> Century German and British Romantics, this sublime

object is often represented in terms of Nature, which is gendered as female—also known as the “eternal feminine,” or “Mother Nature” with all of her mystery and reproductive power.





Fig. 7 A second global image pattern: the tunnel/tomb

The irony in *Vertigo* is that all such creative power is held by the often forgotten, absent center of the film, Gavin Elster. That absence is registered by the absence at the center of the vertigo shot. Scotty pursues a non-existent love object that is the sole creation of another man.



Fig. 8 An absence at the center of the shot and the narrative

## Endings

Just as the beginnings of films often contain important information for a convincing interpretation so do their endings, often wielding a retroactive tyranny over everything that has come before. I insist that students consider the ending of the film they are analyzing in order to demonstrate how that ending punctuates the meaning of the narrative as a whole. *Vertigo* ends with a *seemingly* cured Scotty walking out on the ledge of the Mission Tower looking down on yet another fallen victim as the nun tolls the great bell.



Fig. 9 A purposeful pose for the film's last frame begs interpretation

But then Scottie does something quite extraordinary and pronounced: He raises up his arms in helplessness and in so doing matches the global image of the other victims in their death pose, the Officer on Rooftop (Fred Graham) now dead on the city street, the real Madeleine dead on the Mission's tiled roof, and Scottie himself during his nightmare freefall first onto the tiled roof but then falling into infinite whiteness.







Fig. 10 The victim's stylized pose of unfreedom and death

That Scotty, or more precisely, James Stewart, intentionally raises his arms into this pose of unfreedom and death seriously undermines the simplistic closure for which Hollywood narratives are famous. **Narrative closure** is a particularly Hollywood (and TV drama and sitcom) practice whereby most loose ends of plot and character are miraculously and improbably resolved or abandoned in the film's last few minutes. Given our observation of Scotty's "victim pose," the audience is encouraged to treat his recent victory over his

fear of heights as temporary—a symptomatically brief reprieve during his momentary enlightenment as he angrily punishes Judy for her deception—only to return to his weakness and fear detectable in his swooning pose earlier in Midge’s studio.



Fig. 11 Scotty’s feminized swoon matches other poses of unfreedom and death

### **The Next Day?**

Another strategy for students to employ is to speculate upon the question: “What happens the next day?” If the film has been “true to itself,” that is, has not papered over its contradictions and loose ends, it can withstand such interrogation and reveal important putative details for a logical interpretation. It is fair to argue that the “next day” Scotty, having received the jolt required for him to kick his syndrome when he discovered Judy’s complicity, has now returned to his acrophobia with the shock of Judy’s death, as attested to by his stylized pose. Perhaps a “happy ending” lies ahead (as indicated in Hitchcock’s “Foreign Censorship Ending”) when and if Elster is apprehended fleeing his crimes in Europe. It is fair to claim that the best directors thwart expectations of narrative closure, as we will see, for example, in *Blue Velvet*.

The extreme high angle shot or God shot of the bell tower, tiled roof and sidewalk following Madeleine's "jump" is held by Hitchcock for an unprecedented 10 seconds or so creating a tableau for interpretation. A **God Shot** or extreme high angle shot is so named because it often approximates a near impossible perspective of elevation available only to a supreme being. The shot usually confers some sort of moral judgment and, particularly in Hitchcock, foreshadows the death of the subject within the frame. The priest and nuns discover Madeleine's body on the roof to the left of the tower, while to the right, a miniscule Scotty emerges in a panic from the stairwell out onto the walkway of dark grey slabs which form an unmistakable cross. Casting a long shadow, he seems to stumble. As he abandons the scene, he looks over his shoulder before going around the corner of the building. He will later testify that this state of impotence was a "mental blackout." The crucifix and clergy images on display during Scotty's flight stamp him with guilt; unbeknownst to him he is being sacrificed by Elster.



Fig. 12 A god shot creates a tableau of impotence and religion-inspired guilt

Scotty's guilt is hammered home by the Coroner at the inquest who not so subtly degrades the mute Scotty for his unmanly cowardice as a failed "watchdog and protector." Three times during the Coroner's tongue lashing there are cuts to Elster flanked by attorneys and more importantly seated behind him are the nuns and priest who found the body. To emphasize the importance of visually associating these figures of moral condemnation with Elster, who after all purportedly lost his wife due to Scotty's weakness and neglect, there is an insert shot of Elster with a watchful nun over his right shoulder.



Fig. 13 The association of Elster, the priest and nuns bestows guilt and affects the film's end  
Scotty's overdetermined guilt complex that will soon give way to a surrealistic nightmare is set up by combining the crucifix tableau at the scene of the "suicide" with the condemning stares by the real jury of Elster and the church figures. The overwhelming guilt is cemented by the Coroner's diatribe, which manages to also assign guilt for the death of the Officer on Roof. The court finishes with Scotty this way: "It is a matter between him and his own conscience." Elster's connection to the priest and nuns must be

taken into account when interpreting Judy's death at the end of the film, instigated as it is, in part, by the arrival of the nun.

### **Dreaming in Color: A shot-by-shot analysis of the Nightmare sequence**

Following the grueling inquest, Scotty briefly visits Madeleine's grave. A low angle camera allows us to view a crucifix atop a mausoleum, which prevents Scotty from appearing tall and powerful. He places his hands behind his back suggesting they were tied when it came to saving Madeleine.



Another crucifix towers over Scotty



Fig. 14 /

Vertigo ties his hands

A fade from this image to momentary blackness and then a fade up on the establishing shot of the San Francisco rooftops reminds the audience where Scotty discovered his vertigo at the beginning of the film. Lighted signs on buildings flash, most noticeably one with the letters “SP” that figured prominently in the right to left pan across the rooftops in the opening chase scene. I will leave the interpretation of those letters to others.



Fig. 15 This stationary establishing shot recalls the site of Scotty’s first vertigo attack

The following lap dissolve to the inside of Scotty’s bedroom connects the origin of his trauma with the nightmare he is about to have. An extreme high angled God shot reveals Scotty restless in bed as he assumes the stylized victim’s pose with a yellow blanket turned down, forming a wide stripe across his body. Students often jump to analyze this use of color (yellow stands for cowardice or, following Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1899 "The Yellow Wallpaper," insanity,) despite warnings about the ultimate arbitrariness of color analysis. What does the color red signify? Passion? The Devil? Anger? Beauty?

Love? Lust? Only a rather detailed analysis can begin to sound convincing when it takes its cues from the context of the film and argues specific meanings for specific colors.

There is a connected caveat to be issued as well regarding the technology of representation. Because most contemporary students, critics, and scholars study films from DVD copies, or online streaming services, those representations of color are only as good or as inaccurate as the monitor and its hue settings. What appears to be blue on one screen may very well turn up as green or purple on another.



Fig. 16 A God shot of the victim's pose



Color analysis often too arbitrary

Dark horizontal lines cast by the shadows of the Venetian blinds are irrefutable and create the typical film noir image of entrapment and imprisonment. After the establishing god shot we see an insert close up of Scotty's troubled face on the pillow as the saturating blue filtered light begins to flash on and off, mimicking the flashing signs outside. **Filters** are gelatin or glass overlays attached to the camera (or printer lens), which modify the amount and nature of light. Filters used here create flashing colors in order to contribute to the surrealistic nature of the nightmare sequence. Fog filters are used in several exterior shots with Scotty following Madeleine to Carlotta's graveyard and to the redwood forest of Muir Woods. The visual effect of the fog filters helps to soften edges and results in a kind of gauzy contrast. Because not limited to Scotty's point of view shots, the "fog" represents Scotty's and the viewer's romanticism and nostalgia for the

old San Francisco wistfully recalled by both Elster in his office and Pop Leibel in his bookstore.



Fig. 17 Fog filters suggest a romanticism and nostalgia for both viewers and Scotty alike

Throughout the nightmare leading up to Scotty's freefall in white space, the flashing filtered light continues to throb like a heartbeat, beginning as blue then violet with Scotty's head still on the pillow. When the nosegay is revealed we see a single throb of green before the rhythm is interrupted momentarily as the oil painting rendition of the

flowers transforms into a cartoon version suggesting the detective's unrealistic love affair with "Madeleine." At the outset of the nightmare, Bernard Herrmann's score has taken over in full orchestra and loud castanets with the Spanish tempo or habanera announced earlier in the film as we inspected Carlotta's portrait. This ghostly tango clearly represents the fabricated Carlotta influence at the center of Scotty's nightmare. When the throbbing filtered light flashes pick up again, the image alternates between black and white and color with a single rose blossoming at the center of the chaos of exploding petals. Perhaps the rose represents to Scotty his love for Madeleine as the one stable element in the otherwise chaotic series of events surrounding her death. Often when a film, shot primarily in color, switches to black and white it is a signal of returning to a time in the past as demonstrated, for example, in Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994) and Sam Medes' *American Beauty* (1999).



Fig. 18 Scotty's love-rose amidst the chaos

Black & White often confers a sense of history

With the appearance of the inquest window scene, the filter changes to an orange hue, and recalls two recent graphic match moments which together contribute to Scotty's anxiety: one with Captain Hansen, Elster and Scotty in front of the window and the ensuing one-sided chat with Elster and Scotty. Elster tells Scotty "You and I know who killed Madeleine," and that claim is punctuated in the dream by inserting Joanne Genthon

portraying the Carlotta of the portrait—Madeleine’s suicide was the improbable hypnotic result of the ghost of Madeleine’s mad grandmother. The dream logic of replacing Hansen with Carlotta is a not as simple. Hitchcock places the Captain so close to Elster that his body intersects with the murderer’s body. The spatial relationship is nearly identical to the one in the dream and forges a Hansen/Carlotta equation. Certainly Elster has manipulated both the San Francisco police department and the memory of his wife’s suicidal grandmother in his murder and money grab plot. Elster picks Scotty to be an unwitting accomplice based on his certain failure to see the whole truth of the crime due to his acrophobia and Madeleine infatuation. The master puppeteer not only dresses, scripts, and rehearses Judy Barton, he typecasts Scotty along with some of his movements and lines:

ELSTER: Do you mind if I speak to him for a minute?

HANSEN: Oh, go ahead.

Elster leads Scotty as he crosses to another window. Without looking at him, Elster commands Scotty to follow.

ELSTER: “Scotty.”

Elster comments that the Coroner “had no right to speak to you like that,” and further assigns or rather cancels lines: “No there’s nothing you have to say to me.”





Fig. 19 "You & I know who killed Madeleine." Elster has both Carlotta & the police in his pocket

At first Carlotta's head rests on Elster's shoulder in his embrace, and then she raises it to gaze at Scotty all the while obscured by shadow. When her head movement is complete and her stare is firmly fixed on Scotty, a key light timed to the throbbing filter illuminates her face to uncannily reveal the face in the portrait. A zoom in on a "live portrait" of Carlotta stops on a choker close-up of a necklace with a large red square gem set in a gold embroidered pendant with three hanging teardrop shaped red gems set in gold as well. What is most striking here is the presence of a kind of "cheat." Why is Scottie's consciousness so taken with this necklace? Interpretations abound from an unpacking of the meaning of this necklace, and the most convincing are those that account for the number three in their analysis of how it all relates to the film. However, the most compelling explanation of the necklace is a mere plot point. Somehow Scotty's nightmare is improbably taking out the time to italicize this prop in order to later incriminate Judy as Elster's accomplice.



Fig. 20 Scotty's nightmare pauses improbably to plant incriminating evidence

The image of Scotty walking in darkness follows. Hitchcock performs a kind of half-baked version of the vertigo shot by having Scotty walk towards the camera as the camera dollies back providing a helpless feeling that Scotty is getting nowhere. Then timed to one of the filter throbs, a rear-projection blue screen image of the cemetery appears behind him to replace the darkness. A **blue screen** or **green screen** effect depends on technology that combines a foreground image (such as a TV meteorologist) with a background image (such as a weather map). The foreground subject is filmed in front of a vividly colored solid background, often blue or green. Then everything blue is replaced by a background plate to form a composite image, such as Scotty at first walking in blackness that then mysteriously morphs into Carlotta's (Madeleine's?) cemetery.



Fig. 21 Getting nowhere fast

Cemetery appears via the blue screen effect

Scotty has been approaching an open grave as revealed by his POV tilt down shot and into the grave. A **point of view** or **POV shot** is self-explanatory in that it is a shot from a particular character's subjective perspective as if seen through that character's eyes. A director grants a particular privilege to any character afforded such a shot since the audience is being let in on that character's view of the world. Most POV shots indicate that the subject is the center or protagonist of the film. There is no question *Vertigo* is "Scotty's film," since at its very start we get his subjective experience of his illness by means of the vertigo shot.



Fig. 22

The privileging POV shot

### **Splitting POV**

Hitchcock, however, repeatedly splits the viewer's identification in his films (*Notorious* and *Psycho*) and in *Vertigo*, long before we learn Judy's secret via her flashback, we are afforded her points of view of the tree lined coastal highway, for example.



Fig. 23 Subjective point of view is split. Judy steps out from her disguise and is afforded a POV shot

On a second viewing of the film the audience scrutinizes false Madeleine's performance for hints of Judy Barton and her growing affection for Scotty, and we find one during her conversation with Scotty in his apartment after he has "fished" her from San Francisco Bay. It is plausible that it is more the actor Judy rather than the false Madeleine who looks away and says:

(False) MADELEINE: One shouldn't live alone.  
SCOTTY: Some people prefer it.  
(False) MADELEINE: No, it's wrong."



Fig. 24 On a second viewing, a Judy Barton perspective emerges

Following the tilt down into the grave Herrmann's score picks up the dizzying circular musical figure heard several times before when a vertigo attack is imminent. What is apparently a free fall into the bottomless grave reveals a perfect metaphor for Scotty's impotence, his disembodied/decapitated head surrounded by eight black lines descending into an infinite vortex or spider's web, all the while the filtered light throbbing continues to pulse. Intermittently Scotty's head disappears as if bad reception loses the signal and then the head returns, each time larger until a choker close up of Scotty's face fills the frame and then there is a split second of blackness.



Fig. 25 It's all in his (impotent) head/A Vertigo vortex/Elster's web

The blackness is soon revealed to be Scotty's silhouette in the unmistakable pose of unfreedom and death. If you are in silhouette, your identity is not exactly determined or fixed. This notion of a stripped identity when cast in silhouette is returned to when Scotty views as a revelation untransformed Judy in silhouette.



Fig. 26

Silhouette subtracts specificity

If the walk toward the freshly dug grave earlier in the dream wasn't a giveaway that he is inhabiting Madeleine's mind and experiencing her recurring nightmare as described to him first by the craggy tree-lined shore of the coastal highway, and then another time on a panicky evening visit to his apartment, then the fact that he is plummeting toward the tiled roof of the San Juan Battista church should make clear Scotty is dying Madeleine's death. This profound immersion in another's identity should not surprise us. Ferguson, Scotty, John, Johnny-O—one with so many names suggests one with an identity problem. The grown man, unmarried, mothered by Midge, claims that wandering around is his occupation. Although ostensibly in his forties, (Jimmy Stewart was fifty years old at the time of the film's release), the coming of age of this middle-aged man remains to be achieved. The fusion of his identity with false Madeleine's is depicted visually the first time he sees her at Ernie's Restaurant where we view them in contiguous graphic matches whereby both characters' heads are turned, thereby conjuring the amorous cliché: "she turned his head."



Fig. 26 Love at first furtive glance? Their cameos form a graphic match

Scotty's next viewing of false Madeleine at the flower shop provides another instance of identity fusion. We are given a startling view of Madeleine's reflection in the mirrored door, which is ajar allowing Scotty to visibly peer through. The authorial camera presents us with the peeping Scotty and the posing false Madeleine in order to connect their identities and depict the nature of this deadly chase whereby the hunter gets eventually caught by the game. False Madeleine is not only onto Scotty following her, she

## **The Authorial Camera**

An **authorial camera** is a particularly Hitchcockian flourish whereby a seemingly subjective camera takes you on a journey to reveal information, however no one can plausibly be assigned the viewing perspective other than the film itself. In narrative theory, this perspective would be assigned to an omniscient narrator, although in Hitchcock films the authorial camera is at times (such as the camera work immediately following the murder of Marion Crane in *Psycho*) much more fluid than the rote stationary establishing shots of most films' omniscient perspectives. Whose viewpoint is seeing this odd tableau of Scotty and the mirrored reflection of false Madeleine? It is the author of the film, and as with all stylized moments, the director is nudging us to receive some meaning. Scotty and Madeleine are fused in the sense that they are both ill: Scotty with his fear of heights (and women), Madeleine with her fear of repeating the fate of her suicidal grandmother. With unvoiced hopes that he will get free of his fears if he can liberate his patient of her fears, Scottie leads her along and treats her in patronizing ways replicated by the treatment he receives from Elster, Hansen, and Midge. He momentarily beats his vertigo near the end of the film as he brutally drags Judy up to the top of the bell tower, lost in his anger and realization of his defeat by Elster. A state of vertigo returns with the death of Judy as indicated by his assuming the victim's stylized pose at film's end.



Fig. 28 An Authorial Camera reveals that Scotty trails a reflection of which he is a part

One stinging irony regarding the contents of Scotty's dream is that it is scripted almost entirely by Elster. The Master Puppeteer (or should we term him Pimp?), has managed, not only to articulate Scotty's taste and desire for one woman in particular, but to invade his victim's dreams. Scotty does not careen into the tiled roof, as has Madeleine, but via blue screen again, the tiled roof is removed from the background and solid whiteness is replaced. An adept version of the vertigo experience is falling forever into infinite whiteness and that prospect is too terrifying for Scotty and he awakens terrified. His yearlong muteness is foreshadowed both during the title sequence where Jimmy Stewart's name appears above closed lips, and subsequently both the Coroner and Elster silence him.



Fig. 29 Into the void boy!



Mute for a year

After the trauma of the vivid, deadly nightmare, matronly Midge nurses Scotty. A stylized overhead shot of weakened Scotty allows a kind of godlike contemplation of his pathetic and needy state as he appears tiny and boy-like sitting quietly in his chair. Hitchcock employed a strikingly similar shot in *Notorious* (1946) of Alex Sebastian sitting in his mother's bedroom after he learns his wife is an American spy who has duped him. Madame Sebastian admonishes her son, demanding that he: "Stop wallowing in your foul memories." Melancholic Scotty will spend a year or more wallowing, unable to shake the guilt and memory of Madeleine. Midge does the right thing realizing she cannot cure Scotty; she walks out on him down a long tomb-shaped hall of the hospital.



Fig. 30 Two strikingly similar overhead shots of weak boys soon tended to by their mothers