

Don't Just Look, Listen: How Bernard Herrmann Composed a Sonic Gaze in Hitchcock's
Vertigo (1958) and *Psycho* (1960)

By

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Abstract

Bernard Herrmann provided strong scoring to accompany nine of Hitchcock's films including, *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960). Hitchcock, and his representation of women, has long been a source of criticism of feminist film scholars. This critique later expanded into art, most notably by Cindy Sherman. I use the term "sonic gaze" to describe the aural counterpart to Laura Mulvey's, traditionally visual, male gaze. I argue that Herrmann's sonic gaze maintains the perspective of the male protagonists in *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, and therefore objectifies and silences the female characters in the narrative. I use Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* series as a critical tool to explore how Herrmann's sonic gaze expands the feminist meanings of the still images. I place Herrmann's score over Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* to interpret how the imagined underscoring affects the unseen narratives of the film stills. Through this interpretative experiment, I encourage the practice of "listening" to photographs.

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Lastly, Hitchcock – *hvala* – you're still right about the sunset.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Illustrations	v
Introduction.....	1
Critical and Artistic Interpretations of <i>Vertigo</i> (1958) and <i>Psycho</i> (1960)	3
A Feminist Discussion	5
The Sonic Gaze	6
Existing Literature	9
Chapter Overview	14
Chapter 1: “Spiralling into the Sound of <i>Vertigo</i> (1958)”	18
Constructing Carlotta & Imaginary Women.....	26
Listening for Madeleine.....	31
Hearing Judy	37
Midge’s Diegetic Control	43
Conclusion	47
Chapter 2: The Sound of Something Terrible in <i>Psycho</i> (1960)”	51
“Something Terrible” Happens to Marion.....	57
Mrs Bates & Phantasmatic Sound.....	65

Lila, Sounding the Final Girl	70
Conclusion	78
Chapter 3: “The Sound of Cindy Sherman’s <i>Untitled Film Stills</i> (1977-80)”	82
<i>Psycho</i> (1960): Something Terrible Must Happen to These Women	89
<i>Vertigo</i> (1958): Constructing Imaginary Women Out of Real Women.....	100
Conclusion	107
Conclusion	111
Bibliography	117

List of Illustrations

1 Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #15," MoMA 1978.....	86
2a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #52," MoMA 1979.....	92
2b Marion lying on the hotel room bed during <i>Psycho</i> 's (1960) hotel room opening scene.....	92
3a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #2" MoMA 1977.....	95
3b Marion vignettted by Norman's peephole during <i>Psycho</i> 's (1960) peephole scene	95
4a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #54," MoMA 1980.....	97
4b Lila, <i>Psycho</i> 's Final Girl, searching for Marion in the Bates Mansion	97
5a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #53," MoMA 1979.....	99
5b Lila uncovering Mrs Bates in the basement during <i>Psycho</i> 's (1960) biggest reveal	99
6a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #26," MoMA 1979.....	100
6b Norman dressed to kill as Norma in <i>Psycho</i> (1960)	100
7a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #82," MoMA 1980.....	102
7b Norman in custody during <i>Psycho</i> 's (1960) final scene	102
8a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #56," MoMA 1980.	104
8b Scottie making Madeleine out of Judy in <i>Vertigo</i> (1958)	104
9a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #33," MoMA 1979.....	106

9b Judy writing her confession to Scottie in <i>Vertigo</i> (1958)	106
10a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #38," MoMA 1979.....	108
10b Madeleine during <i>Vertigo</i> 's (1958) forest scene.....	108
11a Cindy Sherman's "Untitled Film Still #36," MoMA 1979.....	110
11b Opening Credits to <i>Vertigo</i> (1958)	110

Introduction

Benny & Hitchy: “Partners in Suspense”

It is impossible to think about Alfred Hitchcock’s late 50s and early 60s films and not hear the music of Bernard Herrmann.¹ Indeed, according to Steven Rawle and K. J. Donnelly, the Hitchcock-Herrmann partnership “gave us some of cinema’s most memorable musical moments.”² As a ‘mélomane,’³ Hitchcock had a deep appreciation for music and gave it an important role in his films.⁴ Hitchcock’s film career began during the silent era, something that Elisabeth Weis believes to have been an advantage as he treated sound “as a new dimension to cinematic expression.”⁵ To this end, Hitchcock handed over a large portion of creative control to Herrmann, who played a vital role in shaping the sonic architecture and musical landscape of Hitchcock’s filmography.⁶ According to Herrmann, “[Hitchcock] only finishes a picture 60%. I have to finish it.”⁷ Hitchcock seems to have concurred, humorously crediting just 33% of *Psycho*’s box office success to the music by Herrmann,⁸ suggesting that he viewed Herrmann as a “creative equal.”⁹ Known for his own cameos in his films, Hitchcock also encouraged Herrmann into a cameo appearance during the remake of *The*

¹ James Wierzbicki, *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 6.

² Steven Rawle and K. J. Donnelly, *Partners in Suspense: Critical Essays on Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 1.

³ Claudia Gorbman uses the term “mélomane” to describe a director who has a strong love for, and understanding, of music. Admittedly, as she states in her chapter “Auteur Music,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack*, that she prefers to use the term for modern directors — even though she recognizes that Hitchcock fits into the definition. She does mention though, that the collaboration between Hitchcock and Herrmann allowed for a sonic consistency for the “group of works” they created together. See: Claudia Gorbman, “Auteur Music,” in *Beyond the Soundtrack*, ed. Daniel Ira Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert (California: University of California Press, 2007), 149-162.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Elisabeth Weis, *The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock’s Sound Track* (Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 14.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Royal S. Brown, “Herrmann, Hitchcock, and the Music of the Irrational,” *Cinema Journal* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 14.

⁸ Jack Sullivan, “Hitchcock and Music,” in *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, ed. Thomas Leitch and Leland Poague (New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 219-36.

⁹ Rawle and Donnelly, *Partners of Suspense: Critical Essays on Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock*, 3.

Man Who Knew Too Much (1956). Here, Herrmann's brief appearance conducting the London Symphony Orchestra in the Albert Hall marked a rare moment where Hitchcock wanted a collaborator to 'do as he did.'¹⁰

Believing their legendary collaboration to be a product of fate, Royal S. Brown calls on the age-old principle of 'opposites attract' when describing their working relationship, as he compares Hitchcock's stark British conservatism to Herrmann's fiery emotionalism.¹¹

Donald Spoto believes that the pair, "shared a dark, tragic sense of life, a brooding view of human relationships, and a compulsion to explore aesthetically the private world of the romantic fantasy."¹² Jack Sullivan uses the Conradian metaphor of 'secret sharer' to describe Herrmann as "Hitchcock's secret sharer" and that Herrmann's music serves as "a catalyst for energies darker and riskier than Hitchcock's cool sensibility normally permitted."¹³

Hitchcock published his own ideas on film music in the arts journal *Cinema Quarterly*, where he detailed his opinion on what the primary uses of film music should be: the first, to create an atmosphere of excitement and tension; the second, for psychological effect that expresses the unspoken to work in tandem with the visuals.¹⁴ Hitchcock and Herrmann worked on nine films together. Their legendary collaboration immortalizes the importance of synergy between the visual and sonic, and for this thesis, their work is "the heart at fire's centre."¹⁵

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Brown, "Herrmann, Hitchcock, and the Music of the Irrational," 14.

¹² Donald Spoto, *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock* (London: Da Capo, 1999), 355.

¹³ Jack Sullivan, "Bernard Herrmann: Hitchcock's Secret Sharer," in *Partners in Suspense: Critical Essays on Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock*, ed. Steven Rawle and K. J. Donnelly (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 10.

¹⁴ Alfred Hitchcock, "Alfred Hitchcock and Music in Films," *Cinema Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1933): 80-83.

¹⁵ The name of Bernard Herrmann's biography comes from his favourite poem, "The Truly Great" by Stephen Spender which he carried in his wallet. The last verse reads:

"Near the snow, near the sun, in the highest fields,
See how these names are feted by the waving grass
And by the streamers of white cloud
And whispers of wind in the listening sky...
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre."

See: Steven Smith, *A Heart at Fire's Center: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann* (California: University of California Press, 2002).

Critical and Artistic Interpretations of *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960)

Hitchcock and Herrmann's decade-long collaboration happened at a pivotal period of filmmaking in Hollywood. The Classic Age was burning out, and the New Wave that was replacing it brought with it a cultural tide of filmic cynicism, violence, and sexual explicitness or suggestive content, that explicitly reflected the changing societal values of the time. *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960), directed by Hitchcock, with soundtracks scored by Herrmann, sit on the cusp of this change. *Vertigo*, a film noir psychological thriller, took a knock from initial reviewers, who seemed displeased at Hitchcock's veer away from his usual romantic-thriller territory, noting the plot's far-fetched supernatural undertones. Although much less extravagant, in both production and storyline, *Psycho* also shocked its initial audiences with its raw and ostensibly crude portrayals of sex and violence. As time passed, however, ideas about both films rapidly pivoted. *Vertigo*'s re-evaluation brought it up from "box office flop" to the rank of the *greatest* film of all time, as noted by the British Film Institute Magazine *Sight and Sound*.¹⁶ Fifty-five years after *Psycho*'s release, *Time Magazine* published a redo in 2022 of its original review, aptly called "What TIME'S Original Review of *Psycho* Got Wrong."¹⁷

The pivot of critics and scholars in terms of their critical evaluation of *Psycho*, reveals how integral film is to understanding society and culture and vice versa. To this end, both *Vertigo* and *Psycho* have been a source of critique for many feminist scholars.¹⁸ Arguably

¹⁶ "The 100 Greatest Films of All Time," *Sight & Sound*, BFI, last modified June 28, 2021, <https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound/greatest-films-all-time>.

¹⁷ Lily Rothman, "What TIME'S Original Review of *Psycho* Got Wrong," *Time Magazine*, June 16, 2015, <https://time.com/3907090/original-review-1960-psycho/>.

¹⁸ See: Laura Mulvey, *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019); Laura Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006). Shohini Chaudhuri, *Feminist Film Theorists: Laura Mulvey, Kaja Silverman, Teresa de Lauretis, Barbara Creed* (London New York: Routledge, 2006); Carol J. Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992); Linda Williams, "Discipline and Fun: *Psycho* and Postmodern

one of the most provocative responses has come through the photography of Cindy Sherman, perhaps one of the most widely known Pictures Generation artists. The Pictures Generation were heavily influenced by commercialization, television, cinema, popular music, popular culture, and magazines and provided a social commentary on early mass media content with a fresh and critical attitude towards the mechanisms of seduction and desire.¹⁹ While she has never directly said “my work is influenced by Hitchcockian cinema,” Sherman’s favourite film growing up was Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954). In an essay on making her *Untitled Film Stills* series, Sherman wrote: “I loved all those vignettes Jimmy Stewart watches in the windows around him. You don’t know much about any of those characters, so you try to fill in the pieces of their lives.”²⁰ Visually, there is no context for what happened before, or what will happen after the images captured in Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series. By following Grace Kelly’s instruction to Jimmy Stewart in Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954), Sherman asks her audience: “Tell me everything you saw – and what you think it means.”²¹ Her debut suite, the *Untitled Film Stills* (1977-1980), is a collection of black-and-white photographs in which she is her own muse. Dressed up as various fictional film characters, Sherman depicts imagined moments —film stills — from non-existent films. Sherman’s portrayal of female character tropes,²² points to the voyeuristic treatment of women on screen. Printed to mimic the format, scale and quality of film stills from 1950s and 60s Hollywood, Sherman’s *Untitled Film stills* hold an uncanny resemblance to, and signal a nostalgia for, Hitchcock’s filmography. If there is agreement on the opening sentence in this thesis — “It is impossible

Cinema,” in, *Alfred Hitchcock’s Psycho: A Casebook*, ed. Robert Kolker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 164-204.

¹⁹ The Pictures Generation comprised a group of New York artists known for their critical analysis of media culture. In this respect, the movement picks up threads from the Pop Art movement launched by another important New Yorker of the period, Andy Warhol. See: Marvin Heiferman, “In Front of the Camera, Behind the Scenes: Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills*,” *MoMA* 25, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 16-19; Douglas Eklund, *The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009); Margaret Iversen, “The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984,” *Art Journal* 69, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 128-131.

²⁰ Cindy Sherman, *The Complete Untitled Film Stills* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2003), 9.

²¹ Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window* (1954), Paramount Pictures Studios.

²² Sherman’s tropes include: the femme fatale, the bombshell, the vamp, the lonely housewife, and the seductive mistress.

to think about Alfred Hitchcock's late 50s and early 60s films and not hear the music of Bernard Herrmann" — then surely, when looking at Sherman's work, we see elements not only of Hitchcock's visual aesthetic, but we also hear Herrmann's film score.

A Feminist Discussion

Not only do the visual aesthetics of Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* align with Hitchcock's filmography, but the reception of the stills in feminist discourses mimic the feminist tensions in Hitchcock's films. As is typical in Hollywood films, there is a tension concerning sexual liberation, women's rights, and traditional modes of authority. These tensions are visualized by Hitchcock's representation of women and, as I argue throughout this thesis, they are also heard in Herrmann's soundtrack. I believe that when studying films from the 1950s and 1960s, it is important to consider them first within the cultural context of their time. It is for this reason that I use second wave feminist theory to analyze Hitchcockian cinema. But I also bring in newer feminist criticism within musicology and film to bring this discussion into the twenty-first century.

Historically, second wave feminist film theorists have argued that Hitchcock's female characters are suppressed within the film narratives. These feminist scholars — including Laura Mulvey, Carol J. Clover, Julia Kristeva, Kaja Silverman and Barbara Creed — draw on the psychoanalytic and semiotic theories of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, and Roland Barthes, and they aimed to investigate how women and men, in particular modes of femininity and masculinity, were being represented on screen. Among other things, their explorations reveal the extent of female passivity, including voyeuristic images of the female, castration anxiety, spectatorship, and the male gaze. Mulvey examines power dynamics and Hollywood's male gaze through male directing and camera work. Mulvey posits that the gaze

demeans women into a “to-be-looked-at-ness” status while categorizing them into belittling tropes.²³ As a photographer documenting and preserving such tropes through the gaze, the dialogue in contrasting feminist spheres over Sherman’s work comes down to whether her depiction of vulnerable women calls attention to the exploitation of women, or if it reinforces the process of exploitation.²⁴

The Sonic Gaze

Where does Herrmann fit into this feminist dialogue? Scholars, like Kaja Silverman,²⁵ have considered the role of women’s voices and bodies in demonstrating the female position within the narrative. Silverman’s 1988 publication, *The Acoustic Mirror* aimed to do for the soundtrack what the second wave feminists were doing for the image-track, highlighting where the soundtrack is productive of gendered objectification by focusing on the dialogue and the sounds made by the female characters on screen, to expose how women are repressed in cinema.

In this thesis, I aim to amplify Silverman’s goal musically while relying on second wave feminist film theorists like Mulvey, and the countless studies that have been inspired by her work. This thesis makes an original contribution to Hitchcockian cinema by considering how Herrmann’s score silences women within the film narrative through “the sonic gaze.”

The sonic gaze operates in the same voyeuristic, objectifying way that the male gaze does. Hitchcock’s directing, in keeping with the filmic climate of the late 50s and early 60s,

²³ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London Palgrave Macmillan: London), 116.

²⁴ Michelle Meagher, “Would the Real Cindy Sherman Please Stand Up? Encounters Between Cindy Sherman and Feminist Art Theory,” *Women: A Cultural Review* 13, no. 1 (2002): 19.

²⁵ Silverman’s work comes heavily influenced by the French psychoanalyst Guy Rosolato, particularly his work on the foundational theory on vocalisation, “the acoustic voice,” the namesake of Silverman’s 1988 publication. See also: Guy Rosolato, “The Voice: Between Body and Language,” *French Review of Psychoanalysis* 38, no. 1 (1974): 75-94.

is a consistent example of the male gaze as it operates visually. Herrmann's sonic gaze is the aural counterpart to the traditionally visual, male gaze as it supports and maintains the perspective of the male protagonist. I use the term "sonic gaze" because I am referring to the gaze as it is heard through the sonic narrative. The sonic gaze incorporates the complete sonic narrative, from the film score to sound effects, to vocality. In Chapters One and Two, I devote my focus to the sonic gaze, and how it operates through the medium of moving image before I expand on this idea through Sherman's still images in Chapter Three.

To study the sonic gaze and how it operates in *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, I have structured Chapter One, "Spiralling into the Sound of *Vertigo* (1958)" and Chapter Two, "The Sound of Something Terrible in *Psycho* (1960)" around female characters who are objectified and silenced in their narratives. On the topic of female characters, Hitchcock has been quoted as saying: "I always believe in following the advice of the playwright Sardou. He said: 'Torture the women!' ... The trouble today is that we don't torment women enough."²⁶ I argue that torment occurs in these films in multiple ways – including the level of the soundtrack.

The women in *Vertigo* are tormented, and in some cases, pushed to their deaths. Kim Novak becomes Judy, the double of the suicidal Madeleine, who is possessed by Carlotta's spirit, as she mystifies the undercover detective, Scottie, through a series of dangerous illusions. The construction of Carlotta into an ethereal being that possess Madeleine, utilizes the doubling Gothic effect of Madeleine/Judy, feeding into the Freudian realm of the uncanny. The transformations of Carlotta, Madeleine, and Judy can be understood within the frame of the Nietzschean notion of the "eternal return" where history repeats itself, each time with a subtle difference; Carlotta becomes Madeleine, until Madeleine becomes Judy, and Judy completes the circle to become Carlotta. For each female character of *Vertigo* (Madeleine, Judy, Carlotta, and Midge), I examine the role of the sonic gaze in constructing

²⁶ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015).

their identity and, ultimately, in silencing them. As in *Vertigo*, the women in *Psycho* are also tormented. Janet Leigh plays the morally ambiguous Marion in the initial take-the-money-and-run plot. Rather than pursuing a traditional romance, however, she becomes the victim of a violent jealous rage perpetrated by motel proprietor Norman, on behalf of his mother, Mrs Bates. Marion's murder turns the plot into a mystery that is only solved when her sister Lila gets involved. As the only surviving female character, Lila becomes the first example of the filmic Final Girl trope. For each female character of *Psycho* (Marion, Lila and Mrs Bates), I consider how the "sonic gaze" is used to underscore violence and enable and weaponize Norman Bates against all three of his victims. Throughout this chapter, I lean on second wave feminist film theory, particularly Carol Clover's *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*.²⁷

Through interdisciplinary study, I aim to demonstrate the scope of the sonic gaze and how it extends to another medium – still photography. In Chapter Three, "Exploring Herrmann's Sonic Gaze Through Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* (1977-1980)," I take the traditionally silent medium of photography and superimpose Herrmann's film scores to prove that the sonic narrative can manipulate visual narratives through the sonic gaze.²⁸ Each of Sherman's characters live in a different story that happens before and after the snap of the camera shutter; it is up to the viewer to create the storyline for the character. In my research I explore this unseen storyline musically. By placing Herrmann's score over a silent *Untitled Film Still* by Sherman, I explore the extent of voyeurism produced by the sonic gaze in the film narratives of *Vertigo* and *Psycho*. Berthold Hoeckner demonstrates that the visual aesthetics of film, and the acoustic nature of film music create a representation of memory.²⁹ He considers how music forges an intimate relationship with film's visual style, and narrative

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ By using an art movement influenced so heavily by visual media, it is evident that regardless of how old or seemingly outdated a film is, this is a medium that leaves a print on the viewer that perpetrates the cultural thought around it. See: Heiferman, "In Front of the Camera, Behind the Scenes: Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*," 17.

²⁹ Berthold Hoeckner, *Film, Music, Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 6.

patterns and themes. Hoeckner states that film scores do not just signify or evoke memories, but they lead the viewers to recollection - of earlier moments in the character's life – through silence. This opens an interesting avenue for further question and creates space for my pivotal, and final, argument — Herrmann's score is so powerful within the sonic narrative, that through this recollection of memory, Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* become overpowered by the sonic gaze.

Existing Literature

Scholars have written extensively about Hitchcock's auteurist style. However, as previously mentioned, Hitchcock was known to hand over a considerable amount of creative reign to the composers who scored his films. Speaking about their work ethic, Herrmann once stated: "we've all begun to think one way,"³⁰ highlighting their seamless director-composer relationship.³¹ Sullivan claims that Hitchcock "thrusts music directly into the narrative, depicting singers and songs, mysteries and codes, musicians and orchestras, stages and dressing rooms,"³² claiming that his direction of music shows his resistance against the Hollywood cliché that music should merely be an accompaniment or imitation, imagining it rather as a preternatural force.³³ Sullivan goes on to state that Hitchcock's musical style is not sufficiently appreciated, and decries the fact that Herrmann's scores for Hitchcock's films are often separately covered exclusively in academic film music spheres.³⁴ Recognizing this, I bring both Hitchcock and Herrmann into dialogue with each other by comparing the visual

³⁰ William H. Rosar, "Bernard Herrmann: The Beethoven of Film Music?" *Journal of Film Music* 1, no. 2/3 (Winter 2003): 124.

³¹ At least until Hitchcock's *Torn Curtain* (1966), where he ended up firing Herrmann in front of the orchestra. An act that ultimately ended their decade long collaboration.

³² Sullivan, "Hitchcock and Music," 219.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 220.

aesthetics to the sonic narrative to discover what this means for the representation of female characters.

Hitchcock has a complicated legacy that has become wrapped up in second wave feminist film theory. Thomas Schatz, a prominent Hitchcock scholar, states that in his teaching of Hitchcock in film theory, Laura Mulvey's work "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" is indispensable to his course syllabi.³⁵ Of course, it is almost impossible to have a conversation on female perspectives and film without mentioning this cornerstone essay. Schatz reiterates Mulvey's central points on the male gaze stating that the gaze not only dominates, but fundamentally shapes the narrative proceedings of Hitchcock's filmography.³⁶

Kyle Barrowman highlights Hitchcock's 'colonization' by the second wave of feminism in the 1970s where he was branded as a misogynist who exemplified the intrinsic problems of classical Hollywood storytelling. Barrowman says that by refusing the notion of equality in the suffering of male and female characters, it would appear, based on the psychological and physical violence done to women in his films, that Hitchcock did indeed favour the male subjective perspective by at least "protecting" it from death."³⁷ Robert Pippin, while not explicitly agreeing with the equality between the suffering of male and female characters, states that in a romantic relationship between two people, there are actually six people involved. There are the two persons they are; there are the two persons as they see themselves; and then there are the two people who they aspire to be seen as by the other.³⁸ Pippin uses this as the basis for his exploration of *Vertigo* through the relationship of Madeleine/Judy and Scottie to discover why the elements of *Vertigo*'s illusion work so well.

³⁵ Thomas Schatz, "Mulvey and Hitchcock," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 15, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 461.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 462.

³⁷ Kyle Barrowman, "The Sublime Stupidity of Alfred Hitchcock," *International Journal of Žižek Studies* 6, no. 3 (Winter 2016): 11.

³⁸ Robert B. Pippin, "Scottie's Dream," in *The Philosophical Hitchcock: "Vertigo" and the Anxieties of Unknowingness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2017), 84.

Florence Jacobowitz notes how Mulvey concedes that Hitchcock's *Vertigo* foregrounds the problems of voyeurism and fetishistic romantic fantasy that are the perverse results of masculine insecurity.³⁹ This argument, from Jacobowitz — one that relies heavily on Mulvey's theorizations — bleeds into the volatile notions of voyeurism and fetishized violence in Hitchcockian cinema. Brown adds to this discussion, about Hitchcock and violence, as he considers the ways in which the music imposes violence on the narrative. It is important to remember that Hitchcock did not want music in *Psycho*'s now infamous shower scene, for example. However, as Brown notes, “the existential distance and the emotional gap between a movie audience and what is transpiring on the screen are so great that even the sight of a knife repeatedly entering the body of a nude woman, and even the sounds of her screams and gasps, did not create sufficient visceral involvement in the scene.”⁴⁰ Herrmann used his score to communicate the shower scene's irrationality on its own terms with the use of the stripped back string orchestra. Kevin Clifton attributes the effectiveness of the shower scene down to the tension and release in Herrmann's score, and most notably notes the construction of the “Hitchcock chord.” To extend Brown's commentary, Clifton states that it is the connection between the visual and the sonic that makes the shower scene so disturbing, as the audience do not see the knife, rather the repulsion comes from the sound of the knife, as musically represented by Herrmann's screeching violins, violently slicing Marion's body.⁴¹

Focusing on Herrmann's non-diegetic orchestration in *Psycho* is important and, according to Fenimore, the voices left in the realm of the heard and unheard create the foundation for Marion's interactions throughout the narrative. Marion never sees Mrs Bates;

³⁹ Florence Jacobowitz, “Hitchcock and Feminist Criticism: From *Rebecca* to *Marnie*,” in *A Companion to Alfred Hitchcock*, ed. Thomas Leitch Leland Poague (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 452- 472.

⁴⁰ Brown, “Herrmann, Hitchcock, and the Music of the Irrational,” 15.

⁴¹ Kevin Clifton, “‘We All Go a Little Mad Sometimes. Haven't You?’ Musical Empathy in Hitchcock's *Psycho*.” *Musical Analysis* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2018): 52.

she only hears her voice. However, as Fenimore rightly suggests, what Marion does not know is that this voice is an imagined, “phantom,” voice in the film.⁴² Acousmatic sounds — sounds that are heard but for which no source is visible onscreen — are a hallmark of the horror genre, marking the dislocation between what we hear and what we see to create a tension that blurs the boundaries between the known and the unknown. Fenimore discusses how these “cracks” in synchronized sound lead us to a feeling of unease and distrust, where we question whether we can rely on what the protagonist is hearing, and wherever or not what we can hear is audible to the protagonist in the diegesis. This question leads to the crux of the sonic disconnect and ultimate illusion of horror, hailing the “imagined” voices as the ultimate, bodiless, fear.

The illusions held in both *Psycho* and *Vertigo* are almost better on second viewing, due to the careful threads of Hitchcock’s subtle foreshadowing. This concept of foreshadowing is not a new one within Hitchcock and Herrmann scholarship. Scott Murphy discusses the audio-visual foreshadowing created by Herrmann’s prelude scoring by breaking down the dramatic musical transformations of the Hitchcock chord, concluding with the hermeneutic interpretation of what the prelude might suggest in the upcoming filmic narrative.⁴³ Dan Blim believes that this is also true for the prelude to *Vertigo*. Though the prelude does not supply concrete themes for the rest of the score, he notes that the use of the mirror and spiral motifs as well as harmonic, tonal and formal structures directly foreshadow *Vertigo*’s narrative.⁴⁴ David Butler also places emphasis on Herrmann’s penchant for Wagnerian leitmotifs, and on the key stylistic features in Herrmann’s scoring, detailing: “the rejection of extended melodic lines; the emphasis on instrumental and harmonic colour;

⁴² Ross Fenimore. “Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*,” in *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*, ed. Neil Lerner (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 83.

⁴³ Scott Murphy, “An Audiovisual Foreshadowing in the First Thirty Seconds of the Last Eight Minutes of *Psycho*,” in *Terror Tracks*, ed. Philip Hayward (Sheffield: Equinox, 2009), 53.

⁴⁴ Dan Blim, “Musical and Dramatic Design in Bernard Herrmann’s Prelude to *Vertigo* (1958)” *Music and the Moving Image* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 22.

distinctive groupings of instruments as opposed to a reliance on a large-scale orchestra; a predilection for small musical ‘cells’ and the use of the ostinato device.”⁴⁵

Discussions around “the visible,” and the non-visible, in still and moving image goes deep into classic film theory. Classic film theorists such as André Bazin and Christian Metz discuss the in-between spaces of reality and the indexical through the areas of grey space between moving and still image.⁴⁶ Metz describes photography as passive, where the object has been, and moving image as active where the object is.⁴⁷ In theorizing the rhetoric of image, Roland Barthes asks two important questions: “What is the impression of reality produced by the photograph?” and “What, above all, are the limits of photography?”⁴⁸ Barthes contemplates these questions through three frames of meaning (1) the obvious and (2) the obtuse, (3) “the third meaning.”⁴⁹ To explain the third meaning Barthes decodes film stills to show how interpretative thought around one still moment in a film has the ability to restructure the narrative of an entire film.

Photographs and the verbs “listen,” and “watch” have been placed in dialogue with each other by modern culture and media scholars, Tina M. Campt and Ariella Azoulay. Campt believes that the decision to listen, as well as look, at photographs is a conscious decision that engages sound in the sensory register to critically decode a variety of cultural issues and social values in images.⁵⁰ Azoulay agrees and suggests that when we look at a photograph, we have to listen to deeper social and value meanings, and that this is what turns “watching” photographs into a civil contract.

⁴⁵ David Butler, “The Days Do Not End: Film Music, Time and Bernard Herrmann,” *Film Studies* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 60.

⁴⁶ André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” in *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments*, ed. Marc Furstenuau (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 90-94. See also: Christian Metz, “The Cinema: Language or Language System,” in *The Film Theory Reader: Debates and Arguments*, ed. Marc Furstenuau (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 133-170.

⁴⁷ Metz, “The Cinema: Language or Language System,” 335.

⁴⁸ Roland Barthes, “The Rhetoric of Image,” *Communications: Recherches sémiologiques* 1, no. 4 (1964): 40-51. See further discussion in: Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” 133-170.

⁴⁹ Roland Barthes, “The Third Meaning,” *Artforum* 11, no. 5 (Winter 1973): 46-50.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

I interact with this existing literature on feminist theory, Hitchcockian critique, film music, and media studies to build on my own thoughts, insights and perspectives around what the male gaze means for the sonic narrative in film while creating a new context where imagined music highlights feminist issues in still photography. I bring together the work of Hitchcock and Herrmann, to bridge the gap where they are studied separately, and to demonstrate how male film composers, as well as male film directors, manipulate the gaze that objectifies women in film. I hope to contribute the idea that the male gaze is both visual and sonic. By superimposing Herrmann's score over Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, I support the idea that photographs can be "listened to," and I examine how sound and music highlight feminist issues, like the gaze.

Chapter Overview

In Chapters One and Two, I argue how important sound and music are in *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, unpacking how Herrmann's score treats the female characters voyeuristically through the sonic gaze. For these film music case studies (*Vertigo* and *Psycho*), I have taken methodological inspiration from Wierzbicki's "Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema," which uses an integrated approach. Wierzbicki believes that regardless of where the music is present in Hitchcock's filmography, be that as source music, or an underscore, with diegetic or extra-diegetic, the content of the music in Hitchcockian cinema is not as relevant to Hitchcock's sonic style; what matters is what Hitchcock *does* with Herrmann's score. Included in Hitchcock's directing is his use of sound effects. Discussing Hitchcock's sonic narrative style in particular, Sullivan notes that Hitchcockian cinema "encompassed street noise, dialogue (especially voice-over), sounds of the natural world... sonic effects of all sorts ... [and] silence, the sudden, awesome absence of music, capable of delivering the most

powerful musical frisson of all.”⁵¹ Hitchcock himself may have also agreed with the use of an integrated approach in this methodology, as Wierzbicki claims, Hitchcock told an interviewer that he has always considered music as just one more sonic element whose placement in a film demanded careful consideration; he is quoted saying, “after all, when you put music to film, it’s really sound; it isn’t music *per se*.”⁵² To understand the grip that the sonic gaze has on each character in *Vertigo*, I pose and discuss the following questions: (1) “Carlotta, is for Hitchcock, ‘the face of female anonymity’, so how does Herrmann construct her ghostly character in the sonic narrative?” (2) “To what extent are Madeleine and Judy treated differently by the score, and how does this affect their position in the narrative?” (3) “To what extent is Midge free from Herrmann’s sonic reign, and how does this position her in *Vertigo*’s narrative?” My following discussion around the questions highlights how the sonic gaze operates to fuel the narrative from the male character’s perspective, which ultimately silences the female characters. To consider how the sonic gaze effects each character in *Psycho*, I pose and discuss the following questions: (4) “If Marion, Lila, and Mrs Bates are all victims of Norman Bates, how does Herrmann’s score treat them?” (5) “How does Herrmann’s score enable and weaponize Norman Bates against all three victims?” (6) “To what extent does Herrmann’s score musically reflect Lila’s courage and levelheadedness in finding her murdered sister, exceeding where her male counterparts fail?” In the discussion of these questions, I lean on second wave feminist film theory, particularly Carol J. Clover’s *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, to consider how *Psycho* acts as a “benchmark” to study the trope of the Final Girl.⁵³

In Chapter Three I argue that when we see Sherman’s work, we might hear Herrmann’s music from Hitchcockian cinema. In a cinematic context, Herrmann’s score

⁵¹ Sullivan, “Hitchcock and Music,” 222.

⁵² Wierzbicki, *Music, Sound and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema*, 6.

⁵³ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 26.

silences the women, but when superimposed on Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, the score provides Sherman's characters with an emotional context which, somewhat ironically, can give them a voice in their visual narrative. This chapter is highly interpretative in nature, and I have taken inspiration from Gregory Currie's "The Interpretation in Art," where he demands recognition for the thought process involved in interpretation, saying that it requires creativity as a meaning-assignment.⁵⁴ I start by asking: (7) "How can still images be explored sonically?" (8) "What narrative meaning, and emotional context can a film score provide a still photograph?" The dialogue around, and the answers to, these questions create space for my pivotal, and final, argument — Herrmann's score is so powerful within the sonic narrative, that through this recollection of memory, Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* become overpowered by the sonic gaze.

I consider the visual similarities between Hitchcock's shots and Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*.⁵⁵ These visual similarities are noted through the positioning of the figure, the aesthetic style of the figure,⁵⁶ visual motifs, the composition of frame, lighting and suggested, actual, or imagined context of the image or scene that is captured. After I have chosen which Hitchcock shot and Sherman still to pair, I consider the corresponding Herrmann cue (or leitmotif) that plays over the Hitchcock shot. While reflecting on my musical discussion of Herrmann's cues in Chapters One and Two, I will expand on my visual observations concerning Sherman's still photographs. To do this, I "watch" Sherman's still photographs, while playing Herrmann's cues. During this exercise I interpret how Herrmann's music adds to the issues of the male gaze as put forward by Sherman, and digested and constructed by the

⁵⁴ Gregory Currie, "The Interpretation in Art," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, ed. Jerrold Levinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 291-306.

⁵⁵ For added discussion on artistic interpretation as a methodological practice see, Elliot Eisner "Art and Knowledge" in *The Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*, ed. J Gary Knowles and Arda L. Cole (California: Sage Publishing, 2008), 3-13. See also: Currie, "The Interpretation in Art," 291-306.

⁵⁶ "Aesthetic style" refers to the hair colour (usually blonde) of the figure, and the clothes that the figure is wearing. This is one of the most obvious visual similarities between Hitchcock's shots and Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* because Sherman was most interested in portraying women from the 1950s and 60s.

viewer, by perpetrating the sonic gaze. As described above, the theoretical framework of this work involves three stages to compliment the three areas of research; music and the sonic narrative, visual aesthetics of film including characterization, and still photography superimposed with film music.

In conclusion, I bring together feminist film theory and cultural thought to discover how the sonic gaze furthers the voyeurism present in film, and how music can become a weapon for perpetrating the male gaze, which represses and silences the female within the film narrative. To fully show the extent of the sonic gaze, I expand my study beyond film to consider the sonic gaze in the context of still photography. Sherman asks her audience: “Tell me everything you saw – and what you think it means.” Through my interpretative angle, I ask: “tell me everything you see and *hear* - and what you think it means.”

Chapter One: “Spiralling into the Sound of *Vertigo* (1958)”

We've forgotten why Joan Fontaine leans over the edge of the cliff and what it was that Joel McCrea was going to do in Holland. We don't remember why Montgomery Clift was maintaining eternal silence or why Janet Leigh stops at the Bates Motel or why Teresa Wright is still in love with Uncle Charlie. We've forgotten why Henry Fonda is not entirely guilty, and exactly why the American government employed Ingrid Bergman. But we remember a handbag. But we remember a bus in the desert. But we remember a glass of milk, the sails of a windmill, a hairbrush. But we remember bottles in line, a pair of glasses, a passage of music, a bunch of keys...⁵⁷

Jean Luc Godard

Based on Boileau-Narcejac's novel *D'entre les Morts* (1954), *Vertigo* features a constant circling back to the same moments, objects, and indeed – musical cues. Bernard Hermann's score mirrors the visual narrative's themes of obsession and illusion through musicalized spirals that get right into the heart's meaning of obsession. Like the “keys” and “glasses” and “bottles” that Godard remembers in Hitchcock's visuals, I argue that music too, through frequent repetition, is symbolically and obsessively represented and even immortalized in *Vertigo*.

Receiving negative-to-mixed reviews upon release, *Vertigo* eventually spiralled into a storm of scholarly criticism that made it a Hitchcock classic. The film holds a legacy in cinematography as the pioneer of the dolly-zoom, which is an in-camera effect used to distort perspectives leading to a degree of disorientation. Hitchcock used this technique to visually portray the sensation of vertigo. Aside from cinematography, *Vertigo*'s soundtrack is one of

⁵⁷ Jean Luc Godard, *Histoire(s) du cinema* [1998; Olive films, 2011], disc 2, 12:11-13:38.

the most studied film scores. In 2012, *Vertigo* exceeded Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) for the title of "the greatest film of all time." Interestingly, Herrmann scored both films. *Vertigo*'s score is written with the fiery emotionalism expected of Herrmann, yet it weighs heavily to one gendered side as it fosters a sonic alliance with the protagonist, Scottie, through musical gestures and techniques which perpetrate the male perspective.⁵⁸ This suppresses the female characters of the narrative, ultimately silencing them.

Vertigo, in classic Hitchcock fashion, is inherently musical. Jack Sullivan notes that "critics have used musical terminology to describe the film, even when not discussing the music."⁵⁹ Unlike its thrilling cinematic predecessors, *Notorious* (1946) and *Rear Window* (1954), which use silence to sonically portray tension, *Vertigo*'s tension is driven by sound. The score starts with the prelude before moving into three narrative movements that finish with a coda. This musical form takes the first section (prelude) and repeats it after the middle section. This is significant to the visual narrative of *Vertigo* as the sonic narrative reflects the themes of illusion and obsession, expressed through mirroring and spiralling.

Vertigo's plot centers around former police detective John "Scottie" Ferguson,⁶⁰ who suffers from vertigo induced by an extreme fear of heights. Although Scottie is retired from duty, an old acquaintance, Gavin Elster,⁶¹ hires him as a private investigator to follow his wife Madeleine,⁶² who is behaving strangely. Despite cynicisms from his best friend Midge,⁶³ Scottie dutifully follows Madeleine around San Francisco. Scottie's constant pursuit of Madeleine becomes an obsession to the point that he believes he has fallen in love with her.

⁵⁸ Antony John, "'The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For': Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann's Score for *Vertigo*," *The Musical Quarterly* 85, no. 3 (2001): 516-544.

⁵⁹ Jack Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 222-234.

⁶⁰ Played by James Stewart.

⁶¹ Played by Tom Helmore.

⁶² Played by Kim Novak.

⁶³ Played by Barbara Bell Geddes.

He discovers that Madeleine is visiting places tied to the late, mysterious, Carlotta Valdes.⁶⁴ One such place is an Old Spanish missionary where tragedy strikes when Madeleine falls to her death from the bell tower. Scottie experiences an emotional breakdown, blaming himself for Madeleine's death as a bout of vertigo stopped him from climbing up the bell tower after her. Scottie is given a second chance when he spots Judy,⁶⁵ Madeleine's doppelgänger. In a desperate effort to regain his mental health, and fulfil his obsession, Scottie attempts to remodel Judy into Madeleine. This is an easy feat, given that earlier, Gavin had paid Judy to pretend to be Madeleine to cover up the murder of his wife. When Scottie realises that Madeleine and Judy are the same person, he forces her back to the bell tower, re-enacting the event that led to his breakdown — only Judy slips, and falls to her own death leaving Scottie, once again, bereaved.

Vertigo's themes of obsession and illusion can be linked to Sigmund Freud's *das unheimliche*,⁶⁶ otherwise known as the "uncanny." This theory takes the mundane and relates it to what is frightening or disturbing, by conceptualizing inanimate figures coming to life, ghosts, or doppelgängers, through art, literature, and cinema.⁶⁷ In his foundational 1919 essay, "Das Unheimliche,"⁶⁸ Freud defines the uncanny as something strange and mysterious that becomes unsettling through its familiarity. While the uncanny may be most often thought of, or represented, visually, the uncanny also "appears" on the screen as a sonic presence.

Kenneth Smith draws on four features of Freud's uncanny theory that may be applied to

⁶⁴ Played by Joanne Gethon.

⁶⁵ Played by Kim Novak.

⁶⁶ Kenneth Smith writes that Freud's use of the noun 'das Unheimliche' and its adjectival form 'unheimlich' is chosen for its associations; 'Heimlich' in German applies ambiguities, 'Das Unheimliche' then is something creepy (once beautiful, now not beautiful), a secret 'geheimnis' that should be kept at home. In, Kenneth Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," *Music Analysis* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 68-102. Also, Kramer notes that we must avoid thinking of the two as opposites, writing: "the unheimlich is not the opposite of the Heimlich— the long known, the familiar – but a distortion of it." In, Lawrence Kramer, *Music as Cultural Practice, 1800–1900* (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1990), 320.

⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud, James Strachey, Hélène Cixous, and Robert Dennomé, "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The Uncanny)," *New Literary History* 7, no. 3 (1976): 525-645.

⁶⁸ Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," San Diego State University Internet Archive, accessed February 13, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110714192553/http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html>.

Herrmann's musical themes in *Vertigo* through the idiosyncratic chord progressions: 1) repetition, 2) repression, 3) animation, and 4) vision.⁶⁹

The uncanny is associated with “the constant recurrence of the same thing — the repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations.” Repetition in *Vertigo* is showcased musically by the repetitive use of spiralling arpeggios which are present in the prelude and are repeated in the coda to cement an aural sensation of vertigo.

Judy suffers from repression. Freud on the ideal of repression states: “the uncanny in reality is nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and long-established in the mind, and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.”⁷⁰ Scottie represses Judy back into Madeleine by reconstructing her identity into the image of the woman she was imitating when Scottie was initially infatuated with her. I argue that Herrmann plays his part in this repression by musically submerging Judy into Madeleine, who in turn is commandeered by Scottie's male perspective (explored below).

Also prominent in *Vertigo* is animation through the “gaze.” On animation of the inanimate, Freud observed: “I have occasionally heard a woman patient declare that even at the age of eight she had still been convinced that her dolls would be certain to come to life if she were to look at them in a particular, extremely concentrated, way.”⁷¹ Tom Cohen discusses, while citing Žižek's clarification, that the “gaze” is a category of animation as the personification of the inanimate.⁷² Žižek's problematisation here comes from the Freudian term *das ding*,⁷³ “thing,” where the gaze creates the other thing by turning the inanimate into

⁶⁹ Smith, “*Vertigo*'s Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals,” 69.

⁷⁰ Sigmund Freud, “The ‘Uncanny’ in an Infantile Neurosis and Other Works,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth [1919] 1955), 217–52.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Tom Cohen, “Beyond “the Gaze”: Žižek, Hitchcock, and the American Sublime,” *American Literary History* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 350–78.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 351.

the animate.⁷⁴ If we extend the theory of the gaze to *Vertigo*, Kim Novak's character, Judy, is a personification of Madeleine who, in her absence, is inanimate. Herrmann's "Madeline"⁷⁵ leitmotif accompanies Madeleine *and* Judy on-screen; this proves that Herrmann's score is vital in sonically producing the uncanniness in character development while representing Madeleine as the inanimate, because she is not real. Herrmann and Hitchcock's spelling choice — Hitchcock uses "Madeleine," while Herrmann uses "Madeline" — also creates a doubling. Perhaps this is only a slight difference between their British English and American English stylisations, however, there do appear to be parallels between Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Marcel Proust's *In the Search of Lost Time*. Proust uses the French cake — madeleines — to contrast involuntary memory with voluntary memory. Hitchcock stayed quite close to Boileau-Narcejac's novel which uses the spelling "Madelienne." Therefore, perhaps we can speculate that Hitchcock's spelling of Madeleine's name may be an intertextual reference from Boileau-Narcejac to Proust and his literary notions of the memory-laden cakes.

Finally, the uncanny holds the property of vision — an obsession with the eyes. Such an obsession causes the consideration of "the eye of the beholder," and the power that male characters have in their looking, of which the female characters are the sole subjects; Herrmann purposely uses the male gaze through his score, creating what I term a "sonic gaze," to manipulate the narrative to align with Scottie's perspective, thusly silencing the female characters.

These four issues (repetition, repression, animation, and vision) of *das unheimliche* are sewn together in the Lacanian theory of the gaze. Hitchcock scholar, Thomas Schatz considers how the gaze not only dominates, but fundamentally shapes the narrative of

⁷⁴ Francois Peraldi, "The Thing for Freud and the Freudian Thing," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 47, no. 4 (1987): 309-314.

⁷⁵ Richard E. Goodkin, "Film and Fiction: Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Proust's 'Vertigo.'" *MLN* 102, no. 5 (1987): 1171-81).

Vertigo.⁷⁶ For Mulvey, a “patriarchal unconscious” governs the narrative and determines the central plight of the film.⁷⁷ Another perspective may be found in Sullivan’s analysis of the film, where he argues that the sonic structure of Herrmann’s *Vertigo* score is based on “the two heroines” Madeleine and Judy, and its purpose is to portray the desire and longing felt by Scottie.⁷⁸ Of course, what Sullivan inadvertently highlights here is how the score is built to support the male narrative and perspective. Sullivan is not alone in this critique, as many other prominent, male, Hitchcock scholars share this same idea of *Vertigo*’s score.⁷⁹ I recognize this issue of male focus, and in this chapter I critique how the male-centered perspective musically silences the female characters. I study how the female characters embody *Vertigo*’s sonic themes of being “illusionary” and the objects of the “obsessed” by using a second wave film feminist lens. Together, the work of Mulvey and Sullivan sutures the visual narrative to the sonic, to highlight how Herrmann’s score is emblematic of the “male gaze” by using a “sonic gaze” to silence female characters.

Mulvey discusses the oppressive treatment of Madeleine and Judy in her 2019 publication *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times*, where she continues Godard’s quote from the opening of this chapter with: “. . . we’ve forgotten why Gavin Elster dispatched Madeleine to seduce Scottie, but we remember the perfect blonde.”⁸⁰ The way

⁷⁶ Schatz, “Mulvey and Hitchcock,” 461.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 463. It is also worth noting here that Mulvey turned briefly to the films of Hitchcock – and in turn she sparked new arguments that have roiled ever since. The discourse became especially intense in the 1980s, due to the sudden re-release and restoration of *Vertigo* in 1983, and the rise of feminist film theory, which Mulvey’s cornerstone 1975 essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” so crucially fuelled. Also, Film director, and auteur, Martin Scorsese, campaigned to Universal Pictures to restore *Vertigo*. Film restoration experts, Robert Harris and Jim Katz took on the job, with Katz saying in interview: “There’s an obvious commercial opportunity here... I can guarantee you that with this restoration, *Vertigo* will look five times better than anyone’s seen since the initial release.” In, Jefferey Wells, “The Pot to Restore *Vertigo*,” *LA Times*, May 9, 1993, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-05-09-ca-33040-story.html>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ John, ““The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For”: Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann’s Score for *Vertigo*,” 516-544. See also: Blim, “Musical and Dramatic Design in Bernard Herrmann’s Prelude to *Vertigo* (1958),” *Music and the Moving Image* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 21-31; David Cooper, “Film Form and Musical Form in Bernard Herrmann’s Score to *Vertigo*,” *Journal of Film Music* 1, no. 2/3 (Winter 2003): 239-248; Daniel Golding, “Spiral Music: Listening to Uncanny Influence in *Vertigo*,” *Screen Education* 69 (Summer 2013): 128-135.

⁸⁰ Mulvey, *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times* (London: Reaktion

Godard puts it, there is a symbolic weight to each image and narrative events, however each is easily forgotten. So, why is Madeleine remembered for being “the perfect blonde?” *Vertigo* uses the idea of “perfection” and manipulates it through cinematic irony. Madeleine’s beauty is an illusion and, as such, she invokes the illusory fascination of film. Mulvey considers the idea that *Vertigo* is not about cinema, but rather about the illusion that cinema itself creates. Scottie’s willingness to believe in the illusionary beauty of Madeleine reflects cinema’s goal to encourage belief in its illusions. Unlike any other film, *Vertigo* was deeply personal to Hitchcock. While he never directly answered as to *why*, Mulvey’s speculation of the willingness of illusion points to the possibility that Hitchcock saw Scottie’s obsessive re-making of Judy, into the character of Madeleine, as a reflection of his own job as a film director.⁸¹ Kim Novak also resonated with *Vertigo*, particularly the underlining theme of ‘men who attempt to reshape women into their own dreams’, as she expressed in an interview:

It happens in every marriage. My husband, whom I adored, wanted me to be more like how he wanted me to be. But I have too much of an independent personality. I’d be off painting and he wanted me to be more of a housewife... in Hollywood they think they want you, but really they want what they want you to be.⁸²

Perhaps unsurprisingly, just like Judy under Scottie’s makeover, Novak frequently clashed with Hitchcock over the directing decisions for her character.⁸³

Books, 2019), 42.

⁸¹ Martin Scorsese shares this sentiment, writing in the forward to Dan Auiler’s *Vertigo: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic* (London: Titan Books, 1998): “*Vertigo* is also important to me -- essential would be more like it -- because it has a hero driven purely by obsession. I’ve always been attracted in my own work to heroes motivated by obsession and on that level, *Vertigo* strikes a deep chord in me every time I see it.”

⁸² Simon Hattenstone, “Kim Novak: ‘I Inherited Mental Illness from my Father, but the Rape Must Have Added To It,’” *The Irish Times*, February 18, 2021, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/kim-novak-i-inherited-mental-illness-from-my-father-but-the-rape-must-have-added-to-it-1.4485274>.

⁸³ James Stewart and Hitchcock were close friends, so much so that Stewart lived with Hitchcock at his ranch in Santa Cruz while they shot *Vertigo* in San Francisco. Richard Blennerhasset claims that because of their friendship, Stewart “helped to ease tensions between Novak and Hitchcock as he shaped her in his image of

The characters I study in this chapter are Carlotta, Madeleine, Judy, and Midge. Madeleine is the woman who is seemingly possessed by the spirit of her great-grandmother, Carlotta. An immigrant from Spain, Carlotta became a mistress to a wealthy married man with whom she bore a child. The child was taken from her as, according to the owner of Argosy Bookshop in *Vertigo*, “men had that power, back then.” Carlotta’s mental health, understandably, took a dive until she became so depressed that she took her own life. Madeleine spends the film in a confused, wandering state, experiencing mental blackouts while visiting places of significance for Carlotta: her grave; her portrait in the Legion of Honor; and the McKittrick Hotel which used to be her home. Madeleine begins to show signs of suicidal ideation, including an attempt where she jumps into the San Francisco Bay. Madeleine, and the mystery of Carlotta, swallows Scottie and suffocates Judy. Paid off by Gavin Elster to cover up his wealthy wife’s murder, Judy is doomed to live Carlotta’s fate as the cast aside mistress when Gavin flees for Europe, leaving her Carlotta’s necklace and some money to help pay her rent at the Empire Hotel. Carlotta, Madeleine, and Judy embody the Nietzschean notion of the “eternal return”⁸⁴ where history repeats itself, each time with a subtle difference; Carlotta becomes Madeleine, until Madeleine becomes Judy, and Judy completes the circle to become Carlotta. Imagining the eternal return as a spiral in motion, Scottie is obsessed with all three women, and as such his gaze has three lenses. The character excluded from the spiralling eternal return is Marjorie “Midge” Woods, who stands as the counterpoint to Madeleine’s doomed beauty. Midge is a fiery, independent woman, who acts as a beacon of light relief through her assertive, and humorous, remarks that often outwit Scottie. Midge was engaged to Scottie and called it off after three weeks, yet she still appears

Madeleine and later Judy.” In, Richard Blennerhasset, “*Vertigo*: Out of the Past,” *Psychological Perspectives* 54, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 58.

⁸⁴ There are many readings of Nietzsche’s ‘eternal return.’ I use the base of the theory from “Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft,” (1882, §341) where there is an authoritative pressure to live as if our actions would be endlessly repeated. This is significant for the idea that each character in *Vertigo* is doomed to repeat history; the female characters Carlotta, Madeleine and Judy are all subjected to the repeating treatment of the male characters Gavin Elster and Scottie (who himself is affected by Gavin Elster’s repetitive history).

to hold a candle for him. To address and critique how each of these women are treated in *Vertigo*'s visual and sonic narratives, I pose and discuss these questions: (1) "Carlotta is, for Hitchcock, 'the face of female anonymity', so how does Herrmann construct her ghostly character in the sonic narrative?," (2) "To what extent are Madeleine and Judy treated differently by the score, and how does this affect their position in the narrative?," and (3) "To what extent is Midge free from Herrmann's sonic reign, and how does this position her in *Vertigo*'s narrative?" To discuss the possible answers to these questions, I rely on second-wave feminist film theory,⁸⁵ and the newer work that has been inspired by them.

Constructing Carlotta & Imaginary Women

The prelude and opening credits to *Vertigo* encourage a construction of female identity through Saul Bass's hypnotic graphic design. The blank screen opens to the left profile of a soft cheek and lip before the camera slowly moves to frame heart-shaped lips. Pausing over the lips for a moment, the camera slowly pans up to a set of searching eyes. Who does this face belong to? This is a topic of contention between Hitchcock scholars, with Kenneth Smith reminding Alex Ross that the face cannot belong to either of Novak's characters, because Carlotta is "the only woman who looks" in the film.⁸⁶ Their guess work is validated as Hitchcock gives no indication; however, Antony John believes that this face is the "dislocated face of female anonymity,"⁸⁷ where the physical dismantling encourages the viewer to

⁸⁵ To be specific, in this chapter I use: Mulvey's theorizations on the male gaze in her publications *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times* (2019), *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006), and *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989) and Kaja Silverman's work on female voice and vocality in her publications *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988) and *The Subject of Semiotics* (1983).

⁸⁶ Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 69. See also: Ross, "The Music That Casts Spells of Vertigo."

⁸⁷ Smith has an interesting take on this, as he explains that the eyes can either belong to Judy or Madeleine, who is the same woman as far as Scottie is concerned, or they could be the spiritual presence of Carlotta which would suggest that the face is an imaginary illusion, in Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 68-102. See also, John, "'The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped for': Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann's Score for *Vertigo*," 516-44.

(re)construct the woman, much in the manner that Gavin constructs Madeleine out of Carlotta, and that Scottie constructs Madeleine out of Judy.

From one anonymous eye comes a crudely animated spiral that moves with the queasy zoom-in and track-out shot designed to visually induce the sensation of vertigo, something that Bass describes as “*Vertigo*’s psychological vortex.”⁸⁸ The visual movement, and sound, of spirals are associated with vertiginous feelings of sheer heights and limitless falling, thusly animating the anonymous eye into Freud’s realm of the uncanny. The Nietzschean “eternal return” is noted in the face of female anonymity of the prelude; Carlotta’s spiralling blonde curls, become Madeleine Elster’s, become Judy’s. The “eternal return” is only completed in *Vertigo*’s conclusion, yet Hitchcock and Herrmann must start at the top of the spiral with the start of the film.

The prelude and opening credits are Hitchcock’s foreshadowing that *Vertigo* will shatter female identity through its own debilitating force. Herrmann’s musical accompaniment supports these themes through a repetitive set of arpeggios coming from the high winds and strings that spiral as they climb up the register, only to fall back down when they reach their highest pitch. The “Love” leitmotif is introduced as low-brass chords interrupt the musical spirals to cause a registral separation through the timbral opposition. Obsessive love as a human emotion has the capacity to be one-sided, and the notion of having a leitmotif that namely suggests love in an identifying male perspective (Scottie’s), sonically traps the female character (Carlotta/Madeleine/Judy) in a controlling, and possessive manner. Furthermore, and perhaps more sinisterly, the opposing musical gestures of the arpeggios and the “Love” leitmotif resists a straightforward tonal classification, which manifests an unsettling sonic relationship, acting as an aural metaphor for Scottie and Madeleine’s “love.” Smith notes that while Herrmann did not invent the notion of off-centre tonality, the

⁸⁸ Harrison Engle, “Obsessed with *Vertigo*,” Vimeo, accessed July 27th 2021, <https://vimeo.com/458026675>.

relentlessness of this delivery is attributed to Herrmann.⁸⁹ Ross believes that the prelude's intention is literally to induce vertigo, as Herrmann provides no acceptable tonal resolution as the spirals pull the score back in on itself.⁹⁰ Stitched together, the visual narrative and the sonic narrative forge a dizzying, thematic connection between feelings of vertigo and love. While Scottie experiences psychological strains of vertigo that affect his ability as a detective, Judy inevitably experiences the physical effects of vertigo as she becomes reconstructed into Scottie's illusion of Madeleine — in the original illusion of Carlotta — the idol of his psychological and physiological vertigo.

Carlotta is presented almost always as a figure of the past,⁹¹ one constructed from Madeleine's imagination, only being implied through visual objects or musically through leitmotifs in Herrmann's score. The first time Carlotta's name appears is on her tombstone. Scottie follows Madeleine around San Francisco which leads him into a graveyard. When Scottie steps out of the church into the cemetery, the "Graveyard" cue drops the organ from the previous "Mission Organ" cue for muted violins and bass clarinets. The registral gulf, divided by the timbral layers grating against each other, reflect on the space between Madeleine as the object of the look, and Scottie as the looker. The high violins are playing a variant of the "Madeline" theme which rejects the past notions of Carlotta to sonically represent Madeleine. When the camera zooms in to read "Carlotta Valdes" on the gravestone, the aptly named "Tombstone" cue comes in, with its mini reprise of the previous cue "The Mission." For this reveal, Herrmann adds a stinger which aligns with the pitch of the harkening church bell.

⁸⁹ Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 71. See also, James K. Wright, "Twelve-tone Terror: Representing Horror and Monstrosity in Dodecaphonic Film Music," in *Monstrosity, Identity, and Music: Mediating Uncanny Creatures from Frankenstein to Videogames*, ed. Alexis Luko and James Wright (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2022), 150-171.

⁹⁰ Ross "The Music That Casts the Spells of *Vertigo*."

⁹¹ There is a 4 second shot during Scottie's nightmare where Carlotta appears in a physical form.

Scottie follows Madeleine into San Francisco's Legion of Honor, where he finds her sitting in front of Carlotta's portrait.⁹² Herrmann's cue "Carlotta's Portrait" plays. The strings which until now have played legato, switch to staccato, which is reminiscent of the organ from the previous cue, "Mission Organ". Tom Schneller takes this spiritual undertone further, observing that the continuous incantation and response, while paired with a slow tempo and harmonic stasis, contributes to the sound of a "hypnotic trance."⁹³ Herrmann musically hints at the spiritual, while sonically highlighting the uncanny visual connection between Madeleine and Carlotta. The camera uses Scottie's perspective to zoom in on Madeleine's tightly wound spiralling bun and bouquet, matching Carlotta's hairstyle and bouquet. Madeleine continues to gaze at Carlotta, while Scottie gazes at Madeleine; however, Carlotta is gazing down on them both—supporting Smith's observation in the prelude that Carlotta is the "only woman who looks."⁹⁴ "Carlotta's Portrait" is sonically revisited in Scottie's car, after Midge tries to guess the story. Scottie looks at the portrait in the gallery pamphlet as the translucent side profile of Madeleine's face is double-exposed over the frame for a few seconds. This shot of Madeleine's face is faded in and out twice, as if to mimic a double glance (from Scottie's perspective), is sonically supported by Herrmann's repeat of "Carlotta's Portrait." This is an example of Edward Branigan's "dream balloon" concept, where the dreamer (Scottie) is shown, with a second inset scene that represents his internal, visual, narrative.⁹⁵ Scottie's "dream balloon" marks a temporal discontinuity, and as Branigan notes, when a temporal discontinuity is undefined, neither in the past, present or future, it is

⁹² Vera Miles was supposed to play Madeleine/Judy, so the Carlotta panting is modelled in Mile's image. Hitchcock wanted Kim Novak to fill the role of Madeleine and Judy, because he believed that she could pass for the double of Mile's portrait (Carlotta's Portrait). The final portrait of Carlotta was painted by John Ferren, who also drew the abstract expressionism sequence in Scottie's nightmare sequence.

⁹³ Tom Schneller, "Fearful Symmetries: Music as Metaphor in Doppelgänger Films," in *The Routledge Companion to Screen Music and Sound*, ed. Miguel Mera, Ronald Sadoff, and Ben Winters (New York and London: Routledge, 2017), 543-562.

⁹⁴ Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 71.

⁹⁵ Edward Branigan, *Narration and the Fiction Film* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 85.

labelled as a form of “mental process narration.”⁹⁶ Carlotta is the past, and Madeleine is the present — yet Madeleine’s face appears over, and then dissolves into Carlotta’s — interweaving the narratives of time in *Vertigo*.⁹⁷

Post-breakdown, Scottie revisits the places of significance tied to Carlotta. “Carlotta’s Theme,” as described by Sullivan, is a “Ravelian haberna,”⁹⁸ which matches the elegance of the “Madeline” leitmotif with a fiery undertone of passion. Perhaps an increased understanding of “Carlotta’s Theme” comes from Hitchcock and Herrmann’s previous film collaboration, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), where the dance version of a suspense cue harbours mystery and hints at the surreal.⁹⁹ When Scottie revisits the museum, he does so as both the haunter and the haunted. While Madeleine is no longer living, the ever-present living-dead presence of Carlotta shows her, like most horror films in accordance with the uncanny, to be the strange and threatening unreal entity. Carlotta has been set up as the excuse for Madeleine’s ‘death,’ therefore submerging Scottie into delirium. Herrmann ignores the gravity of this accusation and plunges the score into a seductive harmony that glides next to the visual narrative.

Scottie is shown in his bed, from a birds-eye perspective, when Herrmann starts into “The Nightmare and Dawn” cue. The last time the camera was in Scottie’s bedroom, Madeleine was lying naked, also dreaming. The camera zooms into a close up of his face, and another “dream balloon” materializes.¹⁰⁰ In Scottie’s dream, or rather nightmare, an image of Carlotta/Madeleine’s bouquet erupts into animation. Flowers in *Vertigo* represent death, and

⁹⁶ Ibid., 86.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Also, this can also be representative of the Nietzschean eternal return which successfully throws each successive female character back onto the last. See also: Alexis Luko, “Dream Weaving and Sonic Metalepsis in Jan Troell’s *Land of Dreams*,” *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 11, no. 3 (2021): 243-265.

⁹⁸ Sullivan, *Hitchcock’s Music*, 229.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 230.

¹⁰⁰ Branigan, *Narration and the Fiction Film*, 86.

this animation breathes life into them, making the inanimate become animate.¹⁰¹ The sentiment of bringing the dead to life is most obviously portrayed in Scottie's nightmare, as Carlotta appears as a present figure standing in Gavin's arms as Scottie looks at them both.¹⁰² Represented this way, Carlotta's portrait is seen not just as a painting, but as a living entity as once again, Hitchcock undefines the temporal discontinuity of the "dream balloon."¹⁰³ Scottie walks through a blank frame which slowly fades into the graveyard, where Carlotta's empty open grave lies in front of him. Herrmann increases intensity with menacing jolts that link the un-reality of his nightmare into his reality, making this nightmare sonically uncanny. Scottie's lifeless body falls, exactly like Madeleine's, onto the Mission roof, and presumably into the open grave. The end of "The Nightmare and Dawn" cue mirrors the swooning, somewhat romantic, violins that played during the "Graveyard" cue. This sonic repetition harks back to Scottie entering Madeleine's "irrational" world which places the blame for Scottie's obsession over Madeleine on Carlotta's shoulders.

Listening for Madeleine

Antony John claims that Madeleine does not merely arrive on screen. Instead, Hitchcock introduces her through visual composition.¹⁰⁴ The scene is set in a lively, ambiently lit restaurant, with all the patrons — except one — wearing dark shades. The patron in the centre of the frame is wearing a bright velvet green stole and, although her face is hidden, the back of her head is feathered with vibrantly white, blonde hair. The camera slowly zooms in until this head fills most of the frame. Matching the camera zoom, the music slowly begins to

¹⁰¹ Cohen, "Beyond "the Gaze": Žižek, Hitchcock, and the American Sublime," 351.

¹⁰² This is a call back to a previous scene — where Gavin tells Scottie in the court room, "You and I know who killed Madeleine," alluding to Carlotta.

¹⁰³ Branigan, *Narration and the Fiction Film*, 85-86.

¹⁰⁴ John, "The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For": Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann's Score for *Vertigo*," 519.

amplify Herrmann's "Madeline" leitmotif, musically constructing the unseen face of Madeleine. The leitmotif, accompanied by the grandeur of the restaurant setting, establishes a mood of poise and elegance, yet the muted timbre of the strings allow for a subtle undertone of vulnerability.

The camera captures this significant moment for Scottie when it sharply cuts to show him sitting at the bar as he becomes wrapped in the sonorous envelope of Madeleine's leitmotif.¹⁰⁵ For Kaja Silverman, the sonorous envelope is heard through vocality, however Madeleine's voice goes unheard for the first half of the film, therefore the sonic representation of Madeleine comes purely through Herrmann's score (in this particular moment, through the "Madeline" leitmotif). Silverman's reading of the sonorous envelope comes from the powerful cultural fantasy of the maternal voice.¹⁰⁶ By identifying the sonorous envelope trope as a fantasy, Silverman emphasizes the retroactive nature of the trope as the mother absorbs the voice (or sound) and folds into the "infant's position."¹⁰⁷ The infant position is one of helplessness and incapability — the reason that Silverman believes that the maternal voice falls victim to the underscore of the narrative.¹⁰⁸ Madeleine becomes helpless under Scottie's fixated gaze that follows her across the dining room. The intensity of this gaze is shown by interchanging camera close ups of their faces. These camera cuts intensify the sonic voyeurism as the "Madeline" theme soars to a climax. Her long dress sweeps the floor as she glides out of the room like a spiritual enigma, leaving Scottie gazeless. Madeleine has an air of untouchability, emphasising the rumoured possibility that she has been possessed by the spirit of Carlotta. The male gaze, by virtue of being a non-physical repressor, adds to Madeleine's untouchability. Hitchcock's visual and sonic introduction to Madeleine is completely stereotypical of the male gaze, as Mulvey critiques, "in their

¹⁰⁵ Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988), 72-101.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote ‘to-be-looked-at-ness.’¹⁰⁹ This is not lost on Antony John, who posits that “Herrmann’s musical composition . . . add[s] an aural dimension to Mulvey’s exclusively ocular critique.”¹¹⁰

Now that Madeleine has been introduced as the object of Scottie’s gaze, he must pursue her. Herrmann uses a two-measure rhythmic and harmonic ostinato to sonically narrate Scottie as he follows Madeleine around San Francisco in his car. Herrmann calls this cue “Madeline’s Car.” Both the rhythm, and harmony, stay stagnant as the ostinato swings back and forth between chords. While this does not have the same spiralling motion as the prelude, this technique does create the feeling of halted progress; more like the sensation of running on the spot than following the motion of a falling spiral. This sonically represents Scottie’s position as he follows Madeleine, getting no closer to her, at least on an emotional level. Although Herrmann’s score holds a static narrative, Hitchcock shows Scottie in a full-on pursuit of Madeleine. The camera sits on his dashboard, either looking back onto him, or looking forward onto his point of vision — Madeleine’s car. Even though she is perceived as the object of pursuit in the visual narrative, Herrmann’s lack of musical resolve maintains the idea that she is untouchable.

Scottie cannot ‘catch’ Madeleine in this pursuit, and so, as predicted by the prelude, he is left to construct his own idea of her. Hitchcock knows that to make sense of the present narrative, the past must be explored. The first time Scottie leaves the car, he steps out into Carlotta’s world of the past as experienced through the present by Madeleine. There is no dialogue as Scottie follows her through the church and into the graveyard. The lack of dialogue is instead filled by Herrmann and his “The Mission” cue. Once again, this cue is

¹⁰⁹ Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 14-26.

¹¹⁰ John, ““The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For”: Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann’s Score for *Vertigo*,” 517.

deprived of a tonal context which creates a directionless feeling, in keeping with Scottie's pursuit of Madeleine. Scottie is musically escorted into the church by a steep three octave descent from high winds to low winds that is reminiscent of the vertiginous arpeggios of the prelude.

Hitchcock often intertwines source music with the score, a technique he employs as Scottie moves through the church with Herrmann's cue "Mission Organ." The only cue to use a church organ, this is a location signifier to provide a comforting timbral shift into aural expectation.¹¹¹ The feeling of familiarity is disrupted as "Mission Organ" becomes interlinked with the previous cue of "The Mission" by means of a further sonic descent.¹¹² This time, Herrmann uses a sequence that moves from tonic minor, without suspended sevenths, which allows the sonic narrative a feeling of movement.¹¹³ This sudden aural movement suggests progress — from the perspective of Scottie, of course. Herrmann's tombstone¹¹⁴ stinger sonically marks the end of Scottie's pursuit of Madeleine, and he moves on to "claim" her. Herrmann uses the "Tristan chord" to express Scottie's yearning and longing for Madeleine.¹¹⁵ Herrmann reproduces this famous half-diminished seventh chord, pitch-by-pitch, as it is heard in the prelude of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (1865). Through this chord, Herrmann manages to musically reflect on the tension and longing in Scottie and Madeleine's relationship, as perhaps beautifully paralleled to Wagner's description of the opera outline to *Tristan und Isolde*:

¹¹¹ Ibid., 525.

¹¹² Perhaps there is symbolic meaning in the two cues that are played in the church; both use the word "Mission." At first glance, and in the first narrative, with the pursuit of Madeleine this word appears to relate to Scottie's mission in investigating Madeleine. However, by the second narrative, the audience discover that Carlotta was a Spanish immigrant, living at an old Spanish Missionary. It is at the Mission where Madeleine and Judy fall to their deaths from the bell tower. Therefore, the cues with the word "Mission" are symbolic of Carlotta.

¹¹³ John, "'The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For': Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann's Score for *Vertigo*," 522.

¹¹⁴ As discussed in greater detail under the first subheading "Constructing Carlotta & Imaginary Women."

¹¹⁵ John, "'The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For': Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann's Score for *Vertigo*," 525.

And now there were no bounds to the longing, the desire, the bliss, and the anguish of love: the world, power, fame, glory, honour, chivalry, loyalty, friendship, all swept away like chaff, an empty dream; only one thing is left alive: yearning, yearning. Insatiable desire, ever reborn languishing and thirsting; the sole release — death, dying, extinction, never more to wake!¹¹⁶

According to Dahlhaus, Herrmann devised one of the most Wagnerian scores in film music history in *Vertigo*;¹¹⁷ however, Sullivan believes that *Vertigo* also resembles Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, where the femme fatale is a figment of ghostly imagination that causes extreme torment of the male protagonist.¹¹⁸ *Symphonie Fantastique* sounds dreamlike, yet its narrative is nightmarish, as the program is embellished with formal waltzes, pastorales and love scenes that end with dark and melancholy tone. Sullivan argues that Herrmann's harmonies may well be Wagnerian, but his overall sound aesthetic is closer to that of Berlioz, believing that "if ever there was an *idée fixe* in the movies, Madeleine and her music are it."¹¹⁹

The doomed romanticism continues after Scottie takes Madeleine back to his apartment after saving her from the waters of San Francisco Bay. The camera pans around the apartment, going from him stoking the fire, to slowly revealing Madeleine's wet clothes hanging up in his kitchen, and finally to the sleep-muttering Madeleine in his bed. The cue "Sleep" is similar to the "Madeline" leitmotif in that it is composed only for the strings which

¹¹⁶ Wagner quoted in Carl Dahlhaus, *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 50.

¹¹⁷ Herrmann demonstrates Wagnerian musical qualities through his use of leitmotifs, and his penchant for the romantic, which is only emphasized by the "yearning, insatiable desire" that comes from the Tristan chord, as quoted from Wagner by Dahlhaus.

¹¹⁸ Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music*, 232. It is also worth noting that the femme fatale in *Symphonie Fantastique* is idealised to bring love and ecstasy for the male protagonist, yet she also brings him murder, retribution and self-torment which is easily paralleled to Madeleine and Scottie's dynamic.

¹¹⁹ Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music*, 232.

play through a series of Tristan chords. A sonic foreshadow of sorrow, the violins, violas and cellos span widely over four octaves before the cellos come to rest on their lowest note.

Madeleine wakes up, naked to her ambiguous circumstance, startled by the sound of the phone ringing like a morning alarm. The sonic narrative moves onto the “By the Fireside” cue, although it is quickly interrupted by the strings that are reminiscent of the “Madeline” leitmotif as she appears at the doorway of the living room. Madeleine enters the dialogue for the first time by calmly, yet firmly, asking, “What am I doing here?”¹²⁰ A back and forth of conversation has Scottie question Madeleine’s actions, for which she apparently has no recollection. The music fades, and as it does, Madeleine gains some traction in the dialogue by turning the interrogation back around on Scottie. The ringing phone interrupts the chain of narrative events, again, giving Madeleine the opportunity of an Irish goodbye.¹²¹ Herrmann follows Madeleine with his “Exit” cue. The cue is repeated until Scottie realises that she has left. On his realisation, the violins climb up into a high register and Herrmann manipulates the score to express Scottie’s disappointment at her leaving and his growing obsession with her. Antony John believes that by evoking the Tristan chord, Herrmann has established a narrative foreshadow in the connection between love and death.¹²²

Herrmann plays with the connection between love and death throughout his score. Using the Tristan chord in the “In the Forest” cue when Madeleine traces her finger over the rings of a cut down tree, love and death are detailed through the passing of time: “Somewhere in here I was born ... and there I died. It was only a moment for you... you took no notice.” Madeleine pleads with Scottie not to ask her of her ‘death’, yet the Tristan chord implies it anyway. Although the Tristan chord is emphasised at moments of loss, its most explicit use is

¹²⁰ This happens after 45 minutes of the 130-minute film.

¹²¹ An “Irish goodbye” is an Irish-Americanism for when somebody intentionally leaves somewhere, without letting anyone know, to avoid confrontation or pleads to stay.

¹²² John, ““The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For”: Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann’s Score for *Vertigo*.” 517.

during “The Beach” cue. Madeleine recounts her recurring nightmare to the sound of a downward spiralling sequence that ends with the chord which suggests a never-ending loop that will only be broken by death. It is no surprise then, when Herrmann ramps up the sonic narrative to a full orchestration that comes embodied by the bellowing of crashing waves behind Scottie and Madeleine’s passionate embrace. Sullivan pokes fun at this moment, reminding his reader that this scene is a ‘potent rejoinder’ to the notion that Herrmann avoided Romantic hyperbole.¹²³

Commenting on the chord’s instability as it oscillates back and forth, Antony John believes that Herrmann chose the Tristan chord to specifically break down the perceived barrier between Scottie and Madeleine as his identity becomes increasingly bound to her identity.¹²⁴ Therefore, the Tristan chord is a sonic threat to Scottie as it acts as a catalyst in his own destruction through the loss of his identity at the hands of Madeleine. For Madeleine, the Tristan chord is not merely a sonic threat, it is a direct sonic indicator of her looming death as it manifests to dissolve. Scottie further descends into emotional vertigo through the cue “3 am” as he walks along empty streets in the dark. The visual narrative has Scottie stand out as a lost wandering loner; however, the sonic narrative is more forgiving. Herrmann’s persistence with the “Love” leitmotif deepens the wound of obsessive lovesickness, caused by the loss of Madeleine.

Hearing Judy

After Scottie’s stay in hospital, Hitchcock breathes fresh air into *Vertigo* by showing a bright blue-sky shining down a golden light on the city of San Francisco. A twinkling harp

¹²³ Sullivan, *Hitchcock’s Music*, 228.

¹²⁴ John, ““The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped For”: Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann’s Score for *Vertigo*.” 527.

welcomes the violins that lead the panoramic images to Madeleine's apartment block. Suddenly a blonde woman, a dead ringer for Madeleine, leaves the building — long bow strokes start into short, muted quivers in Herrmann's cue "The Past and the Girl." The music stops abruptly, as Scottie realises it is just a visual coincidence. This false encounter happens two more times, at the restaurant and the museum. The violins oscillate through Herrmann's spiralling arpeggios to musically narrate Scottie's hopeful desires that inevitably end in his devastation. Each of these false encounters feature women who aesthetically look like Madeleine with bright blonde pinned up hair, sleek make-up, and similarly chic clothing. However, the fourth time this happens, Hitchcock focuses on Scottie's face, rather than the look-a-like. When the camera turns around to Scottie's point-of-view, there is a woman speaking to her friends. Although this woman has brown hair, heavier make-up, and brighter clothes, her face is the double of Madeleine's. Scottie has been through the past, and now he has found the present — Judy.

Following the rule of the eternal return, Scottie follows this mysterious woman into the Empire Hotel, and up to her room. Judy opens the door and pretends not to know Scottie as he tells her that she reminds him of someone. Judy harshly rebukes Scottie: "I have heard that one before too, I remind you of someone you used to be madly in love with but then she ditched ya for another guy, and you've been carrying the torch ever since, and you saw me, and something clicked." Boldly, and rather rudely, Scottie agrees saying, "You're not far wrong." Judy reads out the details of her driver's license as a first attempt at rationalisation, but a last attempt of identity confirmation. It is only when Scottie closes the door behind him that Herrmann pipes up again, this time the score is accompanied by the flashback from "the Mission," and "Madeline's fall." The initial scene ended with Madeleine's body on the roof. This time, the flashback is from Judy's knowledge, which ends with Gavin holding her on the

Mission roof, while his real wife — the real Madeleine — plummets from the tower.¹²⁵ This is the first time Herrmann shows the perspective from a female character, however it is a perspective which criminalizes her. The music follows Judy back into her hotel room, where she opens her wardrobe to pack her suitcase, only for Herrmann to push a stinger at the first look at Madeleine's suit hanging neatly among her other clothes.

Judy attempts to take ownership of her actions by writing a confessional letter to Scottie. Judy sits down at her desk, and she begins to read aloud as she writes. In film theory scholarship, the Lacanian “suture” has been the focus of discussions of the visual narrative. However, as a scholar who concerns herself with sound, particularly vocality, Silverman believes that the suture appears in voiceovers.¹²⁶ Silverman notes that suture is heard when the sound or voice of a person within the narrative highlights what is happening visually.¹²⁷ Judy's letter scene is a good example of this, as she reads her letter aloud. In classic narrative cinema, both female and male voices are synchronised to their bodies, and Silverman argues that the rule of synchronisation is more strictly applied, and therefore more repressive, to female voices.¹²⁸ Shohini Chaudhuri notes that male embodied voiceovers in film noir are rare; however, when they happen, they tend to be for autobiographical or confessional purposes with characters experiencing trauma.¹²⁹ Silverman writes that female voiceovers, while rare and unusual, do have similar characteristics of the male embodied counterpart, yet she argues that classic narrative cinema has no female voiceovers that are comparable to the disembodied male voiceovers, which narrate from a privileged perspective ‘outside’ of the

¹²⁵ An often-forgotten casualty of *Vertigo*, Gavin's wife is the ‘real’ Madeleine.

¹²⁶ Silverman posits that voiceovers are the sound equivalent of a shot/reverse-shot and, by the rule of synchronization, visual editing matches images and sound frame by frame. In, Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 222.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Chaudhuri, *Feminist Film Theorists: Laura Mulvey, Kaja Silverman, Teresa de Lauretis, Barbara Creed* (London New York: Routledge, 2006), 50.

diegesis.¹³⁰ This is significant because, according to Silverman, the disembodied voice is the one with utmost authority as a voice of ‘the Law’.¹³¹ *Vertigo*, at its core, is a mystery where a former police detective goes undercover and ends up falling in love with the woman he is investigating. Scottie, therefore, quite literally operates as the law, meaning that Judy is suppressed into the role of the suspect. This notion is solidified by Judy reading her confession aloud. While Judy is repressed into the visual narrative, illustrated by the attempt to reconstruct her identity, her written confession pushes her further into an inferior sonic narrative.¹³² Through the visual narrative, men are the seeing, and the women are the seen, and so with the sonic narrative, men are the hearing, and women are the overheard.

In her letter, Judy reflects on the success of Gavin’s plan: “He planned it so well... he made no mistakes.” Hitchcock has set up her dialogue, and so Herrmann evokes the Tristan chord for the following line: “I made the mistake. I fell in love. That wasn’t part of the plan. I’m still in love with you, and I want you so to love me.” Herrmann’s placement of the Tristan chord as Judy speaks of love, implies her death. Judy is alone as she writes this letter, although she looks directly at the camera as if to address the viewer. Feminist film theorists, including Marian Keane and Tania Modleski, have interpreted this as the moment that the audience lose identification with Scottie.¹³³ Judy’s fear of rejection overshadows any fears concerning recrimination or death.¹³⁴ Instead of fearing for what she has done, Judy sees this as an opportunity to love Scottie, however she wants to love him as Judy – not as Madeleine. The “Goodnight” cue plays on this as the “Love” leitmotif is re-introduced when Judy is sitting profile before her hotel room window, silhouetted with the neon green hotel sign light.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 105.

¹³² Karen Hollinger, ““The Look,” Narrativity, and the Female Spectator in *Vertigo*,” *Journal of Film and Video* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 18-28.

¹³³ Keane, Marian E., “A Closer Look at Scopophilia: Mulvey, Hitchcock, and *Vertigo*,” in *A Hitchcock Reader*, ed. Marshall Deutelbaum and Leland A. Poague (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1986), 231-48. See also: Tania Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 55-69.

¹³⁴ Sullivan, *Hitchcock’s Music*, 233.

This scene is intended to tempt Scottie to accept her in place of Madeleine. The irony here is that, in Scottie's perspective, Judy fails as a copy for Madeleine, but once she successfully transforms into Madeleine, she destroys Scottie's fantasy anyway.

The irony is amplified by noting that Judy is opposed to the 'transformation'. In the clothes shop she reluctantly accepts the clothes by tragically pleading, "I'll wear the darned clothes if you [Scottie] want me to! If you'll just like me!" adding later, "I don't care anymore about me." Herrmann evokes the "Love" leitmotif for Judy's transformation into Madeleine.¹³⁵ However, Judy's clothes are not enough, and the visual narrative follows suit as the camera spirals to a close-up of Judy in the beauty parlour as she is being made up to look like Madeleine. Similar to the clothes, Judy pleads desperately about not wanting her hair colour changed saying "It can't matter to you," before she desperately asks, "If I let you change me, will that do? If I do what you tell me, will you love me?" Her pleas go unheard as we hear Herrmann's male-centric perspective representing Scottie's compulsion to re-create Madeleine. Herrmann does this through tremolos and suspensions which seem to mock Judy. With a reprise of spiralling arpeggios, the "Beauty Parlour" cue creates a musical link between the prelude's dislocated face and Judy's makeover. While this creates a narrative consistency, it also shows the severity of the extent to which Judy has become objectified by Herrmann's sonic gaze.

When Judy, in her transformed state as Madeleine, appears in the hotel room, Scottie does not skip a beat in observing that her hair is 'wrong'. Judy retaliates that she, along with the salon staff, did not think that the pinned-up bun (Madeleine's style) suited her. Without this detail however, Scottie's fetish is incomplete, and so Judy disappears into the bathroom to 'correct' her hair. Hitchcock believed that the emotional climax of the dressing scene (or,

¹³⁵ Ibid., 228. Sullivan shares a note from Hitchcock, where in his own dubbing notes, he instructed: [when Judy] "emerges and we go into the love scene we should let all traffic noises fade because Mr. Herrmann may have something to say here."

as it is known formally through Herrmann's scoring, "Scene D'armour") is actually about undressing. In an interview with Truffaut, he explained that "what Stewart is really waiting for is for the woman to emerge totally naked... ready for love."¹³⁶ In the unedited interview transcript however, Hitchcock indicates that "Jimmy Stewart has an erection."¹³⁷ This better explains the soundtrack at this moment, a "sonic gaze" replete with a trembling crescendo that spasms to its climax.

Herrmann's final musical narrative is comprised of three cues that range from Scottie's realisation to Judy's fatal fall from the tower: "The Necklace," "The Return," and "The Finale." "The Necklace" begins with a stinger for muted horns, alerting Scottie's attention to Carlotta's necklace around Judy's neck. The camera does not dolly-zoom into the necklace around Judy's neck, but instead fires into the mirror, emphasising that Scottie is not looking at Judy, but is rather looking at her reflection of Madeleine. There is a moment of irony here as looking into her own reflection, Judy addresses Scottie's male gaze by saying "can't you see?" Remaining silent, Scottie changes their plans for dinner, and instead drives Judy out to the Mission. While Scottie drives, the tension in the car is musically narrated and intensified by a series of Tristan chords, which by their nature, will only find release through death.

Once at the Mission, "The Return" begins to play as Scottie frantically tells Judy "I have to tell you about Madeleine now." This cue has an intensity perpetrated by a series of repeated rhythmic gestures that become overpowered by a crescendo of nihilistic strings that circle back to the familiar vertiginous sound, mirroring Scottie's manic, repetitive monologue. This speech is unscored until Scottie reaches the top of the stairs. "The Return" musically indicates Scottie's triumph over vertigo, while implying the doom of Judy's fate.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., this is also a reflection of Hollywood culture as it pertains to women and image in the 1950s/60s, see: Hollinger, "'The Look,' Narrativity, and the Female Spectator in *Vertigo*," 28.

Hitchcock saw Scottie's obsessive re-making of Judy's character as a reflection of his own job as a film director. When talking about Novak he said: "I supervised the choice of her wardrobe in every detail just as Stewart did."¹³⁸ The split between Madeleine and Judy reflects the idea of the Gothic double. This is pertinent to the dehumanization of Judy as her identity becomes splintered, first by Gavin and then by Scottie. The character of Madeleine that Scottie knew, was imaginary – an illusion created by obsession. Shouting in the final moments of the film, Scottie asserts to Judy, "You were the copy; you were the counterfeit." With a blink of self-awareness he continues, "He made you over just like I made you over," moving on to her behaviour he interrogates, "Did he train you; did he rehearse you?" before concluding, "you were a very apt pupil." Scottie's vocal distress in *Vertigo's* final moments is pinned by his recognition of the uncanniness of his own illusion. Herrmann's harmonies surge into cycles of major-third relations which embody the musical uncanny as the recreation of Judy to Madeleine is completed by her death.

Midge's Diegetic Control

Midge wears glasses. A common romantic trope, eyeglasses hold a vapid power that once removed, make someone instantly beautiful. Midge's orange tortoiseshell rims do not just mark her as the platonic character, they note that she is a "gazer." Just as Scottie dismisses Midge, so does much of *Vertigo* scholarship. Indeed, it is here where Smith's idea of Carlotta being "the only woman who looks" is demystified.¹³⁹ Carlotta is subjected to *Vertigo's* eternal return, and therefore lacks any narrative control. Therefore, given that Midge is truly

¹³⁸ Patrick McGilligan, *Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness and Light* (New York: Raegan Books, 2003), 567.

¹³⁹ Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 69.

“the only woman who looks” in the film,¹⁴⁰ she does have an element of control in both the visual and sonic narratives.

Although Scottie treats her platonically, she disturbs him. In Freudian analysis, this is most likely due to Midge personifying the ‘imprisoning mother’ through the super-ego— a position that Scottie cannot reach.¹⁴¹ Midge asserts this even through her dialogue, as she refers to Scottie by his birth name John, and occasionally pet-names him “Johnny-O.” Each scene with Midge shows a stark contrast to those with Madeleine; this is perhaps because Midge is interpreted by some feminists as the ‘life-mother,’ and Madeleine the ‘death-mother.’¹⁴² At one point, Midge attempts to comfort Scottie when he is in hospital telling him, “You’re not lost. Mother’s here.” This Freudian ideology is interesting in its sonic representation. Midge often plays records in her own space, giving her control over the diegetic music as she turns it on and off. When Herrmann’s non-diegetic score plays, it is often during times when the other characters are either feeling, or causing, turmoil within the narrative.

Vertigo opens with a flashback of Scottie’s almost fatal accident, and the source of his vertigo. Chasing a criminal over moon-lit rooftops, Scottie’s actions are sonically supported by one of one of Herrmann’s most assaulting cues, “The Rooftop.” The cue runs at breakneck tempos, almost literally, only to crash down into long drawn-out notes that heavily sink to the gravity of Scottie’s situation. The slow lurches fade into Midge’s brightly lit apartment where she is playing a sweet Bach melody from her record player. This sonic contrast is entirely deliberate, as Hitchcock writes in his notes for the opening scene:

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Golding, “Spiral Music: Listening to Uncanny Influence in *Vertigo*,” 130.

¹⁴² See: Christine Jackson, “Music and Mirrors in Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*,” *Quadrivium: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship* 1, no. 1 (Summer 2014): 1-9; Keane, “A Closer Look at Scopophilia: Mulvey, Hitchcock, and *Vertigo*,” 240; and Susan White, “Allegory and Referentiality: *Vertigo* and Feminist Criticism,” *Comparative Literature* 106, no. 5 (Fall 1991): 910-932.

In important factor is the contrast between the dramatic music over the rooftops and the soft totally different quality of the background music in Midge's apartment... The rooftop's music is background music and Midge's apartment music is coming from the phonograph... small, concentrated music coming out of a box.¹⁴³

The shock of this sonic contrast marks Midge's apartment as a safe place. When she asks him if he has had any dizzy spells this week, he replies, "I'm having one now... from that music," hinting at the Bach playing from Midge's record player. Sullivan believes that the "force of clarity and consonance" associated with the classicism reflects Midge's struggle to compete against Madeleine for Scottie's affection. In the apartment, he attempts to show Midge his 'control' over his acrophobia as he stands on her stepping stool. The sounds of the stool creak under his weight, already sounding instability, before Herrmann stings on the sight of the drop outside Midge's apartment window. The strings hold a sonic tremor, as Scottie falls into the safe arms of Midge, where the cellos catch him.

When Midge impishly paints her head onto Carlotta's portrait, glasses, and all, she punctures Scottie's illusion of Madeleine. Before the portrait reveal, she tells Scottie that she "has gone back to her first love — painting." She starts to voice her excitement over her new portrait, stating that it isn't exactly a "still life" piece, and that it is a gift for him. Dialogue stops, and Scottie moves towards the canvas. The camera slides up the bodice of the painting, its resemblance to Carlotta's portrait is unmistakable. Midge has brought life to the dead. Midge passes this off as a joke, yet it ends in vulnerable frustration when Scottie abandons her, causing her to breakdown in tears. Midge is therefore repressed into Scottie's narrative, as he appears blind to her pining affection. During this portrait scene, there is no music. This is rare for a scene featuring Midge. Scottie's romantic dismissal of Midge into the position of "platonic friend," rather gives Midge a level of control over Scottie that is not afforded to

¹⁴³ Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music*, 230.

Madeleine, Judy, or Carlotta. A glimpse of this control is heard (or rather, unheard). The scenes that happen in Midge's own space¹⁴⁴ are never accompanied by Herrmann's score. Instead, Midge controls diegetic music by playing classical music on her own record player, or on the record player in Scottie's hospital room. Herrmann's score only accompanies Midge during times of anguish outside of her space, usually when she is dealing with the repercussions of Scottie's infatuation with Madeleine.

After 'Madeleine' falls from the tower, Scottie is institutionalised for his mental breakdown. He sits silently in a hospice room. Midge is there, attempting to comfort him. She puts on Mozart's Symphony no. 34, on the pretence that the music therapist told her that listening to Mozart would best 'suit' Scottie's recovery – a notion which she pokes fun at, saying:

It's Mozart. Wolfgang Amadeus. I had a long talk with the lady in musical therapy, and she said Mozart's the boy for you, Johnny. The broom that sweeps the cobwebs away. That's what the lady said. It's wonderful how they have it all taped now, John. They have music for dipsomaniacs, music for melancholiacs, music for hypochondriacs... I wonder what would happen if somebody got their files mixed up.

Then on leaving the hospice, she stops to speak to a doctor whom she tells: "and you know something doctor, I don't think Mozart is gonna help at all." Midge's comments about music create an element of her character's self-awareness of the score which has been composed to further manipulate the themes of illusion and obsession. The hospice scene suggests that when music is placed over a character, they become smothered by it, which represses them in the narrative. Herrmann's score speaks for Scottie's perspective, yet he remains voiceless with Midge playing the music of Mozart over him. This scene may be used

¹⁴⁴ "Her [Midge's] own space" refers to her apartment, or when she is in Scottie's hospice room as he sits silently while she speaks to him and operates the record player.

to highlight what Herrmann's score does to the women of the narrative; dialogue and acting direction is given to a female character in a film narrative, whereas a film score is placed on top of the female, indicating that the score removes agency from the female characters by silencing them within the sonic narrative. The last time Midge appears on screen is when she leaves the hospice, walking down the darkly lit hospice corridor, alone, with only the sound of Herrmann's sombre cellos and basses.¹⁴⁵ Despite her previous control over the sonic narrative, Herrmann has silenced Midge with her own sadness as she walks out to Hitchcock's fading visual narrative.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have noted how each female character in *Vertigo* is silenced and suppressed through Herrmann's musical language. While *Vertigo*'s score has been studied extensively in film music studies, most scholars focus either on Herrmann's technicality, or how the musical themes move the narrative from Scottie's perspective. Considering its treatment of women and the representation of women, *Vertigo* has also featured prominently in feminist research, particularly in film theory. In this chapter, I recognised the issue of male focus in film music literature, and I examined how the female characters embody *Vertigo*'s sonic themes of "illusion" and "obsession" by using a second wave film feminist lens. To consider these themes in this way, I used the principles of Freud's uncanny theory to analyse *Vertigo*'s visual and sonic narratives and how the uncanny is perpetrated by Carlotta, Madeleine, Judy, and Midge.

¹⁴⁵ This moment is paralleled with Madeleine's dream of the corridor that once held mirrors, and now appears to be a dead end of nothing-ness. This symbolizes the once rational Midge transcending into Madeleine's irrational abyss.

Saul Bass's title sequence constructs the face of female anonymity.¹⁴⁶ Not only does this set intention for the narrative events that follow the idea of 'imaginary' women is created in a way that, as described by Martin Scorsese, is "absolutely essential to the spirit, the functioning, and the power of *Vertigo*."¹⁴⁷ Carlotta, while not entirely imaginary, is placed as a figure of the past, and so the idea of her is imagined and constructed in the present. My first question — "Carlotta is, for Hitchcock, 'the face of female anonymity', so how does Herrmann construct her ghostly character in the sonic narrative?" — is answered through Herrmann's own past with Hitchcock. Herrmann's sonic construction of the "Carlotta Theme" is in keeping with the re-creation of the past as it comes, almost recycled, from the previous Hitchcock-Herrmann collaboration, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956).¹⁴⁸ Sullivan describes "Carlotta's Theme" as a "Ravelian haberna,"¹⁴⁹ and Schneller notes that "Carlotta's Portrait" provides a ritualistic "hypnotic trance."¹⁵⁰ Both of these descriptions pinpoint the ways in which Herrmann's sonic representation ascribes an intimidating, ethereal, quality to Carlotta. Herrmann sonically traps Carlotta, and Madeleine and Judy through leitmotifs and cues which mirror each other continuously through the sonic narrative. This sonic mirroring makes sure that each female character is thrown back on to the last, in a doomed cycle.

Mulvey, not noting Herrmann's musical form, splits *Vertigo* into two parts. The first part shows the fabricated illusion that is Madeleine.¹⁵¹ The second part reveals the process of this fabrication through Judy.¹⁵² Mulvey's method of splitting *Vertigo* in half makes room for the answer to my second question: "To what extent are Madeleine and Judy treated

¹⁴⁶ Smith, "Vertigo's Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 69.

¹⁴⁷ Auiler, *Vertigo: The Making of a Hitchcock Classic*, 3.

¹⁴⁸ It is most important to note that Herrmann scored the 1956 Hollywood remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, which is not to be mixed up with the original British release of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in 1934, scored by Arthur Benjamin.

¹⁴⁹ Sullivan, *Hitchcock's Music*, 229.

¹⁵⁰ Schneller, "Fearful Symmetries: Music as Metaphor in Doppelgänger Films," 540.

¹⁵¹ Mulvey, *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times*, 46.

¹⁵² Ibid.

differently by the score, and how does this affect their position in the narrative?” Speaking of only the visual narrative, Mulvey answers, “behind Madeleine’s perfect façade lies Judy’s tragic reality.”¹⁵³ *Vertigo* is the cinematic fabrication of a perfect façade which mirrors the perfection demanded of women in society.¹⁵⁴ The director makes the decisions, the camera frames the angle, the lights illuminate the face. *She* is captured on film in her passive state of “to-be-looked-at-ness.”¹⁵⁵ Of course, *she* needs sonic accompaniment that will speak for *her* — this is where Herrmann creates his “sonic gaze.” The narrative shows Scottie desperately trying to re-create his love story with Madeleine by means of a manipulative relationship with Judy. Hitchcock creates visual reminiscence through costume, hair, and beauty, to make Judy into Madeleine. Herrmann captures this re-creation of the past, musically, by using the same leitmotif for both Madeleine and Judy. Madeleine and Judy are tied together by a connection of death and love, which Herrmann musically portrays through Tristan chords which chastise Madeleine for being the doomed desire of Scottie, and mock Judy’s longing for Scottie to love her as she is. Herrmann’s coda brings the stringer at the start of the “The Necklace” which sonically points the blame towards Judy for Scottie’s emotional turmoil. Ultimately, Herrmann gives Madeleine and Judy the same musical treatment because the score sonically reflects them in their Gothic double status. In the final moments of the film, Scottie’s vocal distress marks his recognition of the uncanniness of the doubled illusion, and Herrmann supports his distress through surging cycles of major-thirds which embody the musical uncanny.

Midge is excluded from the eternal return that dooms Madeleine and Judy, and Carlotta. Therefore, she holds a unique position in the narrative. My third question; “to what extent is Midge free from Herrmann’s sonic reign, and how does this position her in *Vertigo*’s

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 44.

¹⁵⁵ Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 16.

narrative?” is answered here. Midge is free from Herrmann’s sonic reign, due to her status as “a gazer” crudely demonstrated by her glasses, and platonic, yet motherly, relationship with Scottie. Midge is the only woman who looks. In the Freudian reading, Midge’s position of ‘life-mother’ makes her apartment a ‘safe space’ for Scottie. Often Midge will play music in her apartment, and she is often always asked by Scottie to turn it off. This shows how Herrmann uses the non-diegetic score as a tool for narrative control, because when Midge plays diegetic music over Scottie, she is challenging his male perspective of narrative control. When Midge plays diegetic music on record players, it is always 18th century music.¹⁵⁶ *Vertigo* is set in the early 1950’s, and Midge’s penchant for 18th century classical music is reflective of *Vertigo*’s insistent reliance on replaying the past. Herrmann manages to pull her under the score by her last scene in *Vertigo*, as she leaves the hospital defeated by her own sadness and longing desire. It is true, Hitchcock can leave no woman untroubled.¹⁵⁷ A nightmarish story, during filming, Hitchcock reassured a nervous Novak that “it’s just a movie.”¹⁵⁸ However, to those interested in the representation of women in film and music, *Vertigo* is so much more as it exemplifies the sonic gaze in action.

¹⁵⁶ In her apartment, Midge plays Bach and, in the hospital, (though recommend by the music therapist) Midge plays Mozart.

¹⁵⁷ Clover quotes Hitchcock saying: “I always believe in following the advice of the playwright Sardou. He said: ‘Torture the women!’ ... The trouble today is that we don’t torment women enough.” In, Carol J. Clover, “Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film,” *Representations* 20, no.1 (1987): 206.

¹⁵⁸ Sullivan, “*Hitchcock’s Music*,” 234.

Chapter Two: “The Sound of Something Terrible in *Psycho* (1960)”

In film studios and among filmmakers, there is a convention that the main titles have to be cymbal crashes and be accompanied by a pop song – no matter what! The real function of a main title, of course, should be to set the pulse of what is going to follow. I wrote the main title music for Psycho before Saul Bass even did the animation. They animated to the music. The point, however, is that after the main title nothing much happens in the picture, apparently, for 20 minutes. Appearances, of course, are deceiving, for in fact the drama starts immediately with the titles! The climax of Psycho is given to you by the music right at the moment the film begins. I am firmly convinced, and so is Hitchcock, that after the main titles you know that something terrible must happen. The main title sequence tells you so, and that is its function: to set the drama.¹⁵⁹

Bernard Herrmann

Psycho (1960) drives over a crossroad in film history where the past of studio filming and black-and-white stock meet the future of television’s low-budget, scaled-down production values. During the initial stages of production Hitchcock wanted the horror and intensity to manifest from silence. Hitchcock only wanted to hear music in: the prelude, the opening hotel scene, Marion’s driving scenes, the hardware store scenes, during Arbogast’s murder, and when Norman carries Mrs Bates to the cellar. The rest of the film, even up to the End Title was to be entirely without music.¹⁶⁰ However, Herrmann had other ideas and wrote a score with sixty cues anyway. After insisting that Hitchcock watch the film with the entire score,

¹⁵⁹ Bernard Herrmann, “A Lecture on Film Music,” in *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 219.

¹⁶⁰ Alfred Hitchcock, “*Psycho* – Mr. Hitchcock’s Suggestions for Placement of Music,” The Hitchcock Zone, accessed February 3rd, 2022, [https://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Mr._Hitchcock's_suggestions_for_placement_of_music_\(08/Jan/1960\)](https://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Mr._Hitchcock's_suggestions_for_placement_of_music_(08/Jan/1960)).

Hitchcock had agreed that the music vastly intensified the film, Herrmann has his salary doubled, and his score was incorporated in full.¹⁶¹

At its core, *Psycho*,¹⁶² which follows the plot of Robert Bloch's 1959 novel of the same name,¹⁶³ observes the transition of life to death. Laura Mulvey describes *Psycho*'s cultural significance over the past sixty years as "a milestone that waxes rather than wanes."¹⁶⁴ For Mulvey, the shock in *Psycho* comes from the quick transition between life and death.¹⁶⁵ This is most clearly noted in the shocking violence of Marion's murder that ends with a momentary pause where she transitions from a living character, into a corpse whose story haunts the remaining narrative. This scene set a new precedent for how much violence and sexual voyeurism and suggestiveness could be shown on screen.¹⁶⁶ Of course Hitchcock did this primarily through the visual narrative of Marion's scandalous love life and shocking death, but Herrmann also played a role through a muted string-only score that stripped back the music from the usual larger-scale fully orchestrated, pieces that had been the norm in Hollywood film, involving brass, winds and percussion, in addition to strings.

During a lunch-break tryst in a Phoenix hotel, Marion Crane¹⁶⁷ pleads with her boyfriend Sam Loomis,¹⁶⁸ who tells her that they cannot get married because of his debts. Marion returns to work and takes the opportunity to steal \$40,000 entrusted to her care for a company bank deposit. On the way, Marion flees Phoenix and heads to Sam's home in Fairvale, California. Marion stops for the night at the Bates Motel, located off the old

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² After *Vertigo*, Hitchcock went through a particularly difficult time. Alma Hitchcock was diagnosed with breast cancer during the pre-production of *North by Northwest* (1959). As a coping mechanism, Hitchcock threw himself into both television and film work. *Psycho* (1960) is an interesting combination of these two pursuits.

¹⁶³ Robert Bloch was inspired by the story of real-life serial killer Ed Gein and Gein's obsessive idolisation of his abusive mother and the monstrous ways that he treated his victim's bodies.

¹⁶⁴ Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 87.

¹⁶⁶ Sullivan, "Hitchcock and Music," 219-36.

¹⁶⁷ Played by Janet Leigh.

¹⁶⁸ Played by John Gavin.

highway. Norman Bates,¹⁶⁹ the proprietor, registers her under a false name and offers to bring her dinner from the Bates Mansion behind the motel. Marion overhears Norman ostensibly arguing with his mother, Mrs (Norma) Bates,¹⁷⁰ about her presence. On his return to the motel, Norman apologises for his mother's outbursts, describing her as a sick, elderly woman. After speaking with Norman, Marion comes to her senses and decides that she should return to Phoenix with the money in the morning. She then takes a shower. As she showers, a shadowy figure, who is viewed only dimly through the shower curtains, appears and stabs her to death. Norman's anguished voice is then heard yelling, "Mother! Oh God, Mother! Blood! Blood!" Hitchcock's take-the-money-and-run-plot has now switched into a murder mystery, as Lila Crane,¹⁷¹ Marion's sister, appears in Sam's Fairvale workshop to tell him about the theft, and demand information concerning Marion's whereabouts. Private investigator, Milton Arbogast,¹⁷² approaches them to let them know that he is also looking for Marion. Arbogast drives to the Bates Motel and questions a visibly nervous Norman. When Arbogast enters the Bates Mansion, in search of Norman's mother for questioning, the shadowy figure emerges again, and stabs him to death. Lila and Sam subsequently arrive at the Bates Motel, and Sam distracts Norman so Lila can sneak into the Bates Mansion. When Lila spots Norman coming up the steps to the Mansion, she hides in the fruit cellar where, to her horror, she finds Mrs Bates' mummified body. When she screams, Norman, wearing his mother's clothes and a wig, enters the cellar and tries to stab her. At the police station, a psychiatrist explains that Norman has recreated his mother in his mind as an alternate personality, and how, when Norman is attracted to a woman, the "Mother-half of his mind"

¹⁶⁹ Played by Anthony Perkins.

¹⁷⁰ Voiced by Virginia Gregg, Paul Jasmin, and Jeanette Nolan. In this thesis, "Norma Bates" is referred to most usually as "Mrs Bates" to reflect her status as an imagined character who appears in a different form to every character. In the film, she is referred to as "Mother" by Norman, or by vague phrase "old woman" by the other characters. Mrs Bates is heard in the film through Norman and the "Mother-half-of-his-mind," however this is a "stolen" voice portrayed by Norman. To the other characters, she is known as the "old woman," and eventually as a "corpse." Using the term "Mrs Bates" allows her character to be studied through these different viewpoints, independently away from Norman, and out with the categorization of "corpse."

¹⁷¹ Played by Vera Miles.

¹⁷² Played by Martin Balsam.

takes over. The psychiatrist concludes “Mother” has now completely taken over Norman’s personality.

As noted, *Psycho*’s twist is Lila Crane becoming the main protagonist as the hybrid narrative switches from take-the-money-and-run, to a murder mystery.¹⁷³ The shock caused by Hitchcock killing of Janet Leigh fifty-minutes into the film reflects the narrative technique of “the false protagonist.” This also turns Lila into a founding figure of the “Final Girl” trope.¹⁷⁴ In *Psycho*’s promotional materials, Vera Miles was never *supposed* to be the star. There are three female characters in *Psycho*, and Hitchcock only allows one of them to come out alive: the morally ambiguous Marion Crane centers the story line even after her death, the frightful Mrs Bates haunts and terrorises through her death and fantastical existence in Norman’s psychotic imagination, and the courageous Lila Crane who investigates the disappearance of her missing sister and discovers the dark history of the Bates family. The relations between all three women are naturally complicated by Norman, the threat and perpetrator of violence, and the ways in which he is treated in Herrmann’s score indicate how, I contend, Marion and Lila are treated with a voyeuristic sonic gaze.

The release of *Psycho* marked a pivotal moment for film scholars who are interested in the representation of women in film. It is this jumping off point where Clover hails *Psycho* as the ancestor of the slasher, noting that Hitchcock’s cinematic formulation, particularly the sexualisation of both motive and action, prompted a wave of imitations and variations.¹⁷⁵ Clover uses *Psycho* as her “benchmark” in discussing the slasher genre, because she believes that Hitchcock’s formula has evolved and flourished in ways of interest to observers of

¹⁷³ Hitchcock stayed close to Bloch’s narrative events; it is only *Psycho*’s spin offs (Richard Franklin’s *Psycho II* (1983), Anthony Perkin’s own *Psycho III* (1986), and *Psycho IV: The Beginning* (1990) directed for TV by Mick Garris) that deviate from Bloch’s plot sequels for *Psycho II* (1982) and *Psycho House* (1990).

¹⁷⁴ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*.

¹⁷⁵ The evidence for Clover’s statement is documented by an array of follow-ups, included in the above footnote. To reflect this success, in 1992, the United States Library of Congress hailed *Psycho* to be culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant, thus selecting it for preservation in the National Film Registry.

popular culture and those concerned with the representation of women in film.¹⁷⁶ Clover splits this formula into seven parts: the killer, the ‘terrible place’, the weapon, the shock, the victim(s), the so-called Final Girl, and the body.

Using Cover’s benchmark, *Psycho* can be analysed through these seven parts. In the final moments of the film, the psychiatrist describes how Norman Bates has introjected his mother, a “clinging, demanding woman,” so completely that she is his controlling alter-ego. Norman is seemingly locked in childhood — a child for whom his mother remains responsible after her death. According to Clover, this has made the slasher killer an insider, a man who is seemingly normal until his ‘other half’ is revealed. Female killers are rare in horror and its subgenres, so what does this mean for Mrs Bates? In this chapter, I argue that Mrs Bates is a victim of the false representation of an abject horror. The “terrible place” where the story unfolds is the Bates Motel. At first, to Marion’s relief, the motel with its shining neon sign signals a “safe haven” from the storm outside, and a temporary escape, from the take-the-money-and-run-plot to which she has been subjected. Behind the hotel, the Bates Mansion looms with Victorian decrepitude; however, the origin of its terror lies in the events and people that once occupied it – a mother and son locked in a pathological attachment.¹⁷⁷ The weapon that twists the plot into a murder mystery is a knife which penetrates Marion’s body audibly, not visually. The emotional terrain of the slasher is pretechnological,¹⁷⁸ making the murder physical, intimate and shocking in its immediacy. The rapid-fire of forty-one-second shots in the murder scene “suggests so much but shows so little.”¹⁷⁹ This murder marks Marion as *Psycho*’s first victim. From the opening scene she is paraded as a sexual transgressor as she dresses herself from a lunchtime tryst, begging her almost-divorced lover to marry her. Just as she dresses, she undresses just prior to the murder

¹⁷⁶ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 35.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

scene, and dies nude on the bathroom floor. Killing those who seek or engage in unauthorised sex amounts to a generic imperative of the slasher film subgenre. From the opening scene, following this subliminal narrative, Marion was doomed to an “early destruction.”¹⁸⁰ Clover’s Final Girl trope shows a character who stares death in the face and is brave enough to keep staring until she is rescued. Lila finds Mrs Bates’ corpse in the basement and screams in terror while Norman runs in clothed as his mother, followed by Sam Loomis (Marion’s boyfriend), who prevents Norman from murdering Lila, as he did her sister. Lila is *Psycho*’s Final Girl, and she is arguably the original Final Girl character trope in horror film. Although it is Marion’s body that is physically violated, Lila also becomes a victim as attempted slashing, ripping, and tearing is also done to her, only Lila survives. Clover emphasises that the character does not matter here, and instead what matters is that “it is the same body for both” – the female body – that is violated.¹⁸¹

From this breakdown of Clover’s slasher benchmark, it is clear how Hitchcock visually constructed *Psycho* as the pioneer and prototype for this subgenre. *Psycho* has been studied by many film scholars who concern themselves with Hitchcockian film and feminist issues. Similarly, as with *Vertigo*, *Psycho* has been extensively discussed by music scholars. However, again, prior accounts of the musical perspective always support the male protagonists, while silencing the female characters in the narrative. Using Clover’s benchmark for the Final Girl, I seek to find answers to the following questions: (4) “If Marion, Lila, and Mrs Bates are all victims of Norman Bates, how does Herrmann’s score treat them?” (5) “How does Herrmann’s score enable and weaponize Norman Bates against all three of his victims?” (6) “To what extent does Herrmann’s score musically reflect Lila’s courage and levelheadedness in finding her murdered sister, exceeding where Sam and Arbogast fail?”

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 33-34.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 59.

To answer these questions, I use a second wave film feminist lens that brings together the culturally significant work of Mulvey, Clover, Silverman, and Kristeva,¹⁸² to analyse *Psycho* and the soundtrack's victimising score. While this may sound reflective, I will also use new and relevant work from feminist film scholars who are paving the way in 21st century film studies. While Herrmann's *Psycho* score has been studied by film scholars, most of them heavily focus on the iconic shower scene, and the ways in which its sonic phenomena takes the side and perspective of the killer. In feminist research, a good deal of dialogue surrounds the female body in horror, and the death-mother dynamic. Clover's framework, however, liberates Lila into her role by absolving her from the narrative. The over-arching goal of this thesis is to focus on the empowerment of women through musical language to assure that women are given a fair sonic place in film narratives of the future. This chapter contributes to this goal by considering the representation of women in early slasher film, both living and dead, by observing how Herrmann's score weaponizes against and, ultimately, silences them into the sonic narrative.

“Something Terrible” Happens to Marion

Not only does Herrmann work on character narrative, but in his role of film composer, he creates the atmospheric foundation on which the film's events transpire.¹⁸³ The prelude acts as a tool to establish dramatic expectation and construction of the characters subjectivity. As heard in the prelude to *Vertigo*, Herrmann's prolific use of the minor-major seventh chord has given it the nickname of the Hitchcock chord.¹⁸⁴ Another similarity to *Vertigo*'s prelude is the

¹⁸² To be specific, I use Mulvey's theorizations on the male gaze in her publications *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women, and Changing Times* (2019), *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006), and *Visual and Other Pleasures* (1989). Clover's definitive trope of the Final Girl from her publication *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* (1992), Kaja Silverman's work on the female voice in her publication *The Acoustic Mirror* (1988), and Julia Kristeva's theories on the abject in her publication *Powers of Horror* (1982).

¹⁸³ Herrmann, "A Lecture on Film Music," 219.

¹⁸⁴ Some film music scholars, in fairness to Herrmann, prefer to call this chord the "Herrmann chord" instead.

ascending and descending diatonic and chromatic melodic steps, which feature prominently throughout Herrmann's filmic discography. In lock-step with Herrmann's prelude, Saul Bass's graphics are equally as unnerving as the credits slide across the screen, and the text is cut and sliced by an unknown entity. In *Psycho*, Kevin Clifton believes this rhythm of tension and release is what makes the film score so sonically influential and effective in pursuing its ghastly narrative.¹⁸⁵ Scott Murphy uses a similar interpretative approach to that of Clifton, breaking down the dramatic use of the prelude by focusing on the musical transformations of the Hitchcock chord, and by providing a hermeneutic interpretation of what the prelude may suggest regarding the narrative that follows.¹⁸⁶ In the conclusion of his analysis, Murphy claims that the prelude is musically symbolic of Norman Bates' psychological abnormalities.¹⁸⁷ In its association with Norman's psychopathology, the prelude clearly acts as a musical narration of Marion's impending doom, which in turn sonically indicates how Marion will be treated voyeuristically.

The prelude wakes from its nightmare, flying into a cheap motel room window that looks out over Phoenix, Arizona. Herrmann starts the "Marion" cue with stripped backed strings to maintain the tension established in the prelude, although the tone is lighter to provide a pseudo-romantic atmosphere. The first time Marion appears on screen, the camera is level with her lying on the bed in white lingerie as a half-naked male torso looms over her, its head and face out of the frame. Already Hitchcock is setting the stage for Clover's trope in which "sexual transgressors are scheduled for early destruction."¹⁸⁸ The "Marion" cue fades in and out of the hotel room, and Marion's breathy and desperate sounding voice is heard,

¹⁸⁵ Clifton, "'We All Go a Little Mad Sometimes. Haven't You?' Musical Empathy in Hitchcock's *Psycho*," *Music Analysis* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2018): 47-67.

¹⁸⁶ Murphy, "An Audio-visual Foreshadowing in the First Thirty Seconds of the Last Eight Minutes of *Psycho*," 47-59.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸⁸ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 33-34.

ending every line with a pining sigh.¹⁸⁹ Her breath conveys her dismay with her secretive love-life: “[sigh] Oh Sam, I hate having to be with you in a place like this,” ... “[sigh] Oh Sam this is the last time” ... “[sigh] I have to go, Sam [sigh].” Each sigh carries a heavy air of desperation as Marion rolls on the bed with Sam, before gathering up her clothes. Interpreting this vocal performance and use of heaving sighing is important in understanding the sonic architecture of the scene as each breath indicates a musical cue.¹⁹⁰ A two-note descending stepwise motif plays — the same as the prelude — sonically hinting that this tryst will end in “something terrible.”¹⁹¹ Clifton interprets these musical sighs as a musical extension of Marion’s own sigh.¹⁹² This supposes that Herrmann’s score is an ingrained entity that musically expresses each characters’ state of mind. The softness of the melodic step pattern balances out the overt shrillness of strings in the prelude, a technique often used by Herrmann to lure a false sense of security within the sonic narrative.¹⁹³

The next time Herrmann’s score is heard is when Marion makes her decision to take-the-money-and-run, telling her boss, George Lowrey,¹⁹⁴ that she feels sick, wants to go home early, and will deposit his latest client’s \$40,000 in the bank on her way. Watching the credits become sliced-up in the prelude by Herrmann’s cutting strings, and then watching Marion and Sam engage in non-marital sex while the same strings continue to play — establishes the sonic signal that when Herrmann’s score plays, something terrible is about to happen.

¹⁸⁹ Murphy, “An Audiovisual Foreshadowing in the First Thirty Seconds of the Last Eight Minutes of *Psycho*,” 47-59. See also: Clifton, “‘We All Go a Little Mad Sometimes. Haven’t You?’ Musical Empathy in Hitchcock’s *Psycho*,” 52.

¹⁹⁰ Ross J. Fenimore, “Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*,” in *Music in the Horror Film*, ed. Neil Lerner (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 92-109. The history of musical mimesis of sighing is long: See also: Arnie Cox. “The Mimetic Hypothesis and Embodied Musical Meaning,” *Musicae Scientiae* 5, no. 2 (2001): 195-212; Sharri K. Hall, “The Doctrine of Affections: Where Art Meets Reason,” *Musical Offerings* 8, no. 2 (2017): 51-64.

¹⁹¹ Herrmann, “A Lecture on Film Music,” in *The Hollywood Film Music Reader*, ed. Mervyn Cooke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 219.

¹⁹² Clifton, “‘We All Go a Little Mad Sometimes. Haven’t You?’ Musical Empathy in Hitchcock’s *Psycho*,” 53.

¹⁹³ Tom Schneller, “Easy to Cut: Modular Form in the Film Scores of Bernard Herrmann,” *Journal of Film Music* 5, no. 1-2 (2012): 127-151.

¹⁹⁴ Played by Vaughn Taylor.

Herrmann's intentions are to sonically support Hitchcock's moral underpinning of *Psycho*'s narrative, and to build suspense. Marion stealing the money is the start of her journey (or, as Mulvey argues, the start of her transition from life to death).¹⁹⁵ As she drives out of town, the diegesis takes a dramatic turn from the objective to the subjective.¹⁹⁶ Hitchcock cuts to and from shots of Marion driving and her point-of-view through her windshield. Instead of the car radio, Marion starts to imagine her conversation with Sam. When she stops at a traffic light, with the camera pointed at her, Sam's voice is heard to ask: "What is it, Marion?" His voice operates in a similar way to Herrmann's score here, by creating a sonic signal that something is about to go wrong. This signal happens in an imagined sonic narrative, yet it overlaps into Marion's narrative filling the fantastical gap where the diegetic and non-diegetic weave together.¹⁹⁷

The camera cuts from the road ahead, and back onto Marion as she bites her finger nervously. Another quick cut back to the traffic crossing, a few seconds of blurry unfamiliar faces, and then her boss George passes by. He nods and continues walking as the camera catches Marion's reaction. The camera flips back, for George's double-take glance, where his expression changes from pleased to perplexed. Here Herrmann abruptly juts in with "The Flight" which starts with the loudest percussive bump-bump-bump-bump of the major-minor seventh motif heard so far.¹⁹⁸ This moment signals the point of no return for Marion and the visual narrative and character expression spurs the soundtrack into paranoid over-drive.

Brown argues that the entirety of *Psycho* can be seen as a series of descents — the falling and

¹⁹⁵ Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, 87.

¹⁹⁶ Fenimore, "Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*," 98. See also: Heather Laing, *The Gendered Score: Music in 1940s Melodrama and the Woman's Film* (London and New York: Routledge 2017), 9-25.

¹⁹⁷ Robynn Stillwell, "The Fantastical Gap Between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, ed. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer and Richard Leppert (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press 2007), 184-202. See also, Luko, "Dream Weaving and Sonic Metalepsis in Jan Troell's *Land of Dreams*," 243-265.

¹⁹⁸ Another clue for Marion's impending doom: each cue played while Marion is driving ("The Flight," "Patrol Car," "The Car Lot," "The Rainstorm.") is interwoven with intervals of the *Psycho*'s main theme "The Murder."

rising of the strings falling add to the pull and release of suspense.¹⁹⁹ Since Hitchcock cannot film Marion driving for hours, it is up to Herrmann to burden her with his relentless score that sonically represents the passage of time.

When Marion takes a moment on her journey to rest in her car, her sleep is interrupted by a police officer.²⁰⁰ The camera enters Marion's perspective and the camera cuts to a close-up of the police officer's face.²⁰¹ This shot emphasises the active sadistic voyeurism held over Marion by the film's male characters as they each watch Marion through their repressive and voyeuristic gazes. Although the dangerous severity of 'the look' from authority figures, namely the agencies of the law,²⁰² is yet to be explored, the police officer's interaction with Marion marks the first, literal, instance of the authoritative gaze supressing the female character into the role of guilty suspect.²⁰³ When he expresses disapproval at finding that she slept in her car overnight, he mentions that there are many motels in the area, sowing the first impression of the Bates Motel as a "safe haven."²⁰⁴ After recording her license number, Marion continues to drive, while the camera flips between her face and the patrol car in her rear-view mirror, confirming the never-ending, active, voyeurism from male authority. The police officer has already spoken to her, and she has been left free to go, but Herrmann piles on the anxiety with his "Patrol Car" cue anyway, never letting Marion's guilt dissipate. Marion trades in her car after a shaky interaction with a suspicious salesman, and the same police officer in tow. Another non-diegetic conversation starts up at this point, although now it is fuelled by suspicion as the dis-embodied voices of the car salesman, police officer, and George, discuss who she really is and where she might be going. The transition from an

¹⁹⁹ Brown, "Herrmann, Hitchcock, and the Music of the Irrational," 14-49.

²⁰⁰ Played by Mort Mills.

²⁰¹ The police officer in this shot has large black aviator sunglasses, and his sharp nose takes the centre of the frame giving him an avian look. One of Hitchcock's greatest fears was birds, and another was police officers, so it is not surprising that Hitchcock would choose to merge them together to heighten the feeling of intimidation. From Marion's perspective, this makes the police officer embody an un-human aspect, as if, like a bird, his watchful eye has been gazing at her silently her from above.

²⁰² Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 105.

²⁰³ Hollinger, "'The Look,' Narrativity, and the Female Spectator in *Vertigo*," 18-28.

²⁰⁴ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 31

imagined, future, conversation with Sam, into a dis-embodied present conversation pushes the sonic narrative from Marion's perspective, which makes her death even more shocking when the perspective changes. Hitchcock has ramped up her anxiety by placing these dis-embodied voices in her mind, and Herrmann continues to pile on the pressure as he runs through his "The Car Lot" and "The Rainstorm" cues, each cue gaining an intensified shrillness like a boiling teapot.²⁰⁵ This unrelenting tension releases only at the first sight of the Bates Motel sign, sonically confirming Clover's notion of the "terrible place" on first impression.²⁰⁶ Only the light sound of rain, a striking contrast to the visuals of the thunderstorm, is heard as Marion looks around for someone to help her check into the motel. Looking up to the Bates Mansion, Marion spots an elderly woman walking across the upstairs window, she honks her car horn to raise attention, and moments later, a young man runs outside.

The first time Norman is introduced, his character seems friendly, like the "safe haven" of his motel, and his first line laced with simple country gentleness: "Gee, sorry. I didn't hear ya in all this rain."²⁰⁷ Clover believes that all male killers in slashers have something decidedly 'pathetic' about them, which she describes as "overweight," or insecure (particularly about their appearance).²⁰⁸ While Norman does not show any of these characteristics — he is a conventionally handsome man who is dressed professionally, and he runs his own business — Hitchcock nonetheless portrays him as someone who is 'trapped' by his circumstances when he invites Marion into his parlour for dinner.²⁰⁹ The next time the score is heard is while Norman collects dinner for Marion, while she looks for a place to hide

²⁰⁵ Fenimore notes Herrmann's own writings on these cues: "We [Herrmann and Hitchcock] both agreed to bring back the music we'd related to the opening of the film, which again tells the audience, who don't know, that something terrible is going to happen to the girl that it's *got* to," in, "Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*," 84.

²⁰⁶ Sullivan, "Hitchcock and Music," 223.

²⁰⁷ Clover notes that going from a city to country in horror film is like going from the village into the dark forest in a fairy-tale, and that country people are often depicted as uncivilized, and 'dangerous' to city folk. This is known as "Urbanoia." In, Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 124.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁰⁹ This act of inviting Marion to dinner suggests Norman's initial attraction to her.

the stolen money. At this point, Norman, by Hitchcock's direction and Herrmann's sonic representation, seems like the "good guy." This visual and sonic positioning of Norman sets us up for an additionally impactful shock, as it undermines our ability to predict what was going to happen to Marion next, under his sadistic gaze.

Initially Hitchcock wanted to avoid using music in the shower scene, however, he soon found that this created an existential distance between the on-screen and off-screen.²¹⁰ The sight of a naked woman being stabbed with a knife by a mysterious figure behind the curtain was not enough to satisfy Hitchcock's intention to portray a particularly violent and visceral mutilation, so he turned to Herrmann who aptly named it, "The Murder" cue.²¹¹ Until this point, Herrmann wanted the strings to play *con sordino* (with mute) throughout the film. His reasoning for removing the mute for "The Murder" cue, was to give more aural power to the full and piercing chords as they violently rained down on Marion. Herrmann took the horrifying visuals, and let the music communicate its own kind of irrationality.²¹² This irrationality is visually shown by the knife slicing through the air erratically, yet no physical impact of penetration against Marion's skin is shown. Instead, Herrmann provides a highly effective empathetic musical cue: the synchronized screeching sounds of the high strings. The music takes over the visual role, and the penetrative stabbing is perpetrated by the music.

Although she appears to rally for a moment, Marion is dead by the fifty-minute mark of the 109-minute film, and she lies on the bathroom floor as the camera zooms in on her eye. Mulvey highlights the significance of this moment by noting the transition between life and death — stillness and movement — in Hitchcock's *mise en scène*. The blood-tinged water

²¹⁰ Stephen Deutsch, "Psycho and the Orchestration of Anxiety," *The Soundtrack* 3, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 53-66.

²¹¹ "The Murder" cue is used throughout Herrmann's score as a leitmotif that signals impending danger and death. Sometimes, throughout film music scholarship, "The Murder" (when used as a leitmotif) is referred to as "Psycho's main theme."

²¹² Brown, "Herrmann, Hitchcock, and the Music of the Irrational," 16. See also: Fenimore, "Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*," 80; Fred Steiner, "Herrmann's 'Black and White' Music for Hitchcock's *Psycho*." *Film Music Notebook* 1, no. 1 (Winter 1974): 28-36.

continues to swirl down the drain in a circular motion before the camera cuts to Marion's eye. Marion's eye flickers, which, according to Mulvey, is "usually a guarantee of life itself, its [Marion's eye] fixed, inanimate stare becomes the uncanny."²¹³ Marion's eye is as motionless as a still-photograph,²¹⁴ until a single droplet of water crosses the frame. Hitchcock's intention here is to reanimate the image, in contrast with Marion's inanimate body. Mulvey claims that the stillness of the 'corpse' is a reminder that the camera's living and moving bodies are animated stills and the homology between stillness and death returns to haunt the moving image.²¹⁵ The camera pivots, tracing the move from murder to mystery, passing over Marion's original aspiration, the stolen money, and out of the window to the Bates Mansion. This sequence marks Mulvey's idea of transition as the narrative switches. The uncanny is signalled by the image of the Mansion, from Marion's room window and the distant cries of: "Mother, oh god mother, blood, blood!"

Herrmann's "The Murder" cue, first highlighted by the prelude and in which the Hitchcock chord adds an unresolvable tension, sonically predicts that something terrible must happen to Marion. *Psycho*'s score to play when something bad, or morally corrupt, is happening on-screen. Therefore, Herrmann's music is vital to understanding Marion's journey from life to death, or as Mulvey's notes, from movement to stillness.²¹⁶ In the shower scene Herrmann's score sonically pierces Marion, killing her with each stab. Taking the mutes off the strings for this cue ramps up the intensity, to further the shock of her murder. Herrmann actively employs a stripped back string orchestra to suppress Marion into Hitchcock's narrative, allowing her no escape from her fate. The next phase of *Psycho*'s narrative is not so much a journey towards death, but a journey towards the dead.

²¹³ Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, 87.

²¹⁴ Hitchcock considered using a photograph for this shot, but Janet Leigh persevered for 22-26 takes to get the perfect shot. Mulvey notes that Leigh has described not being able to breath, swallow, or blink during the close-up, she contributes the final shot as the result of sheer desperation and luck. In, Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, 88.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Mrs Bates & Phantasmatic Sound

The illusion of horror in *Psycho* is created by a sonic disconnect: who is Mrs Bates, and when will she enter the foreground? Mrs Bates is present in vocality, yet she is absent in body, unlocatable in the visual narrative. Fenimore ousts Mrs Bates' voice as "stolen" and "a lie"²¹⁷ that is sonically observed by Mrs Bates' vocal timbre shifting slightly each time her voice is heard. To further the sonic mystery surrounding this mysterious unseen character, Hitchcock made the decision to have Mrs Bates voiced by Virginia Gregg, Jeanette Nolan,²¹⁸ and Paul Jasmin – although their contributions to the sonic structure of *Psycho* go uncredited.²¹⁹ This effect makes Mrs Bates' voice contradictory, sounding both female and male, sometimes sounding aged and husky, at other times sounding youthful and bright. The difference in timbre to Norman's voice, which is familiar in the narrative from his interactions with Marion, makes his mother's voice appear if it is "real." Norman validates the sense of sonic presence by reacting and responding to this phantasmatic voice.

Marion also validates this sonic presence of the phantasmatic voice, as she hears (Mrs Bates) yelling from the Bates Mansion. Marion listens to both Norman's voice of desperation, and Mrs Bates' angry phantasmatic voice yelling, "Oh I refuse to speak of such disgusting things because they disgust me! You understand boy!" Fenimore observes that Marion never sees Mrs Bates, she only hears her voice,²²⁰ and therefore does not know, that the phantasmatic voice is not real. Marking the dislocation between what is heard and what is seen, such "acousmatic" sounds are a hallmark of the horror genre, as they create a tension that blurs the boundaries between the known and the unknown. Fenimore discusses how these

²¹⁷ Fenimore, "Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*," 80 - 89.

²¹⁸ Nolan provides Marion Crane's shower scream, and Lila Crane's scream in the basement. Perhaps then, an extension may be made into Marion and Lila's screams also being "stolen."

²¹⁹ The voice actors were never told when and where their lines would appear in *Psycho* adding to the disjointed, often out-of-place, sound of Mrs Bates' voice.

²²⁰ Fenimore, "Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*," 80.

“cracks” in synchronized sound lead to a feeling of uncertainty surrounding the psychological states of certain characters — in this case, both Marion and Norman.²²¹ However, Hitchcock has already shown Marion to imagine conversations in her own head, making her an unreliable narrator. That said, when Norman arrives with dinner, Marion says: “I’ve caused you some trouble,” to which Norman stutters, “Mother — my mother — isn’t feeling quite herself today.” To acknowledge the overheard conversation, Marion *must* have heard both voices. This is the point where the sonic narrative represents the soul becoming “the double” — a separation from the body that maps onto a filmic split between recorded voice and filmed body, a split that is psychoanalytically represented by Norman and Norma.²²²

The disembodiment of Mrs Bates’ voice condemns her to “float” through the narrative.²²³ This aural disembodiment conjures the vision of a ghost or spirit that literally haunts the narrative, the vocal soul of Mrs Bates’ soul is outside her body yet trapped to wander the sonic narrative. This notion reflects Michael Chion’s ideas about the *acousmètre*; i.e., the voice that is “heard without its cause or source being seen.”²²⁴ Chion elaborates on this definition using *Psycho* as an example where the *acousmètre* becomes the “yet unseen voice, one that can neither enter the image to attach itself to a visible body, nor occupy the removed position of the image presented.”²²⁵ Carolyn Abbate describes the *acousmètre* as like a “sonic cousin to the phantom”²²⁶ as it is condemned to eternal wandering like the unburied dead, to float in the soundtrack.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid., 81.

²²³ Ibid., 82.

²²⁴ In referring to the notion of “acousmatic” sound, Chion is borrowing the term from Pierre Schaeffer, the pioneer of *musique concrète*, who in turn derives it from the Greek *akousmatikoi* (ἀκουσματικοί), which was first used in reference to the students of Pythagoras who were required to sit silently while listening to his lectures delivered from behind a veil, in order to prevent his physical presence from interfering with their understanding of his words and teaching. See: Michael Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, ed. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 17.

²²⁵ Ibid., 125-153.

²²⁶ Carolyn Abbate, “Debussy’s Phantom Sounds,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 10, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 67-96.

Although both Chion and Abbate point to the acousmètre as a sonic haunting of the narrative, it is important to note that Mrs Bates' body does appear in physical form, at the moment Lila discovers the grisly presence of her corpse in the Bates Mansion basement.²²⁷ It is this rupture of sonic haunting that echoes Julia Kristeva's thoughts on the abject. The abject for Kristeva is something that does not respect borders, positions, or rules, which disturbs identity systems and order.²²⁸ Meaning collapses in the abject, as the abject threatens life to the point that it must be 'radically excluded' from the living subject, so it is concluded that the ultimate abjection is the corpse.²²⁹ Kristeva expresses that the corpse signifies "the most basic form of pollution"²³⁰ — a body without a soul. While the corpse may be soul-less in a physical sense, the phantasmatic voice means that the corpse of Mrs Bates is *sonically* alive. Mrs Bates seemingly responds to Lila's voice and touch, as the chair pivots freely to reveal a hollow corpse with large smiling teeth. This creates a blurred boundary between the stillness of a corpse and its movement. There is a pause before Lila screams. Mulvey believes that this is the point of *Psycho*'s biggest reveal – Mrs Bates is both alive and dead.²³¹ Although duly terrifying, especially to Lila who finds her, Mrs Bates' corpse proves harmless as Norman, the real danger, runs into the basement dressed in a wig and his mother's clothes wielding a kitchen knife. Herrmann also notes this, as the strings only pierce in with the repetitive phrases of his "The Murder" cue when Norman runs into the room. He is the "something terrible."

While this final revelation appears in Hitchcock's film, towards the end of the visual narrative, Herrmann places sonic clues throughout the soundtrack.²³² The most striking sonic

²²⁷ Ibid., See also, Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 17.

²²⁸ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (USA: University Presses of California, Columbia, and Princeton, 1982), 1-32.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

²³¹ Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, 99.

²³² For the first half of the film, Herrmann has shown that the musical construction of atmospheric and emotional leitmotifs is integral to the way characters are viewed, one of these motifs is a cue for gender.

clue comes just after Marion leaves the parlour. Norman stays in the parlour, which shares a wall with Marion's room, and watches Marion undress through a secret peephole. Hitchcock makes the camera share Norman's perspective, perpetrating the male gaze through him as Marion, the Other, is vignetted in the frame. Herrmann musically mediates and narrates this scene with his cue "The Peephole." As Norman moves towards the picture frame, the strings are playing in ostinato in a low register. This low register continues, until Marion starts to undress when the first violins enter in the high register. The high register is maintained, and through the soprano-like vocality of the strings, Herrmann predicts Norman's alter ego — Norma. It is discovered at the end of the film, by a psychiatrist, that Norman's mind is only half his own — with his mother's personality taking up the other half. Whenever Norman is aroused by a woman, his mother becomes jealous and acts out, and the strings move into the high register to indicate this double of the "mother-half" of his mind.

When Norman looks through the mother-half of his mind, he still embodies the male gaze, which is proven through the peephole scene to be actively voyeuristic. Barbara Creed uses Kristeva's reading of abjection theory to explain that the monstrous-feminine can be produced at the border separating those who take up their traditional gender roles from those who do not. Kristeva situates the 'monstrous-feminine' with the maternal figure, noting that the merge of Norman and his mother's psyche constitutes another level of the abject.²³³ While Mrs Bates is a physical corpse with a non-physical phantasmatic voice, Norman produces the 'monstrous-feminine' because he embodies her through what he perceives to be her role as his jealous and abusive mother.²³⁴ By watching Marion through the peephole, his own voyeuristic gaze disturbs him enough to fuel what he imagines to be punishment for this

²³³ Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection," *Screen* 27, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 44-71.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

action. However, due to his own complex feelings of jealousy,²³⁵ he punishes Marion for being the subject of his gaze by stabbing her to death in the shower.

In the final scene, the psychiatrist walks through Norman's confession, which he states twice came from "not Norman, but the mother part of his brain." Another striking line from the same speech is, "matricide is probably the most unbearable crime of all, most unbearable to the son who commits it." This cements Mrs Bates in the position of the abject, where her corpse was not enough for Norman, so he not only stole her life from her body, and her body from her grave, but he also stole her thoughts through her voice to keep his illusion alive. When the psychiatrist is done explaining, an officer gives Norman a blanket for "he feels a little chill." The camera waits outside the holding room, and the phantasmatic voice says "thank you" in a calm, gentle, feminine tone. The camera cuts to inside the room, where the frame zooms in on Norman who is shrouded in a blanket against a white wall, hunched over like a frail old woman. Herrmann sweeps in with low strings for his "Finale" cue, and the phantasmatic voice begins to narrate "her side" of events. Given Herrmann's earlier gender motifs of strings in the high register for female expression, and strings in the low register for male expression, the "Finale" cue set in the low register debunks the psychiatrist's notion that Mrs Bates is giving the confession. Norman's mouth twitches, and he moves his head in agreement with the narration. This suggests that the phantasmatic sound of Mrs Bates is truly an illusion in Norman's mind, one that he creates and expresses.

Mrs Bates is indirectly present through Norman in the peephole scene, the shower scene, and the final scene, and she is sonically represented in different ways in each. In the peephole scene, Herrmann constructs a motif through high-register and low-register strings to indicate Norman's anger at such an arousal. In the shower scene Herrmann orchestrates the murder weapon to demonstrate the violent nature of the mother-half of Norman's mind, while

²³⁵ Keeping in mind here, the Sheriff tells Lila and Sam that Norman killed his mother and her lover due to his own jealousy.

he stabs Marion. In the final scene, one of Mrs Bates' voices narrates, and Norman's infamous smile semi-exposes over the toothy smile of his mother's corpse, before Herrmann leads us into the dull tones of the "Finale," that start to climb in shrillness to finish with the "The Murder" leitmotif.

Lila, Sounding the Final Girl

After Marion's car sinks into the bog, the camera cuts to an unfinished love letter, written on paper with letterhead that reads "Sam Loomis." The camera pans back through Sam's hardware shop, and an elderly feminine voice is heard mid-conversation discussing whether a certain bug spray is painless, "I say, insect or man, death should always be painless." Lila enters the shop and, with a tone suggesting that she does not have time for small talk, Lila explains, "I'm Marion's sister," to which Sam takes a moment to respond with kindness, "Oh sure – Lila?" Lila's sentences are quick and to the point: "Is Marion here?" When the "ding" of the cash register interrupts the conversation, this signals a definitive change in the narrative to a detective plot. Within the first three lines of Lila's vocal role, she proves to be very much like her sister, Marion, in her stubborn determination. Lila's sister is missing, so she will take care of it by investigating the issue for herself — just like when Marion took Sam's money woe into her own hands by stealing \$40,000 for them to start a married life together.

Lila is the original Final Girl. Following Clover's definition, she is the sole female survivor, one who quite literally looks death in the face. Lila's life is threatened by a psychotic murderer, and she finds the strength to complete her investigation and find her sister. Sam saves Lila from being attacked and stabbed by Norman, but it is Lila who resolves the plot line by uncovering who Norman really is, and consequently what happened to

Marion.²³⁶ Clover believes that when the Final Girl is presented on screen, it is completely obvious that she (should be) the main character.²³⁷ Clover notes that this “obvious” trope is observed through her difference to her peers — the first time we meet Marion she is half undressed having a non-martial tryst with a divorcee on her lunch break, before she steals \$40,000, whereas the first time we meet Lila she is level-headed and determined to find and help her sister. Marion’s character is played by Janet Leigh, who at the time of *Psycho*, was at the peak of her Hollywood career. Hitchcock wanted every promotional still and poster to place Marion front and centre with the intention of compounding the shock when her character died so early in the film. Lila, as the Final Girl, becomes the main character because she is the one who not only lives to tell the tale, but “destroys” the killer. Though Norman killed Mrs Bates, Lila kills the illusion of Mrs Bates that haunts the narrative through a phantasmatic sound. Lila’s courageous pursuit and heroic triumph is defined by her ability to take a leading role in the investigation of the disappearance of her sister despite the resistance of the male characters.²³⁸

“Let’s all talk about Marion shall we,” announces Private Investigator Arbogast as he walks into Sam’s hardware store tailing Lila. It is Arbogast who drops the information about the stolen money, his motive for finding Marion. Lila remains stony-faced, and when Sam questions Arbogast, Lila replies with the details about the missing money, however in her vocal tone she places emphasis on no-one having seen Marion since. Lila turns to Sam to plead with him, “Sam they don’t want to prosecute they just want the money back, Sam if she’s here?” In a similarly breathy desperation that Marion displayed with him in the opening scene. Another similarity to Marion is Lila’s attitude to standing up to men, abruptly switching her tone from desperate with Sam to stand-offish with Arbogast as she states, “I

²³⁶ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 44.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Laura Antón-Sánchez, “Re-building the Idea of Being a Woman. The Audiovisual Legacy of Lila Crane,” *Communication and Society* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 293-310.

don't care if you believe me or not!" to the private investigator who, in theory, holds more authoritative power in the narrative than she does, so far. This notion of authoritative gazing goes back to Marion's first encounter with the police officer — Arbogast now takes up the position of the Law.²³⁹

The camera fades to watch Arbogast walk into several hotel and motel buildings to talk to the proprietor. There is no voice over, only Herrmann's strings which play "The Search (A)" cue. The repetitive strings that move with urgency, sonically express the nature of Arbogast's conversations. Herrmann eases both tempo and pitch when Norman is shown on screen, quietly reading. The muted timbre of the strings creates a false sense of calmness, as if the music has fallen on an innocent suspect. Throughout *Psycho* so far, Herrmann has structured the score to play when "something terrible" is happening; however, in this moment, Herrmann is switching that narrative to sonically collaborate with Norman in protecting his secret life and crimes. The strings drop completely when Arbogast gets out of his car to speak with Norman, indicating that the search may be over. The next cue, "Shadow," happens as Arbogast's informal interrogation of Norman ends. The strings move through a soft crescendo as Arbogast watches Norman walk down the veranda to change the sheets in each cabin, noting that he pauses at cabin 1 (Marion's room) before moving on. The crescendo peaks and dulls as the music dawns on Arbogast's realisation that there is a silhouetted woman in the upstairs window of the Bates Mansion. Norman denies that anyone is at home, noting that his mother is sick, so "it's practically like living alone."²⁴⁰

Although he has been put into the narrative to find Marion with George's missing money, Arbogast's first port of call is Lila. Calling from a telephone booth, he confirms that Marion stayed at the Bates Motel. Since Lila's voice cannot be heard on the other line, the

²³⁹ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 105.

²⁴⁰ The dialogue is full of foreshadowed puns, including Arbogast's next line, "sick old women are usually pretty sharp."

only side of the conversation heard is Arbogast's,²⁴¹ and he decides to return to the Mansion. In the next four minutes, Herrmann pushes through three score cues: "The Porch," "The Knife," and "The Stairs." These fast-moving cues represent the second murder of the film. Arbogast's murder is sonically very different to Marion's.²⁴² This is because, rather than being a murder motivated by sexual arousal, Norman is killing Arbogast to stop him from uncovering the truth. While "The Stairs" holds a tension in muted strings, just like "The Bathroom" cue before Marion's murder, the murder weapon for Arbogast's murder has its own cue and sound. "The Knife" starts as soon as "Mrs Bates" appears and is interrupted by a sickening, blunt, sound of the knife going into Arbogast's body. The sound of his metal capped shoes trembling on the wooden staircase as he falls adds a percussive element to the violently synchronised string score. Bates lands on top of Arbogast, and stabs him a few more times, as both blunt and bloody penetrations are heard over the music. Arbogast's death is quicker, and far less voyeuristic than Marion's. Clover notes this as typical, observing how the death of a male character is nearly always swift; even if the character grasps what is happening to him, he has no time to react nor register his own terror.²⁴³ The death of a female character, on the other hand, is nearly always filmed at closer range, in more detail, for a greater length time during which the victim's awareness of her horrific fate is allowed to be fully and sickeningly felt by the viewer.²⁴⁴

Similar to the differences between the portrayal of the murders of Marion and Arbogast, there are striking differences in the ways Hitchcock and Herrmann visually and sonically deal with the investigations by Lila and Arbogast. Sam tries to make Lila stay at the

²⁴¹ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 103.

²⁴² There are visual similarities with how the Marion & Arbogast's murders are filmed, albeit Arbogast has clothes on. There is close-up of Marion's feet as she steps into the bathtub (her place of death), and there is a close-up of Arbogast's feet as he steps onto the staircase (his place of death). Straight after these shots, there is a shot from above. In Marion's instance, there was a shot from the perspective of the shower head looking down on her, and in Arbogast's instance there is a shot from the top of stairs, looking down onto the top half of his body.

²⁴³ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 35.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

hardware store so he can go alone, however she seems to doubt his ability to find Marion, as she stands in the shadows of Sam's search and the store. Recognising her frustration, "The Search B" slowly creeps in; lacking in urgency relative to "The Search A," the music returns the camera to Norman, standing by the swamp where Marion's car and body have been sunk. Sam is standing outside of the motel alone, his searching shouts for "Arbogast!" echoing around to Norman by the swamp, but Norman remains unphased. Although the music is non-diegetic, Norman seems to validate it as he stares back into the camera, instead of running back to the motel. "The Search B" cue has musically faltered with Sam taking charge. The flat sombre tone continues through Sam's return to Lila in the shop, where she runs to the door — her body and face becoming entirely silhouetted the closer she gets as if she is answering Norman's gaze instead of greeting Sam. Herrmann cuts the music while Lila listens in despair as Sam recounts the story of his failure. In a moment of silence, she decides to find answers for herself.

Lila and Sam visit the county Sheriff, who breaks the news that Norma Bates is dead. After the Sheriff asks "Well if the woman up there is Mrs Bates, who's that woman buried out in Greenlawn cemetery?" Herrmann places a stinger and Hitchcock cuts to the expression of realisation on Lila's face, before the camera cuts to Norman at the Bates Motel. Norman runs up to the Mansion where he disappears into a room on the first floor. Herrmann is playing through "The First Floor" cue that becomes pierced with the voice of Mrs Bates. The voice puts up a fight, and Norman appears through the door carrying a body down the stairs. The phantasmatic voice, now angry and violent, has a physical source, and since the stillness of the body does not match the movement created by the sound, it creates an element of the uncanny. Considering Mulvey's discussion on stillness and movement in connection with the transition between life and death, the phantasmatic voice creates a link between the two.

On the drive to the Bates Motel, Sam broods about how he does not know what to do.²⁴⁵ Lila is quick to let him know exactly what they will do: register as a married couple, get a cabin (no. 10), and start searching until they find Marion. Lila proves her extreme level headedness, a trait noted by Clover, when she tells Sam that they have to look in cabin 1 for Marion, no matter what they find, no matter how upsetting. The cue “Cabin 1” starts with the same swooping chords as “The Search B,” only this time the score is overlaid with Lila’s high-heeled shoes tapping along the veranda. The intensity increases as they reach cabin 1. There is no dialogue, only music, and the strings increase in shrillness. Herrmann is building tension in the same way as the cues for Marion’s diving scenes,²⁴⁶ although instead of interweaving the “The Murder” leitmotif, Herrmann maintains long, low, drawn-out notes. This demonstrates, musically, Mulvey’s observations on the importance of journeys and the transition of life to death in *Psycho* — Lila and Sam near the end of their journey, tracking where Marion was when she was alive, ending in the bathroom where she died. The last time the camera was in cabin 1, Norman was disposing of Marion’s body. Herrmann’s music reanimates the stillness in cabin 1 by building tension, until he releases it when Lila notices Marion’s discarded note in the toilet.²⁴⁷ Lila finds Marion’s note, proving that Marion was, at some point, in cabin 1.

Lila is determined to go up to the Mansion to find more answers, despite Sam’s warnings that she “can’t go up there.”²⁴⁸ Herrmann sides with Sam: as Lila climbs up the steps to the house, he starts “The Hill” cue. This is the first time in the film that this

²⁴⁵ This car scene is entirely different from any of Marion’s previous driving scenes. One notable aspect is that the camera stays fixed on Lila and Sam as they drive. Marion’s driving scenes always showed the road ahead to emphasise the journey, or transition as Mulvey may argue. By just fixating on Lila and Sam, the camera points to the notion that there is no journey, that Lila and Sam are reaching the end of the mystery.

²⁴⁶ “The Flight,” “Patrol Car,” “The Car Lot,” and “The Rainstorm.”

²⁴⁷ A film of firsts, and as if to illustrate how culturally ‘out there’ *Psycho* was at its release in 1960, this was the first time a toilet was flushed on screen.

²⁴⁸ Sam pleads “I don’t like you going into that house alone,” and Lila simply answers, “I can handle a sick old woman.” Through her persistence, regardless of Sam’s attempts to stop her by trying to convince her that she is not capable of doing what she wants, Lila proves herself to be in the main character in the quest to find Marion.

downwards perspective from the Bates Mansion has been shown. Hitchcock decides to film from an angle where the steps cannot be seen, showing the way up to the Mansion as an overgrown, weedy, hillside.²⁴⁹ For the other characters walking “up the hill” to the Mansion, the perspective has been from close to the ground showing “the hill” for what it is, a set of garden steps. This is in direct contrast to Arbogast, for when he went up to the Mansion, Herrmann’s characteristic slow moving chord patterns of the score’s third movement, switched into to a lighter, up-beat step-wise pattern and the sound of his shoes taking two steps at a time add a steady beat to the soundtrack. When Norman is seen on these steps, he is often running up, or down, without any music at all. As Lila climbs, the strings switch from the long-drawn-out notes heard in “Cabin 1,” to soft staccato stabs, almost mimicking the sound of Arbogast’s shoes on the steps, a sound closely connected to his murder moments later. “The Hill” cue stops when Lila enters the Mansion and pauses in front of the steps.

Herrmann starts “The Bedroom” cue when Lila enters the room that “Mrs Bates” came out of when “she” murdered Arbogast, the same room where her phantasmatic voice was last heard. The cello and contrabass are playing in low glissandos, a complete contrast to the lone violin that plays a series of screeching glissandos during the “The Murder” theme, while the rest of the string section is heard softly plucking in a tip-toe rhythm, imitating Lila as she carefully searches the bedroom. The camera moves in on a death cast of delicate hands, presumably Mrs Bates’ hands, which Lila also notices. The dramatic moment is marked not with a stinger by Herrmann, but with a gasp from Lila, as she gets a fright from the scene in the mirror above the cast, which is reflecting another angle of her reflection in the mirror behind her.

²⁴⁹ It should be noted that while Lila is trying to get to the Mansion unseen by Norman, she is still walking up to the front of the house where the steps are, and where all the other characters have entered.

The music stops for a rest, before waiting for Lila to enter Norman's room where "The Toys" cue starts. The shrillness of the high strings stab at each camera cut that moves to children's toys, a child's bed, and a record player with a copy of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony.²⁵⁰ Clover notes this scene and alludes to the arrested development of Norman's psyche, which places him in an infantilized state of permanent childhood. Clover's observation here focuses on the notion of Norman still being his mother's responsibility. However, rather than taking responsibility for his own murderous actions, he hides behind the gauze of his "mother's responsibilities" (causing him to murder, initially as punishment for sexual arousal) and positions himself as a heroic character who takes responsibility for his mother's actions (murder via the "mother-half of his brain"), by trying to cover them up for his "mother." Although the male psychiatrist at the end of the film announces this to everyone, it is arguably Lila who finds this out first through her own investigatory work.

The dizzying confusion caused by Herrmann's "The Cellar" cue forces Lila into the basement to hide from Norman. Here Herrmann leads Lila to the big revelation of *Psycho* – that Mrs Bates is both alive and dead. "The Cellar" holds its final note as Lila reaches forward to touch Mrs Bates on the shoulder, prompting the corpse to swivel around in the chair. The music dies upon revelation, but the sonic narrative is carried by Lila's scream. It is this scream that links "The Cellar" back into the "The Murder" where the screeching of strings matches the screeching scream. Norman runs in, dressed as his mother, closely followed by Sam who grabs him from behind. Lila stands still, eyes and mouth aghast at the

²⁵⁰ The significance of this record may lie in the title meaning "Heroic" and the symphony's dedication to Napoleon. Although Beethoven dedicated this symphony to a male conqueror, holding connotations of violence, colonialisation, and mass murder, *Eroica* is a *female* name of Italian origin. At the time of the symphony's release, it was considered daunting due to its scale as the biggest, most confrontational symphony to date. It would go on to inspire, not just composers like Wagner, but psychoanalysts such as Freud who used it to explore the realm of unconsciousness. *Eroica* was a revolutionary cultural moment, as was *Psycho* at its release in 1960.

scene in front of her, but she does not fold. Lila's scream is one of her last sonic contributions, other than her question to the psychiatrist: "did he [Norman] kill my sister?"²⁵¹

With the introduction of Lila, the Final Girl, Hitchcock's cinematic formulation is radically altered. Clover believes that the mark of "Final Girl" does not 'enlarge' the character of Lila,²⁵² but rather that the "Final Girl" trope absorbs her into her role of revealing Marion's murderer, despite the obstacles thrown in her way by the male characters who are trying to help (Arbogast and Sam) and who are trying to further cover the truth through killing all of the characters (Norman). *Psycho*'s detective plot, revolving around a revelation, yields to a hero plot that later became standard in the slasher genre, namely one that revolves around the main character's struggle with and eventual triumph over evil. Despite this, Clover states that "for the femaleness, however qualified, of that main character, the story is a standard one of tale and epic."²⁵³

Conclusion

In this chapter, I aimed to answer a number of questions: (4) "If Marion, Lila, and Mrs Bates are all victims of Norman Bates, how does Herrmann's score treat them?" (5) "How does Herrmann's score enable and weaponize Norman Bates against all three of his victims?" (6) "To what extent does Herrmann's score musically reflect Lila's courage and level-headedness in finding her murdered sister, exceeding where Sam and Arbogast fail?" By listening to Herrmann's score, and watching Hitchcock's visual narrative, I have sought to answer these questions by using a second wave film feminist lens that brings together the culturally significant work of Mulvey, Clover, and Kristeva, to analyse *Psycho* and the

²⁵¹ Throughout her time on screen in *Psycho*, Lila keeps focused on her only motive – finding Marion.

²⁵² Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 40.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 41.

soundtrack's victimising score. Although reflective at times, I have used my own fourth wave feminist considerations, alongside the cited work of feminist film scholars who are paving the way in twenty-first century film studies. Out of the three female characters in *Psycho*, Hitchcock only lets one out alive. However, Herrmann adroitly weaponizes his score to enable Norman to punish Marion, Lila, and Mrs Bates.

In the first movement of the film, Herrmann chases Marion in her take-the-money-and-run plot. His stripped-down score builds a chaotic, urgent tension through relentless runs, trills and sharp staccato stabs that play in an agitated manner. Herrmann believes that after the prelude of *Psycho*, with the film's "The Murder" theme, it is obvious that something terrible must happen, and he therefore structures the sonic narrative to act as a weapon against her. Herrmann constructed the "Marion" cue that is embellished with her own sighs of desperation, and the music keeps her in this perpetual state of wanting. Herrmann weaves the *Psycho* theme, "The Murder," through each driving scene to refer to the prelude, to constantly remind Marion of her own demise constantly, and pre-emptively, sonically by her own ill-advised morally corrupt decision making. The driving scenes add to *Psycho*'s overall theme of the transition between life and death, and the bewildering area between the two. Mulvey characterises this transition through stillness and movement. Marion's movement is pushed by her journey to Sam, along with the \$40,000 she has stolen from George. However, the Bates Motel, or in Clover's words, "the terrible place," becomes the end of her journey, and her point of stillness. Herrmann enables Norman to kill Marion by literally contributing to the weapon that kills her: the screeching sounds of the high strings in a repetitive stabbing motion. The music takes over the visual role, and the stabbing perpetrated by the music makes her the film's first murder victim.

Herrmann's musical treatment of Mrs Bates is less aggressive. This is perhaps due to her contribution of sonic horror through the creation of a sonic disconnect. As we have seen,

there are moments where Herrmann sonically protects Norman from suspicion. For example, “The Search A” cue ends when the camera falls on Norman, and throughout *Psycho* Herrmann structured the score to play when “something terrible” is happening. By fading the strings out gently, Herrmann seems to be insinuating that Norman is innocent, alluding to the notion that Mrs Bates is guilty. The vocality of Mrs Bates also impedes her in the sonic narrative, given that for most of the visual narrative, while her voice is present, she is left unseen. Chion and Abbate both describe the acousmètre as the “sonic cousin to the phantom.”²⁵⁴ While her voice clearly haunts the sonic narrative by virtue of its disembodiment, Mrs Bates is not just a phantom figure. This is the reason that her phantasmatic sound is different to both the imaginative, and acousmatic sound described by Fenimore, Chion and Abbate. Norma Bates has a phantasmatic voice because it ostensibly has a physical source, her corpse. Since Norman has, in agreement with Fenimore, stolen his mother’s voice, her voice is an illusionary sound.²⁵⁵ The extent of the illusion is furthered by the three voice-actors who produce her voice, two female and one male, which adds a multi-layered timbre that further confuses the sonic narrative. Kristeva’s theories on *The Powers of Horror* situate Mrs Bates as the abject. However, Kristeva states that the corpse is the ultimate abjection because it signifies “the most basic form of pollution”²⁵⁶ – a body without a soul. If Norman has stolen his mother’s voice, and she is free to haunt the narrative with phantasmatic sound, then Norman embodies the abject. Mrs Bates is continually indirectly present through Norman, and this association marks how she is treated throughout the sonic narrative.

As we have seen, Lila is the original Final Girl. In Clover’s *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, where she defines what the Final Girl trope means to horror, and the trope’s

²⁵⁴ Abbate, “Debussy’s Phantom Sounds,” 67-96. See also: Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, 17.

²⁵⁵ Fenimore, “Voices That Lie Within: The Heard and Unheard in *Psycho*,” 80 - 89.

²⁵⁶ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 2-3.

significance, she uses *Psycho* as a benchmark.²⁵⁷ Lila is the sole female survivor. She literally stares death in the face when she meets Mrs Bates' corpse in basement, her life is threatened by Norman the psychopathic killer, and she finds the strength not only to investigate, but solve the mystery of the disappearance of her sister Marion. She also "destroys" the killer by putting Norman into police custody and shedding light on the murder of Mrs Bates (as well as that of Arbogast, the professional private investigator, and of two other missing persons, whose cases had been unsolved). While they want to find Marion, Sam and Arbogast tend to restrict Lila by either doubting her capability or being needlessly overprotective. Herrmann reflects this in his score, by musically treating Lila's investigation differently to that of her male counterparts, most clearly noted by the cues "The Search A" and "The Search B". During *Psycho*'s biggest revelation — the discovery of Mrs Bates in the cellar — Herrmann's score interweaves with Lila's scream, to silence her quite literally into the sonic narrative by matching her voice. Clover believes that the mark of "Final Girl" does not 'enlarge' the character of Lila, rather the Final Girl trope is absorbed into her role where she uncovers the truth and succeeds in her motive,²⁵⁸ despite the obstacles thrown in her way by the male characters, director, and composer.

²⁵⁷ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 26.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

Chapter Three: “Exploring Herrmann’s Sonic Gaze Through Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* (1977-1980)”

How can art compete with television and movie images? It can't. It should incorporate it — use imagery as if from those things.

Cindy Sherman

Cindy Sherman is one of the most widely known Pictures Generation artists in American culture. Her debut suite, the *Untitled Film Stills* (1977-1980), is a collection of black-and-white photographs in which she is her own muse. Dressed up as various fictional film characters, Sherman depicts imagined moments — film stills — from non-existent films. Sherman’s portrayal of female character tropes, among them the femme fatale, the bombshell, the vamp, the lonely housewife, and the seductive mistress, point to the voyeuristic treatment of women on screen. Printed to mimic the format, scale and quality of film stills from 1950s and 60s Hollywood, Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* hold an uncanny resemblance to, and signal a nostalgia for, Hitchcock’s filmography.

While she has never directly said “my work is influenced by Hitchcockian cinema,” Sherman’s favourite film growing up was Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954). In an essay on making her *Untitled Film Stills* series, Sherman wrote: “I loved all those vignettes Jimmy Stewart watches in the windows around him. You don’t know much about any of those characters, so you try to fill in the pieces of their lives.”²⁵⁹ Visually, there is no context for what happened before, or what will happen after in Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series, but by following Grace Kelly’s instruction to Jimmy Stewart in Hitchcock’s *Rear Window*,²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Sherman, *The Complete Untitled Film Stills*, 9.

²⁶⁰ Alfred Hitchcock, *Rear Window* (1954), Paramount Pictures Studios.

Sherman asks her audience: “Tell me everything you saw — and what you think it means.”

My interpretative angle in this chapter is an attempt to answer Sherman’s call, with a small twist. I ask: “Tell me everything you see *and hear* — and what you think it means.”

In her body of work, Sherman has sought to query notions of self-authenticity falsely sold by Hollywood.²⁶¹ She rejects the idea that her *Untitled Film Stills* are self-portraits,²⁶² and instead views each character as their own individual figure. Larry Qualls suggests that critics and Sherman fans alike were disappointed by the lack of Sherman’s “true” presence in the *Untitled Film Stills*,²⁶³ saying: “what we thought we knew about her... no longer seems to obtain.”²⁶⁴ Quall’s comment pokes at Kim Novak’s statement about becoming reshaped into who somebody else wants you to be.²⁶⁵ Speaking of choosing tropes for her character in *Untitled Film Still #15* (see Figure 1) Sherman said: “to pick a character like that was about my own ambivalence about sexuality — growing up with women role models that I had, and a lot of them in films, that were like that character, and yet you were supposed to be a good girl.”²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ In a 2008 interview with Mark Stevens for *New York Magazine*, Sherman commented: “We’re all products of what we want to project to the world. Even people who don’t spend any time, or think they don’t, on preparing themselves for the world out there – I think that ultimately, they have for their whole lives groomed themselves to be a certain way, to present a face to the world.” See Mark Stevens, “How I Made It: Cindy Sherman on Her *Untitled Film Stills*,” *New York Magazine*, April 3, 2008, <https://nymag.com/anniversary/40th/culture/45773/>.

²⁶² In a 1990 interview with the *New York Times*, Sherman expressed: “I feel I’m anonymous in my work. When I look at the pictures, I never see myself; they aren’t self-portraits. Sometimes I disappear.” See, Glenn Collins, “A Portraitist’s Romp Through Art History,” *The New York Times*, February 1, 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/02/01/arts/a-portraitist-s-romp-through-art-history.html>.

²⁶³ Larry Qualls, “Performance/Photography,” *Performing Arts Journal* 49, no.1 (Winter 1995): 26-34.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶⁵ Chapter One, p. 16. See also, Simon Hattenstone, “Kim Novak: ‘I Inherited Mental Illness from my Father, but the Rape Must Have Added To It.’”

²⁶⁶ George Howell, “Anatomy of an Artist,” *Art Papers* 19, no. 4 (Summer 1995): 7.



Figure 1: *Untitled Film Still #15*.

Sherman's early work is a response to Hollywood's production of commercial film stills, which she characterized as overexuberant with overacting in a lure to sell more movies.²⁶⁷ In her imagined film stills, Sherman preferred to appear mostly neutral to maintain mysterious narratives. In choosing which shots worked for the series, Sherman notes: "The shots I would choose were always the ones in-between the action. These women on their way to wherever the action is (or to their doom) ... or have just come from a confrontation (or a tryst)."²⁶⁸ Always, in her framing and deliberate posing, Sherman encourages the notion that the character is the object of someone's gaze. As the photographer, and muse, Sherman controls the male gaze by directing it herself, and reverting it back onto the viewer to highlight biased gaze through visual aesthetic. The power dynamic of control between Sherman and the viewer complicates the gaze. Who is in control? I hold power as the thinker/analyst and the creator/recreator as I transpose Herrmann's score from Hitchcock's

²⁶⁷ Film stills are photographs taken (usually) on set for the purposes of publicity and promotion. See: Joel W. Finler, *The Hollywood Story* (London and New York: Wallflower Press 2003).

²⁶⁸ Cindy Sherman, *The Complete Untitled Film Stills*, 9.

Vertigo (1958) and *Psycho* (1960) onto Sherman's still photography. I do this to consider how the gaze changes when music is introduced. For clarity, it is important here to make the distinction between the sonic gaze and imagined music. This distinction comes from the understanding of the male gaze, in its traditionally visual form.²⁶⁹ The sonic gaze operates in the same voyeuristic, objectifying way that the male gaze does. Following Hitchcock's direction, Herrmann's scores for *Vertigo* and *Psycho* create an atmosphere that encourages excitement and evokes tension to bolster a psychological effect that expresses the unspoken to work in tandem with the visuals.²⁷⁰ Hitchcock's directing, in keeping with the filmic climate of the late 50s and early 60s, is a consistent example of the male gaze as it operates visually. As I have shown in Chapters One and Two, Herrmann's sonic gaze is the aural counterpart to the traditionally visual, male gaze. I use the term "sonic gaze" because I am referring to the gaze as it is heard through the sonic narrative. The sonic gaze incorporates the complete sonic narrative, from the film score to sound design, sound effects, and vocality. Imagined music is just that — hearing the "unheard" non-diegetic music that is evoked by Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* through memory and nostalgia of Hitchcock's filmography. While I imagine Herrmann's music underscoring Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, I am analyzing the sonic gaze that objectifies and silences the female characters of the narrative. By considering my discussion of the sonic gaze and Hitchcock's filmography in Chapters One and Two, I further the idea of the sonic gaze, to consider how it highlights the voyeuristic undertones in Sherman's still photography.

It is this voyeuristic undertone that has prompted psychoanalytic readings of Sherman's work in feminist spheres. To maintain ambiguity, Sherman resists the

²⁶⁹ Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*.

²⁷⁰ Hitchcock, "Alfred Hitchcock and Music in Films," 80-83.

categorisation of ‘feminist’, which has caused some controversy over her narratives.²⁷¹ The dialogue in contrasting feminist discourses over the ambiguity in Sherman’s work comes down to whether the deception of vulnerable women calls attention to the exploitation of women, or if it reinforces the process of exploitation.²⁷² Sherman is incredibly cynical about theoretical interpretations of her work, saying:

Sometimes I wonder if maybe it’s all a lot of crap. Maybe the work doesn’t mean anything. When they’re writing about it, they’re just finding whatever to attach their theories to. I just happen to illustrate some theories.²⁷³

However, Mulvey believes Sherman’s ambiguity is to an advantage for feminist theory, claiming: “It is necessary to fly in the face of [Sherman’s] own expressly non-theoretical, even anti-theoretical stance.”²⁷⁴ For Mulvey, Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* are not just examples of feminist theory, they are a “critical tool” that allows feminist theory to “come into its own.”²⁷⁵ Sherman said that she “just wanted to make something that people related to without having to read a book about it first,”²⁷⁶ and Mulvey believes that goal has been met because Sherman’s quick success “helped obscure both the work’s interest for feminist aesthetics and the fact that the ideas it raised could not have been formulated without a prehistory of feminism and its theorization of the body and representation.”²⁷⁷

Following Mulvey’s suggestion, I am using Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series as a critical tool to explore the sonic gaze. Scholars who have studied Sherman generally focus on

²⁷¹ It should be noted that while she claims her work is not feminist, Sherman has often shown awareness and poked fun at the stereotypical way that men view women, saying that one [unnamed] “art history Madonna” was painted as if she had grapefruits for breasts” — so Sherman “made them globes” in her photograph. See: Collins, “A Portraitist’s Romp Through Art History.”

²⁷² Meagher, “Would the Real Cindy Sherman Please Stand Up? Encounters Between Cindy Sherman and Feminist Art Theory,” 19.

²⁷³ Glen Helfand, “Cindy Sherman: From Dream Girl to Nightmare Alley,” *Salon*, December 8, 1997, https://www.salon.com/1997/12/08/media_38/.

²⁷⁴ Laura Mulvey, “A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body: The Work of Cindy Sherman,” *New Left Review*, (Summer 1991): 138.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ Sandy Nairne, *The State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980s* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1987), 132.

²⁷⁷ Mulvey, “A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body,” 138.

the visuals. While I rely on their critiques, I also consider the soundtrack that haunts from beyond the frames of the still photographs. I have taken inspiration from Tina M. Campt's monograph *Listening to Images*, where she studies the relationship of quiet and the quotidian, stating in her introduction that quiet registers sonically as a level of intensity that requires focused attention.²⁷⁸ I share Campt's view that the choice to "listen rather than just look"²⁷⁹ at photographs is a conscious decision that engages sound in the sensory register to critically decode a variety of cultural issues and social values in images.²⁸⁰ Ariella Azoulay's book *The Civil Act of Photography* probes at issues and social values attached to viewing photographs to propose that photographs should be "watched" rather than just looked at.²⁸¹ Azoulay's choice of the word "watched" highlights the relationship between moving and still images. This relationship has long been contemplated, with classic film theorists such as André Bazin and Christian Metz discussing the in-between spaces of reality and the indexical through the areas of grey space between moving and still image.²⁸² Metz describes photography as passive, where the object has been, and moving image as active where the object is.²⁸³ I suggest that this isn't necessarily the case because when we see Sherman's so-called "passive" work, we can hear Herrmann's "active" music from Hitchcockian cinema. Similarly, on theorising the rhetoric of image, Roland Barthes asks two important questions: "What is the impression of reality produced by the photograph?" and "What, above all, are the limits of photography?"²⁸⁴ Barthes contemplates these questions through two frames of meaning: the obvious and the obtuse.²⁸⁵ However, Barthes believes that there is a third meaning which he explores through decoding film stills from Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the*

²⁷⁸ Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁸¹ Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

²⁸² André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," 90-94. See also, Christian Metz, "The Cinema: Language or Language System," 133-170.

²⁸³ Metz, "The Cinema: Language or Language System," 335.

²⁸⁴ Barthes, "The Rhetoric of Image," *Communications: Recherches sémiologiques* 1, no. 4 (1964): 40-51. See further discussion in: Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," 133-170.

²⁸⁵ Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning," *Artforum* 11, no. 5 (Winter 1973): 46-50.

Terrible (1944).²⁸⁶ For Barthes, the third meaning is not found through movement, and instead:

[The third meaning] structures the film differently, without subverting the story (at least, in Eisenstein); and for this reason, perhaps, it is at this level, and only here, that the “filmic” at last makes its appearance. The filmic is that which cannot be described in the film. It is the representation which cannot be represented.²⁸⁷

For Barthes, the film still provides insight into the ‘new’ possibilities of audio-visual montages.²⁸⁸ This has been one of my jumping-off points for exploring Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* through the sonic gaze. Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* closely resemble shots from Hitchcock’s films through lighting, visual motifs,²⁸⁹ and composition. In Chapters One and Two, I argue how important sound and music are in *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, unravelling how Herrmann’s score treats the female characters voyeuristically through the sonic gaze. In this final chapter, I argue that when we see Sherman’s work, we might hear Herrmann’s music from Hitchcockian cinema. In a cinematic context, Herrmann’s score silences the women, but when superimposed on Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills*, the score provides Sherman’s characters with an emotional context which, somewhat ironically, can give them a voice in their visual narrative.

To further explore how music functions as a sonic gaze, I am experimenting, in this new context, with still images and imagined and/or remembered music. Below, I analyse how Herrmann’s remembered scores expand the meaning of Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills*. The “meaning” I refer to considers the broader themes of this thesis (as explored and highlighted

²⁸⁶ The conceptualisation of the “Third Meaning” by Barthes was his way of suggesting that film studies ‘progress’ from linguistics, to decoding film stills. See: Dana B. Polan, “Roland Barthes and the Moving Image,” *October* 18, no. 1 (Fall: 1981): 41-46.

²⁸⁷ Barthes, “The Third Meaning,” 50.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ Visual motifs found in both Hitchcock’s filmography and Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* include mirrors, blonde women, letters, bathrooms, bedrooms, stairs, driving, and body (particularly, female) close-ups.

in Chapters One and Two): feminism and the gaze. I ask: “What does Herrmann’s score do for the feminist interpretation of these photos?” and, “How does the score add to or challenge the gaze in each photo?”

This section of my thesis is interpretative, and creative, because it encourages thinking about photographs as more than traditionally passive still mediums.²⁹⁰ Sherman justifies this explorative angle: “I don’t want people to be able to absorb the images,” she has said. “I want there to be questions in the work. I’m trying to engage the viewer to do a little bit of the work.”²⁹¹ In this chapter, I engage with Sherman’s work by contemplating how still images can be interpreted and explored sonically. I first consider the visual similarities between Hitchcock’s shots and Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills*.²⁹² These visual similarities are noted through the positioning of the figure, the aesthetic style of the figure,²⁹³ the composition of frame, lighting, and visual motifs. After I have chosen which Hitchcock shot and Sherman still to pair, I consider the corresponding Herrmann cue (or leitmotif) that plays over the Hitchcock shot. While reflecting on my musical discussion of Herrmann’s cues in Chapters One and Two, I will expand on my visual observations concerning Sherman’s still photographs. To do this, I “watch” Sherman’s still photographs, while playing Herrmann’s cues. During this exercise I interpret how Herrmann’s music adds to the issues of the male gaze as put forward by Sherman, and digested and constructed by the viewer, by perpetrating the sonic gaze.

***Psycho* (1960): “Something Terrible” Must Happen to These Women**

²⁹⁰ Currie, “The Interpretation in Art,” 291-306.

²⁹¹ Collins, “A Portraitist’s Romp Through Art History.”

²⁹² For added discussion on artistic interpretation as a methodological practice see, Elliot Eisner “Art and Knowledge” in *The Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*, 291-306.

²⁹³ “Aesthetic style” refers to the hair colour (usually blonde) of the figure, and the clothes that the figure is wearing. This is one of the most obvious visual similarities between Hitchcock’s shots and Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* because Sherman was most interested in portraying women from the 1950s and 60s.

Sherman's commitment to photographic ambiguity is partly what has made her *Untitled Film Stills* so successful. Each of her characters lives in a different story that happens before and after the snap of the camera shutter, meaning that it is up to the viewer to create the storyline. While Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* are not deliberately scary or disturbing, their ambiguity creates room for the implication of something terrible. Of course, a crucial factor in horror is ambiguity because it fuels the fear of the unknown — and *Psycho* feeds off of implication and ambiguity. During the infamous shower scene, skin is not visibly penetrated by an actual knife. Instead, Hitchcock uses music to imply horror. Correspondingly, we might ask what terrible things might happen to Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* when the storyline is explored musically?



Figure 2.a: *Untitled Film Still* #52.



Figure 2.b: *Psycho* Opening Scene.

When *Psycho* was released, The Motion Picture Production Code, or “Hays Code,” was still in place. Adopted in 1930 and rigorously enforced from 1934 to 1968, this code introduced and aimed to maintain strict film censorship to control what was shown on screen.²⁹⁴ With *Psycho*'s very first scene (see Figure 2.b) Hitchcock made it clear that this was the film to break the code. Contrary to social expectations of the 1960s, *Psycho* opens

²⁹⁴ Maria Lewis, “Early Hollywood and the Hays Code,” ACMI, accessed March 28th 2022, <https://www.acmi.net.au/stories-and-ideas/early-hollywood-and-hays-code/>.

with a non-martial tryst, with Janet Leigh lying on a hotel bed in white lingerie.²⁹⁵ Sherman's *Untitled Film Still #52* (see Figure 2.a) is lying on a bed, in a white nightgown, in a curled up position on the right-hand side of the frame. Herrmann's "Marion"²⁹⁶ cue, in the opening scene of *Psycho*, is reminiscent of the prelude with its stripped back strings, but the melody provides a pseudo-romantic element for the afternoon tryst.²⁹⁷ Clover notes that a tell-tale sign of women who will die early in the narrative is their sexual expression: "sexual transgressors are scheduled for early destruction."²⁹⁸ The woman in #52 has her make-up done, which suggests her scene is not an early morning wake-up, nor a late good-night. Sherman's camera angle pointing down at #52, takes Sam's unseen perspective as he looms over Marion. While Herrmann's "Marion" cue plays, Marion's voice is breathy and desperate, as she ends every line with a pining sigh.²⁹⁹ While #52 is not necessarily in distress, there is an element of desperation in her slightly parted lips, as if she is letting out a long sigh, to show that she is emotionally preoccupied.³⁰⁰ Herrmann's descending motif at the end of the "Marion" cue pushes #52 into an anxious state of despair.

Herrmann's sonic architecture builds tension, particularly in moments of moral ambiguity — the visual and sonic slashes of the prelude, the opening scene's afternoon tryst, and anytime the stolen money appears on screen, for example. As previously discussed, Clover believes that women who show any sign of moral ambiguity will ultimately be killed in the narrative. Therefore, Herrmann's score is vital in understanding both character development, and the turn of narrative events. While the opening scene suggests that, "sexual

²⁹⁵ Films reviews from 1960 demonstrate this distaste, see: Lily Rothman, "What TIME'S Original Review of *Psycho* Got Wrong." See also, Bosley Crowther, "Hitchcock's *Psycho* Bows at 2 Houses," *The New York Times*, June 17, 1960. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/film/061760hitch-psycho-review.html>.

²⁹⁶ "Marion" Cue: 00:04:59-00:05:51.

²⁹⁷ Chapter 2, p. 57-58.

²⁹⁸ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 33-34. See also, Chapter 2, p. 37.

²⁹⁹ Murphy, "An Audiovisual Foreshadowing in the First Thirty Seconds of the Last Eight Minutes of *Psycho*," 47-59. See also, Clifton, "'We All Go a Little Mad Sometimes. Haven't You?' Musical Empathy in Hitchcock's *Psycho*," 52.

³⁰⁰ Chapter 2, p. 37-38.

transgressors are scheduled for early destruction,”³⁰¹ the peephole scene involving Norman hammers that point home. Marion is seen, again, in lingerie. However, this time, her lingerie is black, a stark contrast to the white from the hotel room, symbolising her journey from hotel to motel, from life to death.³⁰² In the opening hotel scene, Marion is in the room with Sam, of whose gaze Marion is aware. However, in the motel peeping scene (see Figure 3.b), Norman is outside of the room and Marion is unaware of his gaze. Norman’s gaze penetrates through the wall as he watches Marion undress through the peephole. Herrmann complicates Norman’s gaze through the cue “The Peephole.”³⁰³ When Norman first looks, the strings are playing in ostinato in a low register. This low register continues, until Marion starts to undress and the first violins enter in the high register. The high register is maintained and, through the registral vocality of the strings in soprano, Herrmann hints at Mrs Bates’ presence. These high strings spark a sonic threat; the next time they are heard is during the infamous “The Murder”.³⁰⁴



Figure 3.a: *Untitled Film Still #2*.



Figure 3.b: Marion Through Norman’s Peephole.

³⁰¹ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 33-34. See also, Chapter 2, p. 57.

³⁰² Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006). See also, Chapter 2, p. 38.

³⁰³ “The Peephole” Cue: 00:43:40-00:00:45:09. See also, Chapter 2, p. 43.

³⁰⁴ See Chapter 2, p. 40 for discussion surrounding the “The Murder” cue.

Distracted by her own reflection, Sherman's *Untitled Film Still #2* (see Figure 3.a) is also unaware of a gaze that sits outside the doorframe of her personal space. The woman in #2 is ostensibly granted more privacy than Marion is given in the peeping scene, as she stands with her bath towel covering her front, while it flails open at the back. The camera is placed outside of the bathroom, however the door is wide open, and the woman is centered in front of the mirror. She is caught in her own gaze as she stares into the mirror, perhaps taking a moment to deconstruct and then reconstruct her own identity — like so many people do when they get ready or the day, or night. A familiar, and personally intimate scene, Sherman's #2 marks this mundane moment. However, the addition of the shrillness of Herrmann's ever-intensifying strings turn the mundane into the extraordinary, the abject.³⁰⁵ As discussed in Chapter Two, Norman embodies the abject by harbouring the “monstrous-feminine” through his supposed “mother-half” which he expresses violently, and vocally through a phantasmatic voice.³⁰⁶ Demonstrated by the Norman-Norma doubling, meaning collapses in the abject and therefore the abject does not respect borders, positions, or rules.³⁰⁷ Just as Norman's gaze penetrates the wall in the peephole scene, the camera in Sherman's #2 acknowledges the doorframe (a symbol of divided space) by showing its right-hand border, yet the door is wide open, thereby allowing the evocative gaze right into the woman's space. By comparison, Marion stands in front of the open bathroom door, where she will eventually die, a compositional foreshadowing of the transition from life to death. Sherman's #2 is in the bathroom, a position that Herrmann's music esclates through the musical indication of Mrs Bates, and the danger that the stabbing strings will insinuate.

³⁰⁵ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 1-32.

³⁰⁶ Creed, “Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection,” 44-71. See also, Chapter 2, p. 41-42.

³⁰⁷ Chapter 2, p. 42.

After Marion's murder, the next time Herrmann's score appears is when her sister Lila is searching for her in cabin 1, Marion's room (see Figure 4.b). Lila is the driving force in the search for Marion after the two failed searches by her male counterparts, and her position marks her as the original Final Girl, as defined by Clover.³⁰⁸ Sherman's *Untitled Film Still #54* (see Figure 4.a) shows a woman walking briskly down a darkly lit street at night in the rain. Like Lila, #54 is dressed in a long wool peacoat, with a button down shirt dress as she strides forward with purpose.³⁰⁹



Figure 4.a: *Untitled Film Still #54*.



Figure 4.b: Lila Searching for Marion.

As previously noted, Herrmann provides Lila's investigation with a musical treatment that is distinctly different from that of Sam and Arbogast's failed investigations ("Search (A)"³¹⁰ and Search (B)"³¹¹). For Mulvey, *Psycho* is a series of journeys, notably journeys from life to death. Lila — as the Final Girl — is destined to live, whereas Marion — the film's early sexual transgressor — is doomed to a tragic death. Herrmann chooses to haunt Lila's investigation with cues littered with strings reminiscent of "The Murder"

³⁰⁸ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 35.

³⁰⁹ This woman is also featured in *Untitled Film Still #55*, where she is standing still in a darkly lit street.

³¹⁰ "Search A" Cue: 01:04:02-01:04:34.

³¹¹ "Search B" Cue: 01:18:46-01:19:57.

leitmotif. Lila's investigation lasts over five cues.³¹² Throughout each of these cues, Herrmann heightens the pitch to build pressure on Lila. This is similar to Herrmann's treatment of Marion through her driving scenes, where each driving cue scored with increasing shrillness and intensity. For Lila, Herrmann releases the tension by countering the shrill notes with long drawn out bass notes. The woman in Sherman's #54 walks briskly down a darkly lit street, and she is holding up the collar of her coat, perhaps to protect herself from a chill wind. Holding her hands up to her neck, the woman looks as if she is shielding from something more, perhaps the sound of the driving wind howling down the lane. Or, perhaps, like Lila, we might imagine that she is shielding herself from Herrmann's attempts to distract and unnerve through his taunting string orchestration. Surrounded by the dark abyss of the alleyway, the woman in #54 is harshly front-lit by a bright, contrasting light — as if to symbolise her journey away from death, as she marks the light at the end of the tunnel.

While Marion and Lila see-saw between life and death, there is one character who sways in the middle — Mrs Bates. *Psycho*'s biggest reveal is that Mrs Bates is both alive and dead.³¹³ Herrmann plays his part in this reveal too, playing "The Cellar"³¹⁴ cue, where the fluttering dread in Herrmann's low strings create a sinking feeling while short tremolos unnerve while their fast tempo pushes Lila down into the cellar to hide from Norman (see Figure 5.b.)³¹⁵ It is here that Lila discovers the corpse of Mrs Bates, and stares death in the face.³¹⁶ Now that the journey from life to death has come to fruition, the divide between movement and stillness can be analysed. Mulvey notes the stark contrast during this revelation by observing Mrs Bates' gaping eye sockets, and the swinging lightbulb above Lila's head. While the floor lamp in Sherman's *Untitled Film Still* #53 (see Figure 5.a) is

³¹² These cues are: "Cabin 1," "The Hill," "The Bedroom," "The Toys," "The Cellar," "The Murder."

³¹³ Mulvey, *Death 24x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*, 99.

³¹⁴ "The Cellar" Cue: 01:40:15-01:41:21

³¹⁵ Chapter 2, p. 48-49.

³¹⁶ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 35.

obviously stationary, the woman's eyes are held at an uncomfortable angle, as if at any moment she is just about to look back at the camera.



Figure 5.a: *Untitled Film Still #53*.



Figure 5.b: Lila in the Bates Basement.

Sherman's #53 stands in front of the lamp which leaves her stoic face in shadow. She stands with a tall posture, her demeanor unfazed by whatever she is fixated on. If #53 is staring death in the face, then she does so in a calm and collected manner — a characteristic that Clover associates with the Final Girl.³¹⁷ “The Cellar” holds its final note before it becomes pierced by Lila's scream. It is this scream that links “The Cellar” back to the “The Murder” where the screeching of strings match the screeching scream. It is at this moment of sonic shock that Norman runs in, clothed as his mother, as the “The Murder” leitmotif rains down on Lila.³¹⁸ The hypothetical scream of the woman in #53 is stifled due to the stillness of her image, however Herrmann's score and Lila's scream animate her into the position of the Final Girl.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Chapter 2, p. 49.

Lila's scream at the end of "The Cellar" is one of her last sonic contributions. As the sole female survivor (Final Girl), Lila escapes Norman, and "destroys" his ability to carry on murdering women in the name of Mrs Bates. Norman, as Norma, keeps the illusion of Mrs Bates alive. Running into the cellar, his face is lit with a wide-open smile and frantic looking eyes (see Figure 6.b). The woman in Sherman's *Untitled Film Still #26* (see Figure 6.a) is in complete contrast to the zealous image of Norman.



Figure 6.a: *Untitled Film Still #26*.

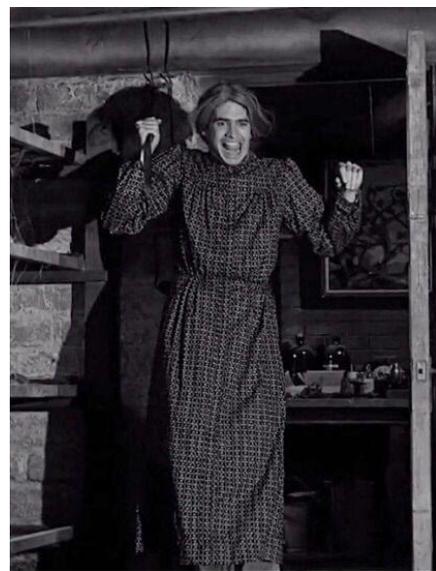


Figure 6.b: Norman as Norma.

The woman in #26 is folded in on herself, her arms bent like Norman's (see Figure 6.b.) but held across her body to cradle her head. Her head is hinged downward as she looks down at at something truly terrible, something abject. The pictorial-composition mirrors an unseen aftermath of Norman's murderous behavior.

Herrmann's leitmotif and cue, "The Murder"³¹⁹ acts as *Psycho*'s weapon. Until this deadly moment, Herrmann marks the strings *con sordino* (with mute), so that "The Murder" cue had the aural power to batter the sonic narrative as the high strings jut and stab into Marion. Of course, much of Hitchcock's horror rises from ambiguity, and Herrmann becomes the musical narrator of the unseen in this scene. Herrmann uses "The Murder" as a leitmotif, and plays it again during but Arbogast's murder and the attempted murder of Lila (see Figure 6.b). Herrmann's active use of music as *Psycho*'s murder weapon interweaves the sonic and visual narratives as the sound of "The Murder" becomes synonymous with the visualisation of death. The woman in #26 is alive, as she stands still in a state of worry. Her long, dirty, white gown is reminiscent of hospital wear—a sight that implies neglect. Norman was smothered as a child, and Mrs Bates' corpse was not neglected, even in death. Indeed Mrs Bates' corpse is "the ultimate abjection."³²⁰ However, Norman embodies the abject by stealing her voice, and Herrmann composes his "The Murder" score cue in her name.³²¹ Although the woman in #26 appears terrified through her body language, she is not screaming. Perhaps, like Lila, her scream has been suppressed into the sonic narrative.

The Norman-as-Norma reveal debunks the mystery of Mrs Bates' voice, proving that the phantasmatic sound of Mrs Bates is truly an illusion in Norman's mind, one that he creates and expresses.³²² It is the voice of Mrs Bates who narrates the final moments of *Psycho*, as Norman sits in police custody. The camera slowly pans closer to Norman sitting shrouded in a blanket, hunched over like a frail old woman (see Figure 7.b).³²³ Norman smiles, but his lips do not move as the phantasmatic sound of Mrs Bates scorns him. While

³¹⁹ "The Murder" Cue: 00:47:41-00:48:37

³²⁰ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 2-3. See also, Chapter 2, p. 43

³²¹ See Chapter 2, p. 41.

³²² See Chapter 2, p. 43.

³²³ Ibid.

the phantasmatic voice of Mrs Bates condemns Norman’s actions, Herrmann intones his closing cue (prior to the credits), “The Finale.”³²⁴



Figure 7.a: *Untitled Film Still #82*.



Figure 7.b: *Psycho*’s Final Scene.

The woman pictured in Sherman’s *Untitled Film Still #82* (see Figure 7.a.) sits in a faraway corner, the space divided by the door frames. Her posture is straight, her legs are together, and she appears guarded as she stares ahead. Similarly to *Untitled Film Still #26* (see Figure 6.a), the woman in #82 wears a white dress with long sleeves, and her dark hair is parted in the middle. However, the dress in #82 is a much brighter and cleaner white, as if the pureness of the white signifies innocence. As previously discussed in Chapter Two,³²⁵ Herrmann manipulates the register to indicate the presence of Mrs Bates in Norman’s mind. This is notably observed in the peephole scene, where the low register moves into the high register to indicate the double of the “mother-half” of his mind. With this musical technique

³²⁴ “Finale” Cue: 01:47:34-01:48:56.

³²⁵ See Chapter 2, p. 43.

in mind, “The Finale” may be heard as a sonic guilty plea, as the low dulcet tones signal Norman’s mental presence, despite the phantasmatic voice of Mrs Bates. Therefore, Herrmann’s last musical cue exposes the psychiatrist’s notion that Mrs Bates is giving the confession, and instead proves that Norman is the cause of “something terrible.” Viewed with this sonic backdrop in mind, #82 can be thought to sit in innocence, rather than servitude.

***Vertigo* (1958): Constructing Imaginary Women Out of Real Women**

Sherman’s general approach to art, more specifically her *Untitled Film Stills* series, echoes *Vertigo*’s treatment of female characters. Sherman becomes a range of women, constructed from her own imagination — just as Judy is constructed out of Madeleine, who is constructed out of Carlotta. As previously discussed in Chapter One, this constant construction of female characters creates the spiralling motion of the Nietzschean “eternal return” where history repeats itself, each time with a subtle difference; Carlotta becomes Madeleine, until Madeleine becomes Judy, and Judy completes the circle to become Carlotta.³²⁶ The female character that is placed outside of this spiralling return is Midge. This is because, for Scottie, Midge is a platonic character, making her ‘un-objectifiable’ by Scottie, which gives her power against the gaze.³²⁷ Herrmann musically reflects the eternal return through musical themes in his score that mirror and spiral. Midge’s exclusion from the eternal return is also reflected musically, however not by Herrmann’s score. Instead, diegetic music that Midge controls herself is used in her scenes. In this way, Midge’s control can be thought to be reflective of Sherman’s role as the photographer and muse, given that Sherman harnesses the gaze and turns it back on the viewer — just as Midge takes the musical control away from Herrmann’s scoring, and thereby avoids his sonic gaze.

³²⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 16.

³²⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 27-28.

Just as *Psycho* plays on the transition from life to death (or as Mulvey notes, from stillness to movement), *Vertigo* pulls between life and death, past and present. This pull is characterised by Judy. As explored in Chapter One, Judy is the final product of the eternal return — Carlotta becomes Madeleine, until Madeleine becomes Judy, and Judy completes the circle to become Carlotta.³²⁸ Throughout his filmography, Hitchcock uses mirrors as a tool for exploring duality. The constant circling back to the same moment, through different characters, mixes the tragic present with the haunting past in *Vertigo*'s story. Sherman's *Untitled Film Still #56* (see Figure 8.a) features a close-up of a woman looking straight into a reflective surface, possibly a mirror, or a window.³²⁹ She maintains a neutral expression as she stares at herself, standing so close to the reflective surface that it is almost as if she were gazing at something, or someone, beyond herself. It is in this act of reflective looking that Judy and Scottie partake as Judy dresses up as Madeleine in an effort to be loved by Scottie again (see Figure 8.b).



Figure 8.a: *Untitled Film Still #56*



Figure 8.b: Judy, as Madeline, and Scottie.

³²⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 16.

³²⁹ Mirrors follow Madeleine through almost all of her scenes, but she rarely looks in them.

Herrmann sonically portrays the duality of Madeleine and Judy by using the same leitmotif for both women. Herrmann's "Madeline"³³⁰ leitmotif is deeply romantic with swooning strings that establish a mood of poise and elegance. When Scottie realises that Judy and Madeleine are the same woman, the camera fires into the mirrored reflection to emphasise that Scottie is not looking at Judy, but rather at the reflection of Madeleine. During this moment of realisation, Herrmann follows Scottie's perspective, and provides a stinger to note the significance of the mirrored moment. The position of the camera behind the woman in Sherman's #56 breathes down her neck. The camera, then, begs the question: who is gazing? The musical underlay of Herrmann's "Madeline" leitmotif suggests a double identity. Viewing and "hearing" the woman in #56 in this way invites the suggestion that she is not who she appears to be and is questioning her own identity through the reflection of the mirror.

Hitchcock reveals Judy's real identity before Scottie's realisation, by having Judy write a confessional letter (see Figure 9.b). As previously discussed in Chapter One,³³¹ Silverman believes that, given that the letter is read aloud as she writes it, this scene is a strong example of the Lacanian "suture."³³² Silverman believes that the difference between male and female voice-overs boils down to their privileged position outside of the diegesis, marking them as "The Law."³³³ This suppresses Judy into an inferior narrative as a guilty suspect. Sherman's *Untitled Film Still* #33 (see Figure 9.a) also appears to have read the letter in front of her. The woman sits at the top of the bed, looking down at the opened letter at the

³³⁰ The "Madeline" leitmotif first appears in the restaurant scene, during the first time Madeleine is introduced: 00:17:19-00:18:30.

³³¹ Chapter 1, p. 24-25.

³³² Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*, 222.

³³³ *Ibid.*, See also: Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 72-101.

bottom. There is a framed picture of what appears to be a man, on the right-hand side of the frame. In fact, this is another picture of Sherman, where she is dressed as a male doctor.³³⁴



Figure 9.a: *Untitled Film Still* #33.



Figure 9.b: Judy's Confessional Letter.

While Judy writes, and reads aloud her confession to Scottie, Herrmann sounds “The Letter” cue.³³⁵ This cue sonically fuels Judy's trauma with a reprise of “The Tower” — where Madeleine falls to her death. This reprise is also reminiscent of the “Roof-Top”³³⁶ cue when Scottie's vertigo is triggered. Though we do not know what the letter in Sherman's #33 says, or who it is for, we know that Herrmann's “The Letter” cue implies trauma.³³⁷ There is distance between the woman in Sherman's #33 and the open letter at the end of the bed. Due to the depth of field, the letter is in a clearer focus than the woman, giving it an apparently higher level of importance. The covers on the other side of the bed are disturbed, and although not in focus, the presumed owner of the disturbed side of the bed looks from the

³³⁴ While Sherman has noted that she has never had that much success at dressing up in masculine outfits, the picture on the bed side table is from a series based around doctors and nurses headshots that she did before *Untitled Film Stills*. See: Sherman, *The Complete Untitled Film Stills*, 9.

³³⁵ “The Letter” Cue: 01:40:04-01:41:43

³³⁶ “The Roof-top” Cue: 00:03:25-00:05:00

³³⁷ Chapter 1, p. 24-25.

bedside table. This complicates the gaze, as the woman is being targeted not only by the camera, but also the picture to her back. This photograph acts as “The Law,”³³⁸ as it gazes over both the woman and the letter, implying that although the woman is physically alone in the camera shot — there is an authority looking over her. With Herrmann’s “The Letter” cue underscoring #33, perhaps we might hear the confessional voice-over not as a female voice, but instead as a male voice coming from the authoritative figure in the over-looking picture frame.

Judy begins her letter by pining: “Dearest Scottie ... and so you’ve found me. This is the moment I dreaded and hoped for, wondering what I would say and do if ever I saw you again, I wanted so to see you again.” This is the first moment when we hear Judy’s confession of love for Scottie, although Herrmann has been playing with the sound of desperate love-longing throughout *Vertigo* by evoking the Tristan chord. The Tristan chord implies the connection of love and death, and its most prominent use occurs in Herrmann’s cue “The Forest,”³³⁹ where Madeleine is pleading with Scottie not to ask her of her ‘death’ (see Figure 10.b). Sherman’s *Untitled Film Still* #38 (see Figure 10.a) shows a blurry image of a woman wading through a forest scene. Spontaneously shot, without focus, this still creates a subconscious awareness of the gazing photographer. This recalls Scottie’s curiosity as he watches Madeleine ‘retrace her death’ in the forest.

³³⁸ Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror*, 80.

³³⁹ “The Forest” Cue: 00:58:37-01:02:06



Figure 10.a: *Untitled Film Still #38*



Figure 10.b: Madeleine in the Forest.

Herrmann’s “The Forest” cue resists the stereotypical romantic fairytale forest scene, and instead opts for a trip into the dark woods. Clover notes that going from a city to country in horror film is like going from the village into the dark forest in a fairytale.³⁴⁰ Clover’s reasoning lies in the notion of “Urbanoia” where the “civilised” city-folk are threatened by the “uncivilised” country-folk.³⁴¹ Sherman and Madeleine share the city girl origin. In what could have been interpreted as a peaceful walk in the woods, Sherman’s #38 turns sour when viewed under the sonic umbrella of Herrmann’s “The Forest” cue. In this cue, Herrmann evokes the Tristan chord to highlight the connection between love and death, and to create a powerful sensation of desperate longing and desire. #38 is surrounded by life, the leaves on the trees, the shrubbery on the ground, and the rippling water at her feet. However, Herrmann’s Tristan chords imply that death is looming. Like a ghost in her floating white dress, #38 moves through the water, and balancing over to one side with her arm out. This

³⁴⁰ Clover, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, 124.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

woman navigates the natural space while in *Vertigo*, Herrmann uses the Tristan chord as a direct sonic indicator of Madeleine’s looming death.

While death haunts *Vertigo*’s narrative, another prominent theme in *Vertigo* is resurrection. This theme is noted by the spiralling eternal return where Carlotta becomes Madeleine, until Madeleine becomes Judy, and Judy completes the circle to become Carlotta.³⁴² As discussed in Chapter One,³⁴³ *Vertigo*’s prelude sets the tone for the film’s deconstruction and reconstruction of female identity. Saul Bass’s graphic design (see Figure 11.b) shows isolated parts of a woman’s face in a way that hides the identity of the woman in the sequence, while simultaneously encouraging her construction or, indeed, reconstruction. Smith believes that these features must belong to Carlotta and Antony John notes that the face is the “dislocated face of female anonymity.”³⁴⁴ Sherman’s *Untitled Film Still #36* (see Figure 11.a) operates in a similar way, as this still features an anonymous woman – one of her only stills where the woman’s face is concealed.



³⁴² Chapter 1, p. 16.

³⁴³ Chapter 1, p. 17.

³⁴⁴ Smith, “*Vertigo*’s Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals,” 68-102. See also, John ““The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped for’: Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann’s Score for *Vertigo*,”” 516–44.

Figure 11.a: *Untitled Film Still #36*

Figure 11.b: Opening Credits to *Vertigo*.

The woman in #36 stands in front of (or behind) a backlit curtain of muslin fabric which silhouettes her figure. Although this is a still image, there is the suggestion of fluid movement. Her underskirt is tightly fitted on top and fans out as it passes down over her waist, the sheer fabric is light as it floats against the fabric backdrop. Her hair is pulled back into a sleek low bun. The abundance of this lightweight muslin fabric creates a veil, concealing the woman. This idea of concealment speaks of peace and tranquillity that comes with being in one's own space — it must be noted, though, that the woman is not alone as the camera acts as its own presence. Notwithstanding the presence of the camera in her space, the woman in #36 is protected by the shadow which veils her identity. When Sherman's film still #36 is underscored with Herrmann's prelude for *Vertigo*,³⁴⁵ the spiralling arpeggios wrap the figure in her own spiralling motion. Her arms are posed above her head and, as if she were a ballerina, Herrmann's score sends her into a dizzying spin that mimics the physical sensation of vertigo. The bellowing sounds of the full orchestra blow through the fabric, erupting the previous feelings of tranquillity and peace. The "Love" leitmotif, interlaced in the prelude, creates relentless off-centre tonality that inspires an unsettling sonic space, making the muslin fabric seem smothering.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have superimposed Herrmann's film scores over Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* to further explore the power and extent of the sonic gaze. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the sonic gaze operates in the same voyeuristic, objectifying way that the male

³⁴⁵ *Vertigo* Prelude: 00:00:26 - 00:03:25.

gaze does. Therefore, Herrmann's sonic gaze is the aural counterpart to the traditionally visual, male gaze. I use the term "sonic gaze" because I am referring to the gaze as it is heard through the sonic narrative. The sonic gaze incorporates the complete sonic narrative, from the film score to sound effects, to vocality. Using Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* as a critical tool to explore feminist theory, I have sought to demonstrate how the sonic gaze acts in tandem with the male gaze through the narrative. In Chapters One and Two, I discussed and critically analysed how Herrmann is complicit in his creation of a sonic gaze that silences the women of Hitchcock's narratives. In this chapter, I took a feminist photographer (albeit one who has never publically declared herself as such) who gazes at herself as a way of critiquing the Hollywood male gaze. Imagining Herrmann's underscore to Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* expands their meaning to provide insight and further discussion surrounding feminist issues in relation to an expanding conception of "gaze." I suggest that when we see Sherman's work, we hear Herrmann's music from Hitchcockian cinema. In a cinematic context, Herrmann's score silences the women, but when superimposed on Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*, the score provides Sherman's characters with an emotional context which, somewhat ironically, gives them a voice in their visual narrative. Although Sherman relies heavily on ambiguity, the irony here rests in the fact that when Herrmann's music is heard, the women in the film stills become attached to a film, and subsequent narrative, where their voices are defined by the narrative context. Looking at the *Untitled Film Stills* series as a whole, there are multiple, feminist stories that interweave through them. However, by attaching certain stills (like the ones mentioned in this chapter: #52, #2, #54, #53, #26, #82, #56, #33, #38, #36) to certain musical cues, each woman becomes ensnared in a specific film, and their agency is thereby stripped away. As I argue throughout the analysis in this chapter, Herrmann's sonic gaze is so sonically domineering in each specific film scene example, any ambiguity in Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* becomes no longer possible.

Sherman's stills are not self-portraits, as she constructs a range of women from her own imagination. Although Sherman has refrained from categorising her work, through her almost 'anti-theoretical' stance,³⁴⁶ her *Untitled Film Stills* series is an example of how the gaze affects women's representation in film. Sherman has constructed her female characters much in the same way that Hitchcock has played with the idea of constructing imaginary women in *Vertigo*, and she relies on the horror of implication which is pursued by Hitchcock in *Psycho*. As we have seen, Herrmann plays his own part in the construction of female characters in *Vertigo*, and the implication of horror in *Psycho*, through the cues that I have placed in tandem with Sherman's stills in this chapter.

While interpretative, this sonic exercise of attaching a film score to film stills, particularly stills from non-existent films, has provided new insights into the sonic gaze. The sonic gaze, while providing Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* with added narrative meaning and emotional meaning and context, highlights the unseen feminist issues of the gaze. Herrmann's music produces another layer of voyeurism which compacts the feeling of claustrophobia created by the gaze in Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills*. Sherman herself may be seen as a participant in the gaze, as she positions herself as the muse and the person holding the camera and taking the photograph. However, she describes the women she depicts in each still as their own characters, living out their own narratives, and stuck by Hollywood's gaze. Their problematic positions are further exacerbated by Herrmann's music that adds a sonic layer to the already present visual gaze.

For Mulvey, Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* are a uniquely valuable locus that allows for a broadened exploration of feminist theory. Adding to this, I believe that Sherman has created a critical tool that is capable of multi-layered critical analysis that expands beyond its own visual medium. Sherman's work has not previously been viewed in the context of its

³⁴⁶ Mulvey, "A Phantasmagoria of the Female Body: The Work of Cindy Sherman," 138.

sonic dimension. My research constitutes an attempt to begin to bridge this gap in feminist theory, to push the idea that perhaps photographs are not the traditionally silent and still mediums we thought they were, that in fact, we should not just look, but we should listen to them as well.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have critiqued the presence of Herrmann's sonic gaze in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960), and I have experimented with the operational scope of the sonic gaze through Sherman's still photographs. As noted throughout, the sonic gaze is the aural counterpart to the traditionally visual male gaze as it supports and maintains the perspective of the male protagonists. I use the term "sonic gaze" because I refer to the gaze as it is heard through the sonic narrative. The sonic gaze incorporates the complete soundtrack, from the film score to sound effects, to vocality. In Chapters One and Two, I considered how the sonic gaze operates through the sonic narrative to objectify female characters in Hitchcock's films. In Chapter Three, I expanded the idea of the sonic gaze, to consider how it highlights the voyeuristic undertones in Sherman's still photography.

In Chapter One, "Spiralling into the Sound of *Vertigo* (1958)," I critiqued how the male-centered perspective musically silences female characters. For this critique, I used a second wave feminist lens to examine how the female characters embody *Vertigo*'s sonic themes of being "illusionary" and the objects of the "obsessed." My contribution here is unique. While *Vertigo*'s score has been studied extensively in film music studies, most scholars focus either on Herrmann's technicality, or how the musical themes move the narrative from Scottie's perspective. I focus on how the sonic gaze chastises the female characters of the narrative. To do this, I asked the following questions: (1) "Carlotta, is for Hitchcock, 'the face of female anonymity', so how does Herrmann construct her ghostly character in the sonic narrative?" (2) "To what extent are Madeleine and Judy treated differently by the score, and how does this affect their position in the narrative?" (3) "To what extent is Midge free from Herrmann's sonic reign, and how does this position her in

Vertigo's narrative?" To discuss and contemplate possible answers, I considered *Vertigo*'s musical structure, and sonic architecture, based on a spiral in motion. This encapsulates the main themes of the film, illusion, and obsession. This musical narration fuels the narrative in which the characters themselves are spiralling — Scottie with his vertigo and emotional turmoil over the loss of Madeleine, and Carlotta, Madeleine/Judy in the eternal return, that Midge is excluded from through her control of pre-existing diegetic music. By using Freud's uncanny theory to analyze *Vertigo*'s visual and sonic narratives, I have noted how the uncanny is perpetrated by Carlotta, Madeleine, Judy, and Midge. *Vertigo* has always been a film of contention for feminist film scholars. From the outset, as the credits roll, there is a hint that *Vertigo* will question and shatter female identity. Carlotta is a case in point, described as the "dislocated face of female anonymity,"³⁴⁷ which suppresses her into the past, in order to reconstruct her in the present. Herrmann's sonic gaze brings an intimidating, ethereal, quality to Carlotta that positions her at the top of the spiralling eternal return. Herrmann sonically traps Carlotta, and Madeleine and Judy through leitmotifs and cues which mirror each other continuously through the sonic narrative. This sonic mirroring makes sure that each female character is thrown back on to the last, in a doomed cycle. At first, Madeleine is visually represented as Carlotta in *Vertigo*'s narrative. However, Herrmann indicates her duality with Judy by persisting on using the same leitmotif, "Madeline," to represent both characters. Mulvey visually parallels this duality by considering *Vertigo* in two parts — the first part shows the fabricated illusion that is Madeleine, and the second part reveals the process of this fabrication through Judy.³⁴⁸ For Herrmann, Madeleine and Judy are tied together by the connection between love and death, which he musically narrates through the Tristan chord. Ultimately, Herrmann gives Madeleine and Judy the same musical

³⁴⁷ Smith, "*Vertigo*'s Musical Gaze: Neo-Riemannian Symmetries and Spirals," 68-102. See also, John "The Moment That I Dreaded and Hoped for": Ambivalence and Order in Bernard Herrmann's Score for *Vertigo*," 516-44.

³⁴⁸ Mulvey, *Afterimages: On Cinema, Women and Changing Times*, 46.

treatment because the score sonically reflects them in their Gothic double status. Rather than doubling, Madeleine mirrors Midge in a stark contrast — Midge is interpreted by some feminists as the ‘life-mother’, and Madeleine the ‘death-mother’.³⁴⁹ This contrast frees Midge from Herrmann’s sonic reign, due to her status as “a gazer” crudely demonstrated by her glasses, and platonic, yet motherly, relationship with Scottie. Midge controls the sonic narrative by playing pre-existing music on record players, in places like her apartment that is associated with being a “safe place.” Herrmann sonically recognizes the Madeleine/Midge contrast by finally absorbing Midge into the sonic narrative, when she leaves Scottie for the last time and walks out of the hospital down the hallway to Herrmann’s sorrowfully low, long bowed strings. This mirrors Madeleine’s dream where she walks down an endless corridor, with nothing but darkness and death awaiting her.

In a similar vein to *Vertigo*, the extensive film music research and discourse around *Psycho* focuses heavily on either technical orchestration or musical perspective that support the male protagonists (namely Norman). In feminist research, most research focuses on the female body in horror, and the death-mother dynamic. In Chapter Two, “The Sound of Something Terrible in *Psycho* (1960),” I contribute to this feminist discourse by considering the representation of (both living and dead) women by observing how Herrmann’s score weaponizes against and, ultimately, silences them into the sonic narrative. To do this, I asked: (4) If Marion, Lila, and Mrs Bates are all victims of Norman Bates, how does Herrmann’s score treat them? (5) How does Herrmann’s score enable and weaponize Norman Bates against all three of his victims? (6) To what extent does Herrmann’s score musically reflect Lila’s courage and levelheadedness in finding her murdered sister, exceeding where Sam and Arbogast fail? To discuss the possible answers surrounding these questions, I took inspiration

³⁴⁹ Jackson, “Music and Mirrors in Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*,” 1-9. See also: Keane, “A Closer Look at Scopophilia: Mulvey, Hitchcock, and *Vertigo*,” 240; and White, “Allegory and Referentiality: *Vertigo* and Feminist Criticism,” 910-932.

from Clover, who uses *Psycho* as her “benchmark” for studying the slasher genre. I have used Clover’s foundational trope of the Final Girl to consider how Herrmann’s film score treats this trope. Out of the three female characters in *Psycho*, Hitchcock only lets one out alive — Lila, the original Final Girl. Lila’s investigation into Marion’s death is consistently interrupted by her male counterparts, and Herrmann plays a sonic role in this by treating Lila’s (successful) investigation differently to the (failed) investigations of Arbogast and Sam — this most notable by the cues “The Search A,” and “The Search B.” While this shows differentiation, Herrmann literally silences Lila into the narrative by blending his cue “The Cellar” with Lila’s final scream. Mrs Bates is also silenced into the narrative due to her contribution of sonic horror through the creation of a sonic disconnect. This disconnect is noted through the vocality of Mrs Bates which impedes her in the sonic narrative, given that for most of the visual narrative, her voice is present, yet she is left unseen. As I argued in this chapter, Mrs Bates’ voice is an example of phantasmatic sound, which is different to the traditional reading of acousmètre or imagined voice, because Mrs Bates has a source of sound — Norman. While Mrs Bates embodies Kristeva’s abject by virtue of being a corpse, it is Norman who actually embodies the abject through the monstrous-feminine. Herrmann supports Norman’s perspective, which means at moments he musically implies Norman’s innocence, which places the blame on Mrs Bates. Therefore, the position of Mrs Bates in the sonic narrative is entirely dependent on Norman and his perspective. Herrmann foreshadows Norman’s alter-ego by manipulating the register, this is sonically observed in the peephole scene when Norman watches Marion undress. Perhaps more disturbingly in the sonic treatment of Marion is how Herrmann sonically enables Norman to kill her by creating the weapon that kills her — the screeching, stabbing strings.

To compliment my discussion of the sonic gaze and moving image in Chapters One and Two, in Chapter Three, “Exploring Herrmann’s Sonic Gaze Through Cindy Sherman’s

Untitled Film Stills (1977-1980),” I used Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series as a critical tool to explore the sonic gaze to pose the questions: (7) “What does Herrmann’s score do for the feminist interpretation of these photos?” and, (8) “How does the score add to or challenge the gaze in each photo?” I engaged with Sherman’s work, in this new context, combining still images and imagined music to encourage thinking about photographs as more than traditionally passive, still mediums.³⁵⁰ Under the subheadings “*Psycho* (1960): Something Terrible Must Happen to These Women” and “*Vertigo* (1958): Constructing Imaginary Women Out of Real Women,” I analyzed how Herrmann’s remembered scores expand the feminist meaning of the gaze in Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills*. There is an irony in the idea that when Herrmann’s music is heard, the women in the film stills become attached to a film, and subsequent narrative, where their voices are defined by the narrative context which erases Sherman’s push for ambiguity. However, as I argue in this chapter, this irony proves how sonically domineering Herrmann’s sonic gaze is to *Vertigo* and *Psycho*, and ultimately why we should listen to the sonic narrative when considering feminist issues.

While it may seem outdated to study Hitchcockian cinema and second wave feminist film theory, it is in fact timely, given Hollywood’s current and urgent need to learn from the #MeToo movement. As fourth-wave feminist scholarly work that reflects on its second wave ancestry, my research is characterized by its focus on the empowerment of women through musical language to make sure that women are given a fair sonic narrative in the future of film. The future of this research will be encapsulated by its expansion into a PhD project, which aims to further experiment with ideas around the sonic gaze. This MA thesis has given me the opportunity to play in a sandbox of feminist theory, creative interpretation, and film music, and I am confident that the arguments I have built and the discussions I have evoked have given me a solid foundation to move forward with and expand this research. Possible

³⁵⁰ Currie, “The Interpretation in Art,” 291-306.

next steps include expanding research so as to consider all nine films on which Hitchcock and Herrmann collaborated, noting how the sonic gaze manipulates each narrative. Further expansion of this research could include examination of the French New Wave which so heavily inspired the filmic counterculture of 1950s and 1960s Hollywood. I aim to branch into wider areas of feminist research concerning the representation of social class, race and whiteness, performative gender practice and sexuality through film and musical language, and I will continue to experiment with the intertextual relationship between moving image, still image, and sound/music. For this thesis, using Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* to explore the sonic gaze through imagined music and still photographs makes sense given Sherman's visual resemblance to Hitchcock's filmography. Is it possible that the sonic gaze can be utilized through other still media formats? Perhaps. There are some musings from the Futurists and Dadaists on sound and colour in paintings, so perhaps it is a possible avenue for consideration. For now, I hope I have encouraged the idea that the gaze is not just a visual phenomenon, and that still photographs are not necessarily silent, passive, mediums. Next time you're looking, I encourage you to listen as well.

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